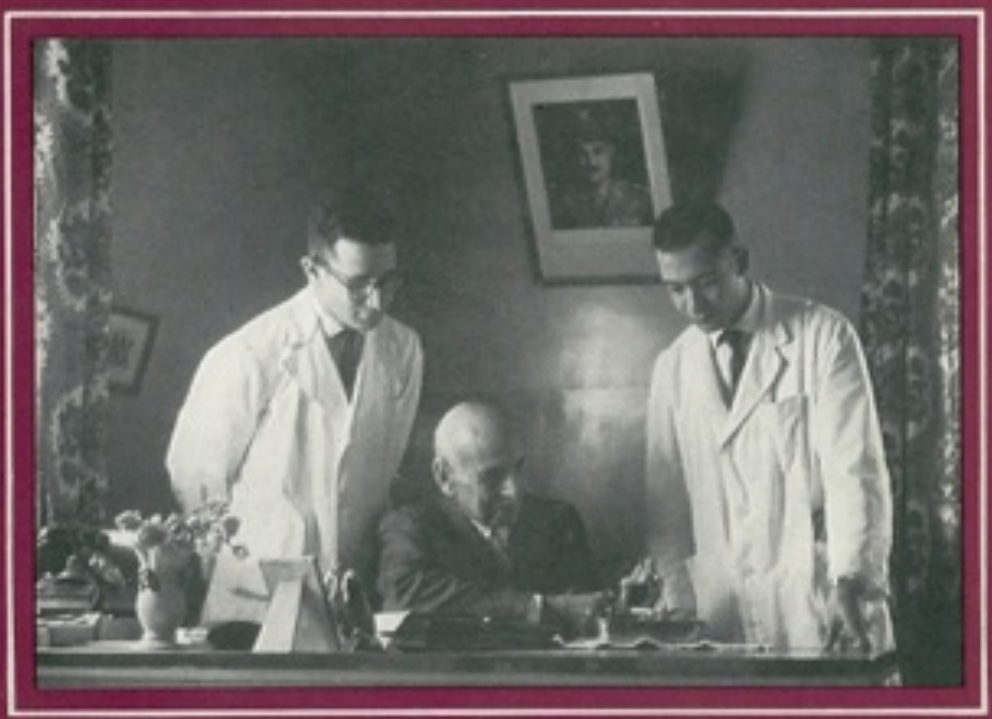
THE LIFE OF AN EGYPTIAN DOCTOR



NAGUIB MAHFOUZ

LIVINGSTONE

THE LIFE OF AN EGYPTIAN DOCTOR

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THE LIFE OF AN EGYPTIAN DOCTOR

BY

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TO THE READER

When I first wrote these memoirs I intended to address them to my daughters, their husbands and my grandchildren only. When I finished writing them, however, my daughters insisted on them being published. At first I hesitated to do so but, on second thoughts, I felt that it might be useful to put my experience before the younger generation and give them an account of the difficulties and hardships I have met, and how I dealt with them. This may help them to deal with their own problems in the manner best fitted to serve God and humanity, not spoilt by flattery nor despondent by neglect, but pushing their way through with energy and faith in ultimate success. A further and more important reason for publishing my memoirs is that they deal with a period which may be considered as the turning point in the history of the Egyptian School of Medicine.

The problems which I am going to deal with will also be of help to those who study the transitional period which medicine went through at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Before I start my narrative I wish to stress upon the younger generation certain points which I consider to be of great importance in forming a successful career. The first and most important of these is never to try to justify a wrong action by a false excuse. Real strength of character appears in admitting one's faults and correcting a wrong attitude once it is discovered.

Young men are bound to meet pitfalls and temptations in the course of their life. When this happens it is easier to deal with them immediately before contracting habits which are difficult to get rid of, like the traveller who suddenly finds his feet sinking in quicksand; every step forward makes it more difficult for him to get back to solid ground, his feet sinking deeper and deeper as he goes on until his whole body is com-

pletely submerged. With self-denial, our young men should fulfil their mission in life. Above all, they should avoid cheap and showy attitudes and refrain from pushing others out in order to put themselves in the limelight. In their struggle in life they should not allow obstacles or misfortunes or treacherous attacks to overpower them. They must have the courage, every time they are knocked down, to rebound higher and higher.

Those who have attained success should beware of a swollen head. Of all objectionable defects of character conceit is the worst and eventually leads to a downfall.

Those who, in spite of a hard struggle, fail to get due recognition should not be disheartened or embittered. In the long run good work is usually appreciated. The seeds of good are bound to bear their fruits. If they do not the feeling that one has done the right thing creates an inner satisfaction which is in itself a reward. In Montgomery's memoirs this great man says that, when war came to an end and a Thanksgiving Service was given at St. Paul's Cathedral, all the well-known personalities were invited with one exception, that of Montgomery himself! He tells us in his memoirs that this omission was not unintentional. To my mind this omission does not detract from Montgomery's value but, on the contrary, enhances it.

Lastly, I should like to address the teaching staff of which I was a member for the greater part of my life. To them I would say that they should bear in mind that they hold the torch of science. They should keep it alight and should hand it over to those who come after them. They should remember that they hold in their hands the future of the coming generation, a sacred trust of which they have to give an account to God and to their fellow countrymen. They should bear in mind that, when a student is standing before them during an examination, they will kill in him the spirit of struggle and create in him a feeling of despair if they are unfair to him.

Teach the student to do his work efficiently by making him feel that he is being treated with justice. In dealing with your assistants, you should give them all the encouragement that you yourselves would have wished for when you were juniors.

If you become members of the University Council, stand up for justice. If you eventually discover that you are not defending the right cause, have the strength of character to admit it and to start again.

Chapter 1

MY BIRTHPLACE

On the east bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile, and about 60 kilometres from its mouth, stands the city of Mansoura, the pride of the Delta and the capital of Dakahlia Province. Its corniche on the bank of the Nile extends for several kilometres. Rows of lanterns extend along its whole length and, when lighted, are a magnificent sight. This garland of lights outlining the bank of the Nile can best be seen by passengers on the evening train crossing the bridge between Talkha, the village on the opposite bank of the Nile, and Mansoura.

It was at Mansoura that I was born. The house where we lived was separated from the coast road by an open space which allowed us to have a good view of the Nile. It was a four-storeyed house and my bedroom was on the top floor. Beside my bed was a small sofa, placed under the window, and it was my habit to rise early in the morning and sit on the sofa listening to the chirping of the birds and watching the small feluccas gliding on the Nile until the time for breakfast and school. It was there, on the shore of the Nile, that I developed my deep love of nature.

In those days Mansoura was a big commercial centre. This was in great part due to the existence of one of the three Mixed Courts in Egypt, the other two being in Cairo and Alexandria. These courts were instituted to deal with litigations in which one of the parties was a subject of a foreign country privileged with special rights. This most unjust privilege was also extended to persons who had sought the protection of one of these countries, all of which had consulates at Mansoura.

The foreigners, who were very numerous, possessed great influence socially and economically. The majority were Greeks and Italians. The British, Americans and Germans, though few in number, had important economic interests. There was also a large number of Lebanese and Syrians whose protection by the privileged countries gave them the same privileges in the Mixed Courts as their own subjects.

My father was in the cotton and cereal trade which gave him the opportunity to form connections in commercial circles. These were not slow to discover his ability, efficiency and honesty. Most of them charged him with auditing their accounts, while one of them took him as a partner. His gains were enormous and we lived in luxury. His sudden death at the age of 53, combined with the fact that neither of his sons had come of age, resulted in a mismanagement of our heritable property which was left in the hands of guardians who were neither honest nor efficient. The income from our property, if properly managed, would have given us an easy and comfortable life. After my father's death we found out that he had been giving monthly allowances to many needy families which we were unable to continue and, indeed, we had to restrict our manner of living to our now straitened means.

Owing to the dishonesty and incapacity of our guardians our income dwindled considerably. I need not go in detail over the hardships I had to suffer. As soon as one difficulty was solved a fresh one occurred. We had to sell first one of our houses, then another, as well as most of the agricultural land we possessed in order to be able to lead a respectable life but, when I look back upon those hard times which lasted more than fourteen years, I find that the life of misery we had gone through developed in me, as a young boy, a will-power to face responsibility with patience. The experience I gained in my childhood sustained me in later life and enabled me to carry on through many difficulties.

Chapter 2

MY CHILDHOOD

After nine months spent in the obscurities of the womb, I was born on the morning of the fifth of January in the year of grace 1882. My mother had a long and tedious labour which lasted for three full days. She was 45 years of age when I was born and I was her eighth and last child.

I was born in a state of white asphyxia, the worst form of foetal distress. I was breathless when I was born and did not meet life with screams as most babies do. My hands were not closed but relaxed. The midwife, Bahana, and her husband, Dr. Mansour, who attended my mother took me for dead. They placed me, together with the placenta, in a copper tray which they placed near an open window. They told the family that I was stillborn. Half an hour later my Aunt Hana whispered to the midwife that she noticed that the baby was breathing feebly every few minutes whereupon the midwife wrapped me up, cut the cord and did what she could to resuscitate me. Slowly I began to breathe normally; but the half hour I spent near the open window on that cold January morning left its mark. In short, I opened my eyes on the world not with cries but with resignation and I wish, when the hour comes for the soul to go to its Creator, that I may meet the event with a smile, hope and faith.

My memory of the first four years of life is very hazy. I can remember nothing but the cod liver oil which I was forced to take three times a day. At first I did not like its taste but eventually I came to tolerate it.

The first event of which I have the most vivid recollection, even to the most minute detail, was the wedding of my fourth sister Liza and the subsequent celebration. I was then a little over five years of age. I well remember the pavilion that was put up in the court of our house where a band, ordered specially from Cairo, played while acrobats demonstrated their amusing feats. I used to stay up late at night during these festivities, which lasted a fortnight, until I began to doze off and my nurse would then carry me, half asleep, to bed.

Fahmy, my nephew and playmate, was four months older than I and we accompanied all the ladies of the family to the public bath which was reserved for the occasion. There we spent the whole morning. Then the bride, bridesmaid and a large number of friends returned to the house in a procession led by the band.

I have a vivid recollection of the celebrated singer and dancer, Amina El Sarafiya, who came specially from Cairo with her band and stayed a week at Mansoura celebrating the occasion. I was dazzled by her silvery costume. On the eve of the wedding, after exhibiting several of her dances, she put a handkerchief in her lap where golden coins were placed by members of the family and their friends in appreciation. When my father deposited a number of gold sovereigns in her lap she got up and danced most gracefully.

When the celebration was over my sister and her husband left for Cairo. In spite of my mother's objection Fahmy and I insisted on seeing her off and I remember how bitterly I cried when the train began to move out of the station. I missed my sister immensely as I was very fond of her.

My nephew and I entered the American Mission School when we were five years old. The ground floor, where the classes were held, was complete but the first floor was still in process of construction and scaffolding was placed all round the building. In our first lesson we were told that we were created of the dust of the earth which appeared to me to be very funny. At midday when I was going home I went up the scaffolding and remained there. One of the teachers saw me and ordered me to come down at once. I hesitated to do so and said "How can I walk on the dust from which I was created?" Whereupon he angrily retorted "Do you mean to pass all your life going up and down scaffoldings? Come down at once and walk on the ground like all other people."

Of those people I met in my childhood, three stand out in my memory. The first is Antar, the guard of a farm we possessed near Mansoura where we generally spent our holidays and weekends. He was a very old man and was proud of having served as a soldier in the campaigns of Mohamed Ali and his son, Ibrahim. He used to describe these campaigns and his heroic achievements to us. His stories were most interesting and aroused in us a desire to join the army and perform similar deeds of valour. None of these desires materialised.

The second figure is that of Sheikha Zohra, a fortune-teller. She was short, stout, gaudily dressed but had a kindly face. She used to visit us at intervals accompanied by her maid who was dressed as queerly as her mistress. During her séances she used to squat on a mattress chanting incantations in a pleasant voice while her maid walked around her holding an incense burner from which fragrant fumes filled the room. Her chanting used to begin in a low voice which gradually rose to a high pitch and finally culminated in a wild dance. She would then sit down, saying in a high voice, "The Kings of the Djinn are now among us and if anyone has a problem let her put it forward." It seems that her maid was endowed with the faculty of ventriloquism for the answers came in a queer sort of voice that seemed to come from different directions. My mother and sisters did not believe in all this and merely asked the fortune-teller to come to the house for the amusement of their guests.

The third figure is nurse Sabah, a Sudanese slave, advanced in years, who had obtained her liberty some ten years previously. She was the kindest servant I have ever come across. Every night, before going to bed, she used to ask the children to come and sit around her to hear her stories. She imitated the voices of the Djinn and the devil in a manner that made us shudder and, though these stories frightened us, we liked to hear them over and over again. If she forgot any small detail we objected and asked her to repeat the story once more. Occasionally she told us how the slave-traders caught her as a child in the south of the Sudan and how they beat and tortured her and gave her very little to eat. At the slightest provocation the whip went over her naked body. Any attempt to escape was punished by scorching her with red-hot nails. How often do I remember going to bed after hearing these stories and crying my eyes out until I went to sleep. Her daughter, Zeinab, had a beautiful voice and she often lulled us to sleep by singing a sweet tune.

Life during our childhood was not devoid of amusements. In spite of the fact that the gramophone, cinema, radio and television were then unknown, it was not a dull life.

The stories narrated to us by female servants kept us interested and we found several means of keeping ourselves amused. For example, it occurred to Fahmy and me to make ice-cream. We asked the cook to lend us the ice freezer but he refused. This cook, we knew, was fond of

drinking Araki, a liquor made from dried grapes. He used to hide the bottle in a cupboard which he visited from time to time. Fahmy knew its hiding place and when nobody was in the kitchen he went in and emptied the bottle in the sink. When this was repeated several times the cook began to suspect Fahmy of being the culprit.

When interrogated Fahmy did not deny it and told the cook that he would not stop doing it until he gave us the ice freezer. The cook submitted to Fahmy's terms and showed us how to prepare ice-cream and drew our attention to the necessity of adding enough salt to the ice to reduce the temperature of the milk below freezing point. We followed the instructions but in our hurry a lot of the salt fell into the cream. When it was ready, we filled several glasses with ice-cream and offered them to the members of the family. You can imagine their deep disgust when they tasted the ice-cream and we felt deeply ashamed of ourselves.

Another of my transgressions occurred when I was eight years old. My nephew Fahmy—who is not a stranger to you by now—developed an attack of smallpox. It was by no means a mild one. He was at once isolated in a room and no one was allowed access to it or to any part of the flat. On a Sunday morning, when everyone had gone to church, I sneaked in to Fahmy's room and stayed with him for a long time. I was appalled at the sight of the pustules that covered his face and hands. I thought that my visit to him would pass unnoticed but I was caught in my flagrant disobedience and was immediately taken away, given a hot bath and put in clean clothing. I was then revaccinated and sent to a village called Kafr El Baramoun where my sister Aziza lived. I was put in the charge of Sayed El Guindi, an old servant who took me out for strolls in the fields in the mornings and evenings. He was a most interesting man and told me tales from the *Arabian Nights*. He belonged to a good family and in his youth had been sent to school with his brother Ali. In the course of their studies Sayed El Guindi developed the habit of drinking, failed in his studies and was expelled from school. His brother Sheikh Aly, on the contrary, succeeded and finally became the omdah (mayor) of the village. Of the many stories Sayed recounted to me I will mention the following.

"In olden times there lived in Greece two great learned men, Hippocrates the celebrated doctor and Socrates the famous philosopher.

Like all members of the same trade they pretended to be friends but were in reality deadly enemies. Each one wished to see the other dead in order to become the only learned man living. Once, when Socrates became ill, those who looked after him had little hope of his recovery. He sent one of his pupils to the town where Hippocrates lived and gave him instructions to tell Hippocrates that his dear friend Socrates had died and asked him to bring back his answer verbatim. When the pupil returned he told Socrates that Hippocrates had expressed his deep sorrow at his death. Socrates then asked the pupil to give him the exact words. The pupil said that his answer ran as follows: 'Socrates died, and I did not compound a remedy for him'. In Arabic the words might have a double meaning which could be interpreted as follows: 'Socrates died, while turnip water would have cured him'. He immediately asked for a glass of turnip water, drank it and was cured."

On hearing this story I asked, "But how was it possible for Socrates to see the double meaning if the answer was made in Greek?" Sayed looked surprised and said: "But why in Greek? All the world speaks Arabic." (Another anachronism that I was not aware of at that age was that Hippocrates and Socrates were not contemporaries.)

Another startling thing that he said to me in one of his discourses was while he was taking me out for a stroll and we passed by the graveyards of the village. Many of the old graves were opened and the bones scattered all around. Seeing a bony skull from which all the soft parts had long decayed and disappeared, he picked it up and pointed out the sutures between the frontal bones. He asked me if I knew what these lines were. I answered in the negative and he said, "Everybody has his destiny written on his forehead. The lines you see depict that in full. No one can escape from the destiny written on his forehead. An example of this is my destiny and that of my brother Aly. My brother's destiny is that he should become a rich man, and mine is that I should remain poor all my life." He then put his hand in his pocket, brought out a bottle of spirit, and said, "It is this bottle that was put in my way in order to make me poor." I was startled and said, "But, Uncle Sayed, stop drinking, since this is the cause of your downfall." His answer was, "Do you believe that a man can run away from the destiny written on his forehead? No, never." He then looked sullen and said, "Do you

think, Master Naguib, that my brother Aly is happier than I? No. Aly is always quarrelling with his wife and their life is a miserable one. As for me I am the happier man of the two. Your sister, Sitt Aziza, looks after all the servants very well and takes good care to make them all happy." All this was very perplexing to my mind.

* * * * *

My uncle who lived in Cairo used to come with his family and household to spend the summer months in our country house near Mansoura. He had a maid named Fagr (Dawn) who was about twenty years old, very tall and thin but of a lively disposition. She used to recount to us interesting stories about the Djinn ghosts and other mysterious beings. I enjoyed listening to her tales but never believed them or in the presence of evil spirits. We used to have long discussions about these matters in which she asserted to us that on many occasions she saw these evil spirits with her own eyes. To prove to me that I was wrong in denying the existence of Djinn she decided to play a trick on me.

She knew that on certain evenings between 7 and 9 o'clock the American Mission School held meetings for young boys in which entertainment combined with religious teaching was given. In those days the narrow streets of Mansoura relied for their lighting on small lanterns (most of which were out of order) hung in front of the doors of houses and, except when there was moonlight, the streets were almost dark after sunset. One night, on my return home from one of these meetings, I saw through the darkness a tall figure in white walking with outstretched arms towards me. This gave me such a fright that I ran to our house in great terror. My hair stood on end and my tarboosh fell off. Rising of the hair is a very painful process which I had never experienced before nor have I since. A few minutes later, when I was safely settled in my room and the other children seeing my fright had gathered round me, I related to them what had happened to me. Fagr then entered and in a hilarious voice said, "Tonight Master Naguib saw the Djinn who took hold of his tarboosh but I managed to snatch it from him." Thereupon she handed it back to me. On hearing this I at once realised that it was she who had played the devil and said to her, "You are a liar and I shall report you

to my mother." She immediately admitted that she was the culprit, begged me to forgive her and said, "I will, however, now relate something which proves without the slightest doubt the existence of the Djinn.

"I have just heard from the servants," she said, "that not far from here and at a distance not exceeding 50 metres there is a haunted house which has been deserted by its tenants because of the Djinn. Every day exactly at noon, when the Muezzin calls the faithful to prayer, small stones and pebbles are showered on the house. What do you say to that, Master Naguib?" "It is indeed strange," I said, "but there must be an explanation."

I waited until Saturday, our day off from school, and sneaked unseen into the haunted house where I hid. When the Muezzin started calling the believers to prayer, I heard stones and pebbles hitting the doors and windows. From my hiding place I could see a man and a woman in a house on the opposite side of the street throwing these stones. I waited for about an hour and then went out unseen. When I arrived home my father rebuked me as my mother had been worried about me being so late for lunch. On hearing the whole story my father, who happened to know the owner of the house, sent for him and explained to him what I had seen. The man said that he had been convinced that his house was haunted but, now that he knew the truth, he was not at all surprised as the man whom I had seen throwing the stones was offering to buy the house at a very low price. When the police were informed the stone-throwing ceased and all the tenants returned to live in the house.

I shall now mention two childish acts of disobedience, one of them causing my parents great concern. The first was on Christmas Eve. The whole family was busy preparing for the usual festivities. They were all working on one thing or another and they did not notice my absence until long after the hour for dinner. My new suit of clothes and my new tarboosh had arrived but not my new pair of shoes. I found it absolutely necessary to go myself to George, the Greek shoemaker, to expedite its dispatch, but did not tell anybody where I was going. George said that he was sorry that my shoes would not be ready before the next day. I entreated him to finish them that night as I could not bear to wear old shoes on Christmas Day. He was kind-hearted and to please a little boy set to work until he finished my shoes at 11 p.m.

It was not until nine o'clock that my absence was discovered. They looked for me in all the houses of our relatives and friends but to no avail. At last they had to resort to the street crier who was to walk through the streets shouting at the top of his voice, "Ye Believers, whose hearts are full of kindness, I implore you to give information on a child missing since noon. The reward is £6 and God's blessings." He would end by appealing to El Adawi, a local saint believed to guide missing children to their parents.

I arrived home just as the street crier was starting on his tour. Needless to say I was given a big reception and was met with embraces for I had been taken for lost.

The following incident is rather amusing. My parents, who were spending some time on the farm, unexpectedly received a visit from a party of friends. A cart was duly sent to Mansoura to fetch a load of mattresses and blankets but with strict orders to the driver that no children should come back with him to the farm. My nephew Fahmy suggested that he and I should hide under the blankets. The cart driver did not notice us until we arrived at the outskirts of Mansoura when we peeped out much to the driver's horror. By then it was too late for him to take us back. We were naturally met with the usual chiding but we passed a really good holiday at the farm fishing and playing in the fields.

Chapter 3

LIFE AT HOME

Our life at home was affected to a great extent by the circumstances my father had met with during his youth.

My grandfather, who was a government official, belonged to a well-known family in Mansoura. He lived to become a centenarian, in spite of which he did not lose any of his teeth. His first wife died a few months after giving birth to my father and his second wife bore him a daughter and six sons.

At the age of fourteen, as a result of a quarrel with his stepmother, my father had to leave the house and start life on his own. Luckily for him, he got a post in one of the big commercial firms that traded in cotton and cereals and which dealt with the cotton market in Alexandria. In the course of time the firm discovered my father's talent and invited him to become a partner. The firm thrived and my father's share in the gains was substantial.

My father gave a good part of his gains to his father and his stepmother. He had no ill feeling towards her and on the contrary showed her great kindness till the end of his life. He used to say that she was an indirect cause of his prosperity.

My father was fond of reading and soon acquired a big library. Among the books it contained were the proceedings of a religious congress held in India between Christians and Mohammedans. I went through these books and was impressed by the broadmindedness and tolerance shown by both parties. This taught me that liberty of thought, self-expression and respect of the feelings of others should be the rule in discussions.

My father subscribed to many newspapers and magazines. On several occasions my brothers-in-law met together in our house and one of them, who was headmaster of the American Mission School, read aloud passages from the newspapers. Discussions followed. I attended some of these

meetings and gave my childish views which did not fail to amuse them.

Before going to bed my father used to ask me to read to him a chapter from the Bible and would explain to me any difficult passage. My mother would recite to me many of the biblical stories and explain their morals.

Between my eighth and twelfth years I had gone through quite a number of the books my father had in his library. It was of great interest to me to read the daily bulletins of the Alexandria Stock Exchange containing the price of cotton and the value of shares. I used to refer to my father for explanation of passages I could not fully understand.

My love for Arabic literature began at that early age. I owe a part of that to three books which were in my father's library. The first was a six-volume book called *The Harvest of Literature*, the second was *The Meeting of the Two Oceans, East and West*, and the third was *Selected Anecdotes*.

My nephew Fahmy and I learned by heart a large number of verses and often competed with each other in a rather unusual manner. One of us would recite a verse, then the other would recite another, beginning with the last letter of the previous verse. This was a common procedure in classic Arabic. This large store of verses was of great help to me in later life.

Chapter 4

SCHOOLDAYS

At the age of five I was sent to the American Mission School at Mansoura, the headmaster of which was married to my eldest sister.

Teaching in this school did not aim to prepare pupils to sit for government certificates that would enable them to continue their education in secondary schools. Its sole object was to give the pupils courses of general instruction. Weekly meetings were held at which discussion on general topics was encouraged. The subject for discussion was chosen beforehand and the pupils were directed by their teachers to the sources where they could obtain information. Poems had to be learned by heart and recited. Foreign languages and religious teaching were the subjects that received most attention. In the higher classes of this school stress was placed on literature. The American missionaries taught the English language themselves and insisted on correct pronunciation.

At the end of the session a fête was held at which some of the pupils acted a short play which took at least a month to prepare. On the day of the feast the school was decorated with flags and coloured lanterns. One of the pupils, Botros Salib, was a talented comedian who missed his real vocation when his school days were over by accepting the job of a junior teacher in a provincial elementary school. The spectators really enjoyed his acting. Parcels filled with chocolates, sweets, oranges or mandarines were distributed. Books with coloured illustrations were given to those pupils who had distinguished themselves in study and conduct. In the evening a great reception was given at the house of the missionaries to which all pupils were invited and lavishly entertained. Mrs. Finney, Miss Minihaha, Miss Strong and Miss Ethel used to teach us social games which we later played at home.

I do not want to close this subject without emphasising the insistence of the school on maintaining a high standard of conduct. If a pupil was

warned once or twice without effect he would be suspended for a month; if this punishment failed the pupil was dismissed.

As an example I would like to relate the case of a pupil named Jacob. This boy was discovered stealing other pupils' books and eventually stealing money from his father's pocket. To punish his son and correct this defect his father told the headmaster that he was going to denounce him publicly. The headmaster strongly objected and told the father that, if he resorted to this shameful means, his son would be dismissed from school. In spite of this warning the father made his son ride through the streets on a donkey without a saddle, with his face towards the tail and two placards hanging from his neck on which was written in bold writing "I am a thief". He was followed by twenty hired boys shouting,

"Jacob! Jacob! Face of a louse,
Who taught you this shameful vice?"

On the morning of the next day the father came with his son to school but the headmaster told him that his son had been dismissed. Attempts were made to reinstate him and many influential persons interceded but without avail. To be fair to Jacob I should say that, as far as character was concerned, the father was even worse than the son.

The reason why I left this school was in fact trivial. The teacher of geography asked me to name the capital of Afghanistan. I said it was Kabul. He then asked me to name the capital of Baluchistan and I could not find the answer. He immediately went into a violent rage and used harsh words which I found unjustified. I waited till the end of school and then went to my father's office, informed him of what had happened and asked him to transfer me to the government school. I pointed out that if I stayed at the American Mission School I would not get the primary education certificate which would enable me to continue my studies in the secondary schools where I could obtain the necessary qualifications needed to enter the School of Medicine which I very strongly desired.

My father agreed to send me to the government school at the beginning of the next session, stressing the fact that he would do so not because of the teacher's harshness to me but in order to enable me to obtain the primary education certificate and thus continue my studies. At the beginning of

the next session I joined the government primary school and remained there for two years, at the end of which I got the primary certificate.

I kept on visiting my old school and attended the meetings they held and took part in the discussions. The period I spent at the American Mission School left me with a good impression and I must say that I owe its teachers a debt of gratitude.

My desire to enter the School of Medicine began at an early age and was to a certain extent due to reading articles published in a magazine called *Al Moktataf* on Koch's discovery of the Tubercle Bacillus and the serum he discovered for its cure, as well as several articles on Darwin's theory on the origin of species and on evolution. I must add, however, that I understood very little of what I read but it was sufficient to create in me a desire to enter the School of Medicine.

In my father's library there were several books on medicine by Dr. Van Dyke and Dr. Wartbat, written in simple language for the benefit of the general public, which were printed in Beirut in Arabic. I read them through over and over again. At times I even thought that I might be suffering from the diseases they described and I often consulted our family doctor about imaginary illnesses.

The government school at Mansoura had a good reputation being one of the best schools in Egypt. The teachers were carefully selected and discipline was strict. This was due to the efficiency of Ahmed Bey Naguib, the headmaster, who in his early days was an officer in the army and a teacher in the Military School. I will never forget our feeling of fear at the morning parade which was held at 8 a.m. sharp. Woe to the pupil who did not stand upright with his shoulders back. Woe to him if his clothes were not clean and well pressed and his boots shining. The cane followed immediately.

Of my recollections of the two years I spent at this school, two are worth mentioning. The first of these was a visit of inspection by Sheikh Hamza Fathalla, Chief Inspector of Arabic language. Two days before his visit was due our teacher of Arabic Sheikh El Mahdi, reputed to be a great scholar, informed us of the expected date of inspection and insisted that we be brief and to the point in our answers. When my turn came I got up but the inspector asked me to sit down and write a short story of not more than ten lines. I sat down and wrote the following

story which I had previously read in one of the pamphlets distributed by the Jesuit fathers.

"In the days of Haroon El Rasheed and his son, El Khalifa El Maamoon, a society was formed for improvement of the style of writing Arabic by abstaining from the use of flowery phrases of no value and by writing the text in simple language using as few words as possible. The members of this society were limited to one hundred. A vacancy occurred and applications for the membership were made. After the choice of one candidate had been made, an eminent sheikh came and presented his application. The president was at his wit's end to know what to do. However, he placed a cup filled with water to the brim before the applicant who was sitting opposite to him. The latter took a small piece of paper and put it on the top of the cup without spilling a drop of water. All the members clapped their hands and insisted on raising their number to one hundred and one. They handed the applicant a paper containing the rules of their society and asked him to exchange the zero on the right for a '1', rendering the number of members 101. Out of modesty he put a zero on the left of the figure, thus, 0100. The president replaced the zero by a one bringing it to a thousand one hundred (1100) meaning that he was worth one thousand members."

I gave the paper to our teacher and he handed it over to Sheikh Hamza who gave it back to me, asking me to read it aloud. I did so, taking care not to make a mistake, and without the slightest hesitation. This is not an easy job in Arabic where the termination of each word differs according to its grammatical position in the sentence, e.g., if a word like book were written in Arabic it could be read "bookon", "bookan" or "bookin" depending on the grammatical position it occupies in the sentence. When I finished reading the inspector asked me to go up to the blackboard and asked my name. I said it was Naguib. He then dictated to me a verse, which he improvised on the spur of the moment, in which he said "Naguib, you have distinguished yourself. Successful would be the man who attains your convictions." Our teacher, smiling, whispered in the inspector's ear that I was a Christian and that the verse might be taken to mean that my creed was the better one. The inspector smiled in his turn and replied laughingly that the word

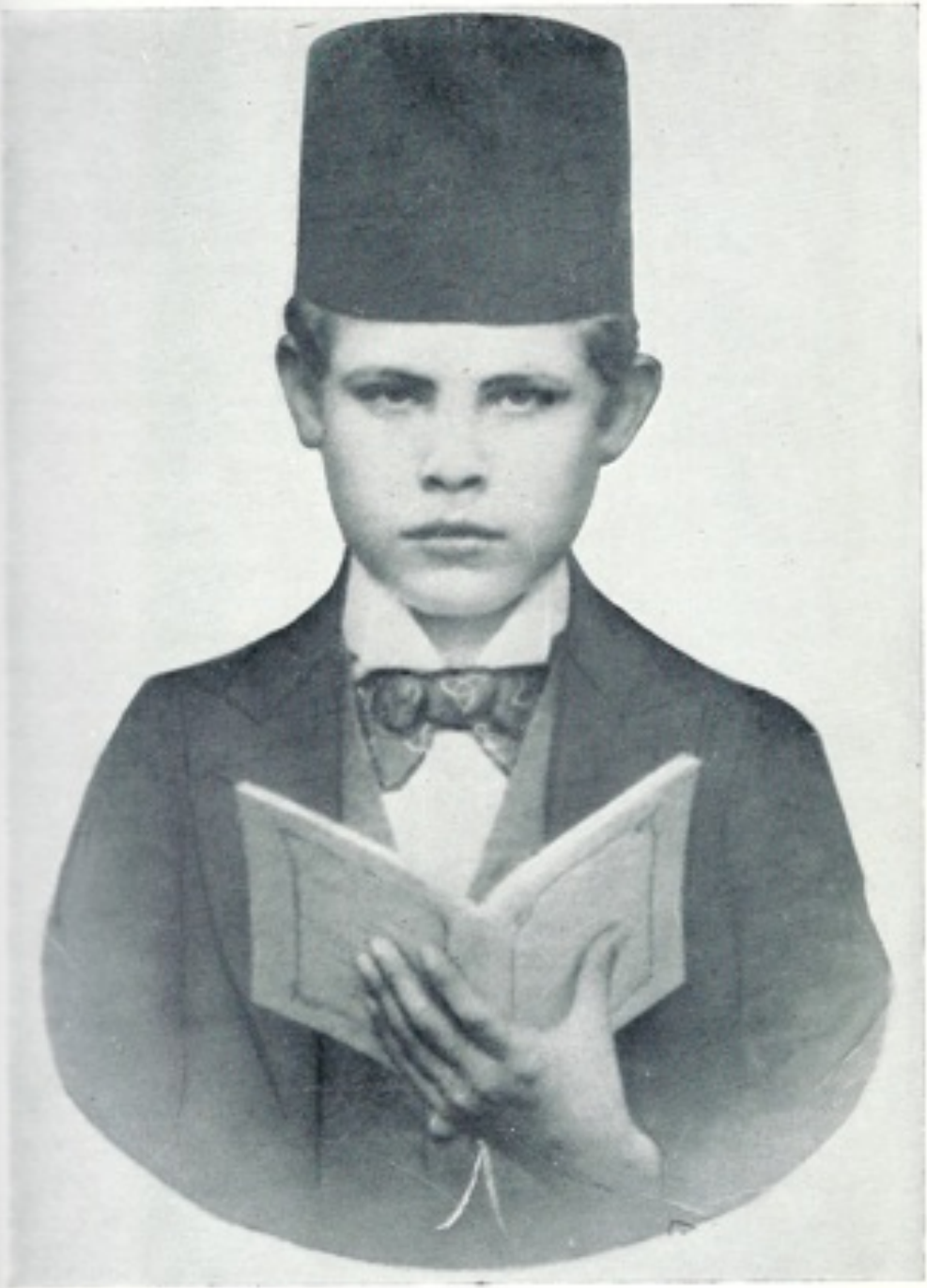

FIG. 1
At the age of eleven. I am a pupil at the Government's primary school.

facing page 16

Naguib meant intelligent and the praise could mean any intelligent boy. The students laughed and we were all very much amused.

Thirty years later Sheikh Hamza brought a patient to my clinic for treatment. When the patient was cured he asked for the bill. I smiled and said, "You settled the bill thirty years ago." He looked surprised and asked how this could be possible. I mentioned to him what had occurred during his visit of inspection at the Mansoura School. He was very pleased and shook my hand fervently saying, "Believe me, Dr. Mahfouz, this is one of the happiest moments of my life."

The second of my primary school recollections was the visit to the school of Mr. Douglas Dunlop, Adviser to the Ministry of Education. The students were all gathered in the examination hall. He began by giving us a lecture on English literature after which he put to the pupils questions on topics of general knowledge. One of his questions was the name of the Queen of England. I raised my hand and said "Victoria". "Victoria what?" he asked. I answered, "I do not know her father's name but probably the full name is Victoria Nyanza." He smiled and said, "That is the name of the lake which is one of the sources of the Nile. You ought to have said 'Queen Victoria'. You should not have said the name without the title."

During my stay at this school I made many friends but, after we obtained the primary certificate, I hardly met any of them except one called Zaky who was one of the laziest pupils I ever came across. Later in life, when I was established as a gynaecologist, Zaky brought his wife to my clinic for treatment. When she was cured he asked me for the bill. I naturally refused to charge him anything but he insisted on paying, saying, "Look here, Naguib, do you remember our schooldays? You and I were in the same class. You were at the top and I always at the bottom. Today, you are a well-known doctor and I am the Omdah (Mayor) of a village. Can you tell me how many acres of land you now possess?" I answered, smiling, that I owned a very small farm of 64 acres. He looked at me in amazement and said, "I, dear friend, now possess 250 acres of the best land in Egypt. Which of the two professions is the more lucrative, yours or mine?" We both had a hearty laugh. All the same, I insisted on him keeping his money. He thanked me and left the room shaking his head, greatly pleased with our conversation.

Chapter 5

CHANGE OF FORTUNE

My father's death was the greatest calamity that befell my family. It was the beginning of a series of hardships and in particular of financial difficulties.

My father was a very healthy, well-built man. I never saw him unwell or consulting a doctor. On the fateful evening of his death he came home about eight o'clock and had no supper except for a glass of lemonade and a few pieces of toast. He asked me to call his stepmother. After that frugal supper he went up to his bedroom and asked me to read to him a chapter from the Book of Ecclesiastes. I happened to open the Book at the words of Solomon: "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun; one generation passeth away and another generation cometh but the earth abideth forever." After I had finished reading I retired to my bedroom which was next door to my father. On the following morning which was a Friday, our day off from the government school, I stayed in my bedroom reciting an Arabic poem which I had to learn by heart for homework. It was getting late in the day and I raised my voice hoping to wake my father from his sleep and save myself the trouble of going to his bedroom to waken him. It was nearly nine o'clock and he was still asleep. I therefore went to his room and lifted the mosquito net off the bed and looked in. I found him lying on his back, snoring heavily and apparently fast asleep. I became frightened and hurried down to tell my mother but when we returned to his room he was dead. I still remember that fateful day as it has left an indelible mark on my memory. The shrieks that followed, when the remainder of the family heard what had happened, were quite deafening. For a whole year mourning, lamentations and screaming never ceased except at night and during mealtimes. All the ladies of the family and their acquaintances used to gather together daily at the entrance hall, mourning and lamenting.

Professional wailers, who chanted dirges for the dead in a sad tune, were hired and around them the mourners formed several circles. After each verse was chanted the mourners screamed and beat their faces with their hands. Fortunately this manner of mourning is no longer practised in Egypt.

Immediately after my father's death I wired my brother, who was living in Cairo, informing him of the tragedy. I had also to inform my sister Aziza who was living in a village near Alexandria where there was no telegraph office. I therefore had to send her a message with one of the servants. The village was an hour's ride on donkeyback from the nearest railway station. The servant arrived at the village in the evening and was told that my sister had already left for Mansoura and that she had sent us a wire to meet her at the station. When she got off the train I noticed that she was in deep mourning. I enquired after the servant whom I had sent to her but was told that she had not seen him. I then asked her why she was dressed in black to which she replied, "I saw you in a dream going into my father's room to waken him and when you lifted the mosquito net you found him dead." She then described how we had covered all the furniture in the house with black sheets. Her description was accurate in every detail. When she woke up from her sleep she felt certain that our father had died, dressed immediately and took the first train to Mansoura. I was surprised at the accuracy of her description.

After the death of my father my mother developed diabetes. She suffered much and after three years of suffering death put an end to her inconsolable grief.

My father left us a fortune, ample enough to ensure us a comfortable life, but the guardians who were put in charge of our affairs were very dishonest and left us little to live on. My brother, who was at the time a pupil at the Khedivial Secondary School in Cairo, was forced to leave school and get a post at the Ministry of Public Works at a salary of £5 a month.

After my mother's death we realised that the inheritance was heavily burdened with debt, so much so that we had to sell the two houses we owned as well as most of the agricultural land in order to pay the debts and to leave a certain sum of money to cover my school expenses. My

brother married his cousin and we settled together, renting a small flat in a poor quarter. Needless to say we lived in poverty. On account of the bad sanitary conditions in the flat where we lived I developed pneumonia and all but lost my life as a result. Although our only revenue was the salary of my brother and the small revenue that we received from the rent of our small farm, I managed to enter the Tewfikieh Secondary School most of whose pupils at that time came from wealthy families. The course of study was five years but I made up my mind to shorten this to three otherwise I would be forced to leave the school for lack of funds.

I began my work at this school with energy and determination. When the results of the first term's examination appeared I was top of my class, surpassing the second pupil by 45 marks. The director of our school was a Frenchman called Peltier Bey who was in the habit of handing over the results of the examination to the student himself with appropriate comments. When he entered our classroom he handed me my report reading the marks out loud. He was lavish in his praise and urged me to keep up that standard. His encouragement made me determined to prepare the curriculum of the second year at home during the summer vacation, and to sit for the examination of the third year in the following October. This was against the rules in government schools. I therefore went to see Peltier Bey, informing him of my circumstances, and asked for his permission. I spoke to him in French and he was pleased to find me able to speak his own language and to make myself understood, despite the fact that I was in the English section where every subject was taught in English. As a result he made a concession and allowed me to sit for the examination. I did so and succeeded, passing from the first year to the third.

It appears that fate was on my side in my endeavour to shorten my schooldays. During the following year, when I was a fourth year student, the government issued a decree allowing fourth year students to sit for the Baccalaureat examination with fifth year students. Only two of us passed, however, one who passed the written examination but failed in the oral, and myself. When the Baccalaureat result for the whole country appeared I came out nineteenth.

Many years later one of the successful candidates at this same exam-

ination, Dr. Aly Maher, became Prime Minister of Egypt. During his term of office he arranged for an exhibition in which the examination papers of the pupils who had obtained the Baccalaureat with distinction were exhibited to the public. He was one of them and so was I. It was then discovered that there had been a mistake in the addition of my marks for mathematics. I was given 23 out of 30 instead of 30 out of 30. Had it not been for that mistake I would have come out top instead of nineteenth.

Chapter 6

THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

I entered the School of Medicine in 1898. That year coincided with the greatest of all changes that occurred in the history of the school. The language in which medicine was taught was changed from Arabic to English.

The school had during many years suffered from a scarcity of efficient teachers. The older ones who had had the opportunity of spending several years in Europe on missions and had become first rate teachers decreased in number considerably. Some of them had died, many had reached the age of retirement and were put on pension. They were replaced by assistants, most of whom had neither had the benefit of going on missions, nor possessed the knowledge of a foreign language to a sufficient degree to follow progress in medicine. In fact the advent of anaesthesia and the use of antiseptics in surgery, which had already been in practice elsewhere, were unknown to many of them.

The change of the language of teaching necessitated the appointment of foreign professors, British and German. The only Egyptian professor who remained was Shukry Pasha who gave lectures in Arabic on midwifery for another three years. He had no beds in the hospital as no section of gynaecology or obstetrics then existed. The Egyptian assistants were retained until the age of retirement but they were not employed in the sections belonging to their specialities. For example Aly Bey Heidar, an oculist, was transferred to the Skin Department, which had become attached to the Surgical Section under Mr. Madden, although he had never before worked in dermatology.

Professor Schmidt and Professor Elliot Smith were chosen as professors, the first for chemistry and the second for anatomy, but they were not available for several months. Dr. Aly Mourad, who was a demonstrator of chemistry, gave us the lectures in Arabic. Dr. Keatinge, who before his appointment as sub-director of Kasr El Aini Hospital was an ear and nose specialist, gave us a few lectures in anatomy.

Dr. Mohamed Nashed, an assistant in the Anatomy Department, knew very little English but insisted on lecturing to us in English on the bone system. We understood very little of what he said but I must admit that he was a very pleasant man who told us many amusing stories.

Indeed, we had hardly anything to do during the six months that elapsed before Professor Schmidt arrived. This gave me the opportunity to read some of the classics, particularly the works of Charles Dickens, Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo. The laziness in which we spent the first six months was, however, doubly compensated for by the arrival of Professor Schmidt. He made us work at analytical chemistry from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m., standing in the laboratories without a minute's rest.

Professor Wilson lectured to us on physiology. He was efficient in his subject but it was difficult to keep awake during his lectures; some of us dozed and others snored.

At the beginning of the second year all the newly appointed professors had arrived with the exception of Professor Elliot Smith who came at the end of the session.

The new professors included Schmidt, Looss, Bitter and Symmers and they made gigantic efforts to raise our standard of knowledge. Professor Symmers in particular did not spare himself any effort in teaching us pathology, both in the lecture room and at the postmortem.

In anatomy I had to depend on myself to make dissections of the different parts of the body. A senior anatomy attendant, Moustapha el Nakhas, had worked for many years with the previous professors of anatomy. He was very efficient and helped me a great deal with the dissections, particularly with the nervous system. It was he who acquainted me with the best methods of preserving the bodies by injection of formalin.

Before the end of the session we were given a month's leave to prepare ourselves for the examinations. After working hard for some days it occurred to me to go and visit my fellow students, Kamel Hanna, Sami Sabongui and Ibrahim Salib. I found them in Sabongui's house in Choubra playing tric-trac. I asked them why they were not studying as they should be. They answered that they were not going to sit for the examination as they had not dissected the entire body. I proposed that they should go with me to the dissecting room daily where we could get

a body for dissection and they agreed willingly to do so. Moustapha el Nakhas was given a £1 tip and he allowed us to go to the dissecting room where he put a whole body at our disposal. We worked hard, morning, afternoon and evening. At night we brought storm-lanterns with us. Once, towards the end of the month, we happened to be working late and when we left the dissection room after midnight carrying our lanterns the porters saw us and screamed with fright crying, "Help! Help! The ghosts of the dead bodies are running after us." The noise they made was sufficient to waken the patients in the hospital building which was close to the dissection room.

When this practice of ours was discovered orders were given to prevent us from entering the dissecting room during the holidays but we did not mind as we had already finished dissecting most of the body. We all sat the examination and passed successfully.

Near the end of the session, the administration of the school found it possible to give all students a salary of £2 a month. A small buffet was established to serve lunch at a cost of three piasters (a little more than sixpence). We were thus able to have a hot meal whereas our lunch had previously consisted of bread and cheese and, if possible, an orange. Out of the £2 salary I paid the bill of the buffet, which amounted to £1 a month, while the other £1 covered the tram expenses to and from the school.

In spite of my strained financial situation I took infinite care to appear well dressed. This did not cost me much. The tarboosh (head gear) was ironed for 1½d. every month, the suit of clothes cleaned and ironed for 3d. once a month. I shined my shoes myself every morning and took great care to comb my hair which was at that time profuse. This care satisfied my self-respect.

Chapter 7

KASR EL AINI HOSPITAL

When we passed our first and second year examinations, which included examinations on anatomy, physiology, parasitology, pathology and histology, we were attached to the Kasr El Aini Hospital as third year students.

The hospital contained 400 beds and the number of students was about 20. Eight of these were fourth year and 12 third year students. The number of beds allotted to each student was 20. There were only two resident doctors, Hayward and Carpenter, and two Egyptian housemen. These dealt with the emergencies, a large number of which consisted of casualties.

Most of the work, surgical and medical, that the resident and home officers could not cope with was left to the students so that their practical training was more than adequate.

All the new professors had arrived and started their work. They showed great zeal and enthusiasm which was passed on to the students. The hospital was now under the full direction of Dr. Keatinge who was one of the ablest, if not the ablest, director the hospital ever had. Every member of the staff had to be at the hospital by 9 a.m. sharp. No professor, however eminent, escaped rebuke if he did not arrive on time.

On one occasion Dr. Toller, one of the most able professors of medicine at the school who had a large private practice among the tourists who came to Egypt during the winter season, arrived late having been detained by an American multimillionaire who was staying at Shepherd's Hotel. Dr. Keatinge happened to meet him at the gate of the hospital and gave him a scolding that neither he nor any member of the staff ever forgot. Dr. Toller told us afterwards that he had been detained by a millionaire who was dying of hunger on account of cancer of the oesophagus.

Dr. Keatinge used to examine carefully the records of the patients who had died in hospital. A postmortem examination was invariably

made and Dr. Keatinge compared the result of the postmortem with the recorded diagnosis. If he discovered an incorrect diagnosis or found negligence in the treatment, the member of the staff responsible never escaped a severe reprimand. Once, while Professor Tribe was doing his round with the students, a messenger came to ask him to go and see Dr. Keatinge at his office. After more than half an hour Dr. Tribe returned and said to the students, "Dr. Keatinge has been ibnkalbing[1] me for the last half hour. A patient who was diagnosed as a typhoid fever case was found at the postmortem to be suffering from abscess of the liver."

One of the most efficient teachers we had was Mr. Madden, professor of surgery. He took infinite pains to acquaint us with the details of any operation he was going to perform. His rounds were most instructive. They were held every Wednesday and attracted many students from other sections. As I said before, the Skin Department was joined to the Surgical Section. Mr. Madden chose as his assistant in this section a doctor known among the students to be most kind-hearted. Mr. Madden liked him very much and held him in great respect but always enjoyed joking with him. Once, while Mr. Madden was making a round in the skin section, a patient was found to be in need of a big operation. Wishing him to be examined by the physician to see if his heart could stand the operation, Mr. Madden asked his assistant to refer the patient to Dr. Sandwith, the professor of medicine. The assistant wrote on the patient's sheet, "To be referred to Dr. Sandwich." Mr. Madden smiled and pointed out to the assistant that the name was Sandwith and not Sandwich. But in vain; Mr. Madden could not make the assistant pronounce the name correctly. At the last attempt the assistant, to avoid pronouncing the name, was satisfied with saying "Yeth-Their" instead of "Yes Sir".

This assistant, in addressing Mr. Madden, always called him Dr. Madden. Mr. Madden laughingly pointed out to him that in England a surgeon is called Mr. and not Dr., the title of Dr. being reserved for the physician. "I therefore wish you to address me as Mr. Madden and not Dr. Madden." The assistant promptly replied, "I shall always do so, Dr. Madden."

Another incident I recall was when Mr. Madden was taking a

[1] The word "ibnkalbing" is a verb that Dr. Tribe composed from the Arabic words "Ibn Kalb" which means "son of a dog."

photograph of a patient suffering from a tumour. He was using a camera with a tripod which necessitated putting a dark cloth over the head of the photographer. Mr. Madden asked us to look through the camera and told us that we would see the patient upside down. He also asked the assistant to have a look but, wishing to pull his leg, he covered the outer lens with the diaphragm. The assistant looked and, although he could see nothing, he very willingly said that he saw the patient "legs up, head down." We all smiled. On later occasions, whenever Mr. Madden instructed us on a case, he used to ask us, "Did you grasp what I said or is it another legs up, head down?"

We spent a whole year in the surgical wards where Mr. Madden and Mr. Frank Milton gave us every opportunity to see and to practise that specialty.

Towards the end of the session five of my friends, three of whom were Ahmed Helmy, Hafez Zaky and Mohammad Saleh, told me that they intended to postpone their examination for another six months as practical work in hospital had made them fail to attend many of the lectures. I was not of their opinion and proposed giving them a résumé of the lectures during the next fortnight. If, at the end of this time, they found themselves ready for the examination then they would sit for it.

They agreed to my proposal. I placed a bed in the middle of a room in the students' dormitory on which I stretched out while they sat on chairs all around the bed. I covered my eyes with a bandage so that I could concentrate better on what I was saying. I gave the lectures for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon for a fortnight. We all passed the examination successfully. In fact one of the five had better marks than I in the written examination.

In the fourth year we entered the medical side and I was attached to Dr. Sandwith's section. He was a very competent man but had a sharp tongue. His criticisms were always bitter and hardly any student escaped them. He used to tell us that Egyptian students were careless in writing their observation sheets and missed a lot of the important points.

Fortunately a friend of mine, Dr. Guirgis Naguib, who was efficient and competent and two years my senior had given me instruction in the wards on palpation, percussion and auscultation before I was attached to the medical side. I was given 10 beds and in one of these a patient

had been admitted in a rather serious condition. He complained of pain on the left side of the chest. He had been examined by Dr. Hayward before admission who had entered his diagnosis of pleurodynia on the patient's observation sheet. After a very careful examination of the patient I found two points attracting my attention. One was that the pulse felt in the two radial arteries was unequal in volume, being weak and hardly palpable in one and quite strong in the other. The second was that the pupil of one eye was contracted while the other was dilated. The heart dullness was increased from above downwards and from side to side. After examining the patient and writing my notes I went to the school library where I got hold of a book on *The Value of Signs and Symptoms in Arriving at a Diagnosis*. I searched for the causes of inequality of pulse felt at both radial arteries and the inequality of the pupils in both eyes. I found that if these two irregularities were present in the same patient the condition would in all probability be an aneurysm of the arch of the aorta. I next got hold of a book on surgery and thoroughly studied the pathology, the physical signs and the methods of conducting an examination of such cases. Having noted all this I went back to the hospital, examined the patient and wrote down my notes very carefully.

Next morning Dr. Sandwith made his first round with us. He started with this patient whom he had diagnosed as suffering from pleurodynia. I read the notes that I had written the day before but Dr. Sandwith was not listening to what I was saying. He was staring at me in contempt, at finding my hair well combed, my suit ironed and my shoes shining, and said, "How many hours do you spend on your make-up?" I answered, "Not more than five minutes." He then said, "Well, go on reading your notes." He did not make any observation on what I read but asked me, "What diagnosis is written on the sheet?" I replied that it was pleurodynia. He said, "Go to the next bed." I asked him, "Shall we leave the diagnosis as it is?" He put on the stethoscope and auscultated the patient's chest. I again asked him, "Shall I change the diagnosis?" He replied "No" and, looking at me in a sneering manner, said, "What is your own diagnosis, sir?" I answered, "Inequality of the pulse in both radial arteries and irregularity of the pupils in both eyes make me think it is a case of aneurysm of the arch of the aorta." His only comment on

looking at my notes on the sheet was, "Your calligraphy is bad. Go to the next case."

I was very disappointed that he did not discuss my diagnosis or point out my mistakes. Moreover, I was greatly distressed when the round was over by the remarks of my fellow students who jeered at me and said, "How dare you offend Dr. Sandwith by contradicting his diagnosis?" One of the students said mockingly to me, "You have hardly begun to use a stethoscope when you jump at this rash diagnosis of an aneurysm." Another student said, "Aspetta un poco Signor."

After a few hours the patient in question died and was transferred to the postmortem room. Having heard of this I immediately went there and waited at the door until Professor Symmers arrived. He shook hands with me and said, "Have you been waiting long?" I smiled and replied, "About an hour." He went on, saying, "Are you interested in this patient?" I said, "Yes, he was in one of my beds." I expected that we would start making an examination at once but he waited for the arrival of Dr. Sandwith as this was the rule at that time. He asked me, "Have you had previous experience in conducting postmortems?" I said that all the bodies I had opened were in the dissecting room but that I had once asked permission to do a postmortem examination and had been allowed to do so. He said, "When Dr. Sandwith arrives you can start." When I opened the body I found an aneurysm of the arch of the aorta which I removed very carefully together with the heart and the great vessels. Dr. Symmers, on examining the specimen, said, "Are you fond of surgery?" I said that I was. He complimented me and approved of the way I had made the dissection, saying, "I will keep this beautiful specimen in the museum." Symmers than asked for the bed sheet and was horrified to find that the diagnosis made was pleurodynia. He turned towards Dr. Sandwith and said, "Did you examine the patient before he died?" Dr. Sandwith said that he had. Dr. Symmers said, "How did you approve the diagnosis written on the sheet? Look at the aneurysm of the arch of the aorta." Dr. Sandwith looked at me, saying, "Didn't we speak during the round about an aneurysm of the aorta?" "Yes," I said. "Then why didn't you write down the diagnosis on the sheet?" I hesitated a bit and said, "The patient died soon after the round." Professor Symmers began asking me questions about the pathology of

aneurysms and was pleased with my answers and said, "Surely Dr. Sandwith told you all this during the round?" I did not make any reply.

I must say that Dr. Sandwith appreciated my attitude and never showed any lack of confidence in me after that.

Chapter 8

TEMPTATIONS

I believe it would not be out of place if I recorded the reaction of youth to the temptations it meets during work in the female section.

I know that talking about the behaviour of people in the face of temptation and the pits into which they may fall is not agreeable. I will therefore avoid mentioning any names or giving any hint that might lead to revealing identities.

My object in writing this chapter is to give a clear picture of the conditions existing at that time and to show the contrast between those who chose the slippery path of temptation and the after effects it had on their career and the gratifying results obtained by those who remained on the right track.

The beds allocated to each student in the hospital included some in the women's section, where probationers from the school of nursing were practising under the supervision of an English sister. I am sorry to say that some of those girls were of doubtful morals. I do not exaggerate if I say that almost half the students were susceptible to them. Meetings between both parties were usually arranged during the absence of the sister in charge of the section but their behaviour could not remain secret for long and within a short time such relationships became the talk of the school, so much so that verses about them, written by one of the students, were circulated. They were indeed very witty. However, any attempt at making an English version of these verses would deprive them of their wit and humour.

I am sure that at the start the students did not intend to go very far with these probationers but one slip led to another. This reminds me of the advice my mother gave me on her deathbed. "When you grow up, Naguib, you will meet with great temptations. Be careful not to fall into them and especially the first one; if you withstand the first one, you will withstand them all. The difference between the right and wrong paths

is as thin as a hair at the start but the gap extends gradually. If you diverge from the right path, however slight the infraction may appear to you at the beginning, at the end you will find yourself in the thick of it." This advice has stood me in good stead in life.

I must say that many students resisted temptation and were of upright behaviour.

The following incident occurred while we were on night duty. There were four of us and we were sitting on a bench overlooking the Manial branch of the Nile. It was about midnight and all the sisters had gone home. In the stillness of the night we heard singing and the sound of music coming from the dormitory of the junior nurses. We knew afterwards that it was a probationer called Fardous who was singing.

"You are not in our thoughts rest assured,
How can a peasant like you
Aspire to the love of a beautiful girl
You ugly man?"

Her words were not meant seriously but simply to tease one of the students, who was sitting with us, into giving her more money and presents. No sooner had she finished than Gaafar, a ward attendant of bad reputation, appeared at a distance and beckoned to the student who was known to be in love with her. This student rose to meet him and it seems that a settlement was arranged that pleased both parties.

I mention this story on account of the harm that resulted to the student from his adventures. He failed four times in his final examinations and would have been dismissed from the school were it not for a difference of opinion between the two professors of medicine, Dr. Toller and Dr. Sandwith, who hated one another. Sandwith failed him while Toller, out of sheer contrariness, gave him a very high mark and let him pass the examination.

A similar fate befell another student. He and I were then in the second year of medicine. I was living at the time in my uncle's house as my brother and his family were spending a month's leave at Mansoura. My uncle gave me a room on the ground floor opposite a house belonging to a wealthy man. A few yards of empty ground, ending in a low wall, separated the two houses. The owner of the house opposite to ours was

of a gay temperament and, in order to entertain his family, he hired two girls. One of them played the mandolin and the other sang. Their singing and music were clearly heard by us. One night as these musical entertainments were being given a friend of mine, who had arranged to study with me the bones of the skull, was present and while we were studying pebbles were thrown at the window of our room. We went to find out the cause and discovered that these two girls were throwing them in order to attract our attention. At once they began a conversation which I cut short and we went back to our studies. The same thing happened on the two following nights. On the third night I told my friend that we should put an end to this nonsense. This displeased him. He left the house and met the girls on the opposite side of the street. Naturally, his visits to me came to an end. As for me, I obtained some nails and a hammer and nailed the window shutter to prevent any further disturbance. I had not the slightest idea that my action was observed by the owners of the house opposite.

Thirty years later a son of that family became a judge in the Mixed Courts and a colleague of my son-in-law, Counsellor Helmy Makram, husband of my second daughter Isis. Knowing of the relationship between us he told Helmy the whole story and of how I closed the window with nails and added that his parents were pleased at what I had done.

As to the student who met the girls, I am sorry to say that he failed the anatomy examination and had to leave the school, obtaining a post in the Egyptian State Railways, but he was neither successful in his work nor in his family life.

These pitfalls are not limited to young men only; even older men may fall into them. This brings to my mind the sad fate that befell two efficient foreign members of the teaching staff at the School of Medicine.

The first was Professor N., a brilliant lecturer, and large numbers of students from other sections attended his lectures. Unfortunately, he fell in love with a frivolous girl, neglected his work and finally married her. The marriage was not a happy one and ended in divorce. He was unable to retrace his steps. He tried to go more regularly to his work but did not succeed and was ultimately dismissed from the school. He then obtained an appointment as a companion to a wealthy tourist and went with him to South America where he died after a miserable life.

The second was a young surgeon, Mr. S., who married a highly educated girl from a well-known Lebanese family. After being married for a few years he fell in love with a foreign woman, the divorced wife of a former Egyptian ambassador. He divorced his wife and married her but his behaviour after the second marriage was such that he lost his post. A few years later his practice dwindled considerably. He stopped practising medicine and opened a boarding house at Helwan. Both husband and wife ultimately took to drink, the pension closed down and nothing was heard of either of them again.

Chapter 9

SCHOOLDAYS COME TO AN END

While we were about to sit for the final examination, at the end of the fourth year, an outbreak of cholera occurred at a village called Mousha near Assiut. The government immediately took steps to combat the epidemic but the number of doctors in Egypt was far from adequate. Recourse was made to enlisting students of the third and fourth years to fill the gap. The school was closed and examinations were postponed until the epidemic subsided.

I consider the work I did during this epidemic to be the cornerstone of my career and therefore I shall devote the next chapter to it.

When first I entered the School of Medicine, the number of candidates was seventeen; four did not find anatomy to their taste and left the school. By the time we arrived at the end of the fourth year the number had fallen to ten. The final examination, which should have been held in June, was, on account of the cholera epidemic, postponed to December 1902. When the examination was over a rumour was circulated that only four of us had passed. This might have been true for, although the students had, thanks to Mr. Madden, Dr. Fischer and Dr. Sandwith, received a good basis both theoretically and practically in medicine, surgery and ophthalmology, yet our knowledge of gynaecology and obstetrics was very poor. We had no practical teaching as there were no sections of obstetrics and gynaecology in the hospital nor even an out-patient department. Moreover, Dr. Shoukry Pasha was prevented on account of illness from giving the forty theoretical lectures. Only three lectures were given.

The only case of labour we had attended ended fatally for both mother and child. However, we learned by heart the two books on gynaecology and obstetrics written by Jellett.

When the result of the examination appeared I had come first out of eight. I was overwhelmed with joy and this joy was doubled by a telegram from my eldest sister in Mansoura announcing that a wealthy landowner was offering a good price for the remaining part of our agricultural land that was still unsold. My sisters and brother and I travelled immediately to Mansoura and completed the transaction satisfactorily. I was entrusted with paying whatever debts there were and with retrieving the family jewels which had been pawned for £1,000. This I did and distributed what remained of the money between my brother and sisters and kept for myself my father's watch and chain which I still possess and cherish.

Before leaving Mansoura I went by cab to visit the farm we had sold. I had not been there for over eight years. Of all the old faces only Radwan, the caretaker, and Ibrahim, the guardian, remained. I gave each a farewell gift and left.

On my return to Cairo my first action was to go to Kasr El Aini Hospital to thank my professors for all their kindness to me during my school years. Those who were not present at the hospital I visited at their homes. Nor did I forget the male nurses who had helped me; I thanked them all and gave them small presents. The two outstanding among these were Moustapha El Nakhas, who had taught me how to preserve bodies with formalin, and Ragab, head attendant in the operating theatre who taught me how to sterilise instruments and bandages with steam. This man worked under both Dr. El Dorry and Herbert Milton who shared the Surgery Section. Dorry Pasha was a very competent surgeon and had marvellous results in elephantiasis of the scrotum and urinary fistulae in men. Like Lawson Tait in Scotland, he did not believe in Lister's theory of the value of antisepsis in surgery. His colleague, Herbert Milton, was a firm believer in Lister. It was he who introduced sterilisation by antiseptics and by steam under pressure as well as anaesthesia at Kasr El Aini Hospital. The third person was Hassan, the head nurse in the Surgery Department. He taught me how to put on plaster of Paris, how to prepare solutions for washing wounds and how to apply bandages.

The reason I mention my gratitude to these attendants is to draw the attention of the younger generation of students to the fact that they

Fig. 2
In the final year in the School of Medicine.

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should not underrate these humble collaborators. When I finished my visit to the hospital and school I stopped for a while at the gate in deep sorrow, thinking that my relation with this school had come to an end. Little did I know then what fate had in store for me. I was to spend all my youth and maturity in this beloved place.

Chapter 10

THE CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN 1902

In the Town of Mousha

In the early summer months of 1902 cholera broke out among the pilgrims in Mecca and resulted in thousands of victims, many of whom were Egyptians. When the Egyptian pilgrims came back they were segregated in the quarantine quarters at El Tor in the Sinai Peninsula. In spite of the strict precautions taken cholera appeared in Egypt. The first cases broke out in a village in Upper Egypt called Mousha near the city of Assiut. This village, whose population is three to four thousand, is situated on a high plain in the immense water basins that surround Assiut. During the flood of the Nile the basins are filled with water and the village becomes a small island which can only be reached by boat. After the flood is over the water recedes and the soil dries up.

The mayor of the village was one of the pilgrims who had visited Mecca when the cholera epidemic had broken out and on his return he brought with him, as a blessing, ten large tins full of the water of Zamzam, the sacred well in Mecca. The water of the well had been polluted with the cholera vibrio. The ten tins of water he brought with him were neither destroyed nor disinfected. When the mayor returned to his village he distributed the water in the tins among relatives and friends who poured it into their wells at home for blessing. Eventually cholera played havoc with the inhabitants of the village who died in large numbers. The government imposed a military sanitary cordon around the village to prevent anyone leaving or entering. A body of the ablest medical men in the Public Health Department, headed by Dr. Goodman and Dr. Rowntree, a British Army physician who had previously fought cholera in India, were put in charge. Owing to the shortage of qualified men medical students from the two final years were recruited to fight the epidemic. They were given a salary of £15 a month which was double

the amount paid to a qualified doctor in ordinary times. In spite of strenuous efforts the epidemic showed no signs of abatement. I was one of the recruited fourth year students but I was not sent to Mousha, being assigned to work at the Cairo Railway Station to examine suspected patients coming from Upper Egypt and to facilitate the transportation of medical equipment to Mousha. I spent 15 days there and became very bored. I asked for a day off and on being granted it I went to the Health Department where I met the Director General's secretary, Wahba Shehata, to whom I was introduced by my nephew Fahmy who happened to be his assistant. I asked Wahba Bey for permission to see the Director General, Sir Horace Pinching, as I had a complaint to submit. I did not tell Wahba Bey anything about the substance of the complaint. He tried to discourage me by informing me that Sir Horace was a very difficult man to meet. "Sir Horace is a military man who has spent all his youth in the army. He is very hardheaded and is feared by all officials, British and Egyptian alike." In spite of this warning I insisted on meeting Sir Horace. When I went in I was very impressed by the gentle way in which he met me. He said, "What can I do for you, my young fellow?" I said that I was one of the medical students recruited for the cholera campaign but that, instead of being sent to the battle-field, I had been given a post at the Cairo Railway Station. He looked at me and said, "What is wrong with that? You have an easy job safe from contagion." "This is what I complain of, Sir," I said, "I am a young man of nineteen and have been given a job suitable for someone who is on the verge of retirement." Luckily Sir Horace smiled. (This, I heard afterwards, was most unusual.) He then said, "I am afraid I cannot send you to Mousha. There are no vacancies there." I added hesitantly, "I read in an evening paper yesterday that an Egyptian doctor working in Mousha contracted the disease and died. May I be given his post?" Sir Horace answered, "Dr. Goodman insists on the appointment of a senior man who has had previous experience in fighting cholera." "It is very unlikely," I said, "that you will find an Egyptian doctor who has had experience in cholera. The last epidemic in Egypt occurred twenty years ago." Sir Horace seemed convinced and wrote a letter of introduction to Dr. Goodman. He then said, "Get ready to leave for Mousha tomorrow." I answered, "Why not today? I can leave by the night train." He looked at me in

amazement and said, "Are you by chance going through a hopeless love affair and want to lose your life?" I smiled and said, "My first and last love is to perform my duty. I have volunteered to fight the epidemic, just as a soldier volunteers to fight for his country." "Very well," he said, "I wish you luck."

When Wahba Bey learned of what had passed between Sir Horace and me he called Fahmy, my nephew, and said, "Why does your uncle want to throw himself in the fire?" Needless to say when my brother and sisters heard the news they were greatly disturbed.

In the evening I took the train to Assiut. I arrived at dawn. I went to the only hotel in the city, hoping to get a little sleep, but I got none as the bed was very hard. At 6 a.m. breakfast was served and I had a chat with the attendant. I learned from him that a caravan left for Mousha every day at 7.30 a.m. carrying food and ice blocks on donkey-back. I asked him to hire a donkey for me and to tell the person in charge of the caravan of my intention to go with him. We arrived at the village in about two hours. The road was difficult to cross on account of the deep wide cracks in the mud deposited by the water of the flood but fortunately no mishap occurred. When we arrived at Mousha we found that the ice blocks had melted on account of the excessive heat to about half their size.

The caravan stopped at the military cordon around the village and handed over the food and ice blocks and returned to Assiut. The officer in charge of the cordon inquired about my mission. I produced the letter Sir Horace had given me to deliver to Dr. Goodman. He brought me a chair and asked me to take a seat. He then informed me that Dr. Goodman was, at that moment, presiding over a court-martial examining the case of a soldier who, in exchange for a boiled egg, helped one of the peasants to leave the village! I learned later that the soldier was found guilty and was given six months imprisonment and forty lashes on the naked back.

Dr. Goodman arrived at about 10 a.m. He was a solemn looking man but seemed kind-hearted. He was accompanied by Dr. Rowntree who was in military uniform. I handed the letter to Dr. Goodman and when he finished reading it he looked at Dr. Rowntree and said in a very angry tone, "Just look here, Rowntree, I asked for an experienced

doctor and they send me a boy of nineteen who has not yet obtained his diploma." Rowntree retorted calmly, saying, "Do you want to pick a quarrel with Pinching?" The effect of this answer on Goodman was astonishing. He at once regained control of himself and said to me in a quiet voice, "We have been fighting the cholera epidemic for a whole month without avail. I think there is a contaminated well somewhere in this village which is defeating our efforts. We have tried very hard to find it but without success. It is for this reason that I asked for an experienced man to look for it and they have sent you who have never seen a case of cholera before." I smiled and said, "I will do my best." Luckily for me he smiled back. "The case is a difficult one," he said, "but I will give you a chance. What can I do to help you?" I replied, "I want first of all the names of those who succumbed to the disease and the dates of their deaths. I want a map of the village as well. I also need a permit to enter every house in the village even if it is the omdah's (mayor's)." "As for the village map," Dr. Goodman said, "the surveyor started to draw the outline but unfortunately could not go any further, having had an attack of diarrhoea. He was afraid it would develop into cholera and applied for leave which was granted. So far there is no sign of his return. The list of the fatal cases and the dates are ready but, as regards the permit to inspect all the houses in the village, I shall arrange for you to be accompanied by at least six policemen to guard you." "I don't need any military protection," I said, "what I need is a guide chosen by the people themselves." He warned me, "They will undoubtedly finish you off on the first day." I said, "I would rather go without a guard of policemen." He then asked, "How long will it take you to accomplish the job?" "Two weeks," I replied.

I went with Dr. Goodman through the military cordon and found a great number of tents erected in the open. Each doctor had his own private tent and I was shown the tent I would occupy. It was next to that of a friend of mine, Dr. Ali Ibrahim, who had obtained his diploma two years previously. He gave me some information about life in tents and warned me about unnecessary exposure to the sun, for the temperature outside was above 50° C. He also warned me against touching the wash-basin, which was made of brass, before pouring cold water on it to cool it down otherwise my fingers would be scorched. I was told not to forget

to put basins full of water under the bedposts to stop scorpions reaching my bed at night. Dr. Ali gave me a wide-mouthed bottle which was filled with alcohol and supplied me with a long artery forceps. He instructed me to look for scorpions before going to sleep, to pick them up and drop them in the bottle. He also advised me to leave my tent in the event of a storm lest it should collapse on top of me. On my first night sleep was a nightmare full of scorpions and storms!

In the morning Goodman sent me the plan of the village, which the surveyor had started, and gave me the list of the fatal cases and the dates on which they had died. The deputy omdah, who was a very strong and well-mannered man, was delegated to accompany me in my house to house visits in search of the wells which were hidden by the villagers to prevent the authorities from disinfecting them as they were their only source of water. My colleagues were very pessimistic about my mission and thought that it was mad of me not to accept a military escort and attributed my refusal to my ignorance of the habits and customs of the peasants of Upper Egypt.

I began my tour of inspection the day after my arrival. It was a Friday, the day on which all Moslems go to the mosque for their noon prayer, led by the Imam (religious leader). I asked my guide to take me to the mosque and to inform the Imam of my intention of saying a few words to the congregation when the service was over. When that was done I asked the deputy omdah to request the Imam to introduce me to the people and make them understand that I had volunteered to succeed the doctor who had lost his life in the course of his duty. The Imam was quite agreeable. I stood on the threshold of the mosque and addressed the crowd in a short speech, which I delivered in the colloquial Upper Egyptian dialect, regarding the nature of my mission. I told them that cholera, which had reaped the lives of a great number of men, women and children, was caused by drinking polluted well water contaminated by invisible poisonous germs. I explained how these germs caused vomiting and diarrhoea and destroyed life in a few days. I also explained how easy it was to get rid of these germs by disinfecting the wells. "The Government," I said, "has already disinfected most of the wells but there are still a few in existence, hidden by their owners for fear that they will be destroyed. This is quite wrong." I assured them that the Government

would supply new wells whose water would not be contaminated and would pay them lavishly for the old ones. As soon as this was accomplished the epidemic would come to an end. I wound up by saying, "I am a young man, under twenty, and I have volunteered to serve you paying no attention to the danger to which I will be exposed. All I ask of you is to help me to carry out my mission." When I finished a murmur broke out. The people objected to my youth but the Imam said in a loud voice, "God Almighty puts his secrets in the hands of the humblest of his creatures." This had its effect and the crowd shouted, "Go ahead with God's blessing."

I had many difficulties in drawing the map of the village because many of the back streets were blocked in the centre by a house and one had to reach the remainder of the lane by climbing over the roofs of these houses. I used to start at 6 a.m. and go on working till noon, resuming work at 3 p.m. until sunset. I would then go back to my tent dead tired and exhausted. I had no experience whatsoever in drawing maps but I had an idea of what to do. It took me five days to complete the plan. I must add that when the epidemic was over a plan of the village was drawn by a surveyor and, when the Ministry of Interior compared the two plans, they were found to be identical. They then wrote a letter of thanks to Dr. Goodman.

Having completed the map I spent a whole day resting on my back in my tent. Next morning I began my tour of well inspection. The villagers used to hide their wells by putting boards of wood across their mouths and then covering these with old mats and earth in such a manner that no one would suspect their existence. My method of discovering these hidden wells was to knock the whole floor of the courtyard with a big club lent to me by the deputy omdah who accompanied me on these visits. If the sound was resonant I suspected the presence of a well and ordered the floor to be dug out. When I discovered a well I put a red mark on the village map indicating its position and wrote down the name of the owner in a special register. In this way I managed to discover some fifty wells.

My next step was to go back to the death lists, putting a black dot at each house where a fatality from cholera had occurred. I was very surprised to discover that most of these deaths took place around a house

that had a well famous for its particularly sweet water. The owners of this well and their neighbours used to fill buckets from it secretly and then hide it in the way I have described. I filled a bottle from that well, taking all the precautions to prevent any leakage, and sent it to the bacteriological laboratory in Assiut. Professor Bitter, the Director of the Bacteriological Section of the Health Department, was fortunately there on an inspection tour. He examined the specimen himself and found it swarming with the cholera microbes. He himself came to Mousha to inform Dr. Goodman of his discovery. Specimens taken from all the remaining wells were negative for the cholera microbe. Within a week of the discovery of the well the cholera epidemic had come to an end.

The village of Mousha has, to this day, left its mark on me. Before I went to Mousha I was fair in complexion but, due to the long exposure to the sun and the excessive heat, the skin of my face and hands peeled off and I developed eczema which took a whole month to heal. As a result of this eczema the colour of my face and hands changed from fair to brown and has remained so ever since.

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Cholera in Deirout

A military cordon similar to that imposed round the village of Mousha, which allowed a citizen to go through at the price of a boiled egg, could not stop cholera from spreading to the rest of the country. Deirout, a village situated in the neighbourhood, was the next to suffer.

One morning I received a telephone message from Dr. Goodman asking me to go at once to Deirout. I went there and met him at the Government rest-house. He informed me that cholera had broken out in the village and asked me to assist him. I was given a room in the rest-house but no servant or cook. I had to sweep the room myself and make the bed besides preparing meals when I could. This was very tiring but eventually I liked it, preferring to prepare my own food and to boil my drinking water and put it in well-closed bottles in order to avoid the possibility of pollution if it were prepared by a servant.

Within a week the epidemic was under control. During my stay at Deirout I made the acquaintance of a police officer who on many

occasions kindly sent his attendant to clean my room and to do my shopping. We soon became good friends and used to spend the evening hours together. During one of our meetings the officer complained bitterly of the attitude taken by the British inspector of the Ministry of Interior under whom he worked. The Inspector accused him of being negligent in his duty and given to drink. He assured me that these accusations were false, that he did his work to the satisfaction of everyone, while as to drink he never took more than three whiskies a night.

Once, while we were busy talking, a phone message came through from his office. Cases of cholera were reported at a small village called Masarra. We at once searched for Goodman and Rowntree to inform them of the message but they had gone on an inspection tour in the morning and had not yet returned. The captain and I found it necessary to work on our own without delay. The officer told me that the village was several kilometres away and that it would take us two hours to go there on horse-back. He then asked me if I could ride a horse. "Not even a donkey," I replied. He laughed and suggested that we should set off immediately for Masarra, taking with us half the number of the male and female nurses in Deirout together with all available disinfectants and medicines. Since I was not accustomed to riding horses he suggested that we should go at a fast trot. We arrived at Masarra about dawn and found the mayor and guards waiting for us. The police officer showed great efficiency in handling the situation. He issued instructions to the omdah to have six rooms set up immediately. The omdah put all the able-bodied young men on the job, using blocks of dried mud from the fields for building the walls and palm branches for the roofs. In a surprisingly short time the six rooms were ready.

While the labourers were getting on with the rooms I inspected the houses and isolated the sick. I put guards on the irrigation canal to stop the villagers from throwing anything into it.

The patients were segregated in the newly built rooms and were given the necessary treatment while nurses stopped all visitors from contacting the sick. At 4 p.m. we had accomplished our job and returned to Deirout. The experience in horse-riding which I had had in the morning allowed me to gallop with safety. We arrived at Deirout at 5.30 p.m., to find Goodman and the British inspector of the Ministry of Interior anxiously

looking for us. Goodman told me that he had been looking for me since his arrival at Deirout at 10 a.m., that a telephone message had been received from Masarra about the outbreak of the epidemic there, and that I had to go there immediately. The police officer and I smiled and told them what we had done.

Dr. Goodman and Mr. Mitchell, the British inspector, asked me to take them to my room at the rest-house to give them a drink of the boiled water which I kept in closed flasks. On the way I gave them the details of our little adventure at Masarra, emphasising that it was due to the initiative and good offices of the police officer, Mahmoud Effendi, that we were able to do what we did. Mitchell looked surprised and said, "This is very strange. All reports we receive about this man tell exactly the opposite of what you say." I informed him that I was relating facts which I had witnessed. What the captain achieved in nine hours another would have done in a week. The inspector was pleased to hear what I said about Mahmoud Effendi and later in the day, when I met that officer, I said to him, "Cheer up, Mahmoud, you will have some good news soon." "It seems," he said, "that you have put in a good word for me with the inspector. I thank you for that but, believe me, Mahfouz, I have no hope of any advancement. Mr. Mitchell simply hates me for no reason." However, I was delighted to learn later that the officer got the promotion of which he had despaired.

Five days later Goodman went to the city of Minia, the capital of the province. There he received a message informing him of the discovery of a case of plague in one of the villages. He at once sent a wire to the Assiut Health Inspector which read, "Send all material for fighting plague and the medicines necessary, together with Naguib Mahfouz, on the goods train that arrives at the village at 2 a.m." I carried out his instructions and took my place on the goods train, sitting in the guard's car. When I arrived at the village I found the mayor waiting for me. He asked me to spend the night at his house but, when I had a look at the bed, I decided to spend the night in the open. I needed no cover because it was very hot. I made a cushion of my coat and slept there till morning. I got up early to take the necessary measures and, while waiting at the door of one of the houses we had disinfected, a whole bucketful of dirt and dust fell on my head. My clothes were all soiled

and my nose was filled with dust. In two days I developed dysentery and was forced to apply for permission to return to Cairo which was granted.

When I got over my attack of dysentery I reported to Sir Horace Pinching at the Health Department. He was very pleasant and said, "I have heard, Mahfouz, of everything you did at Mousha. I was not wrong in my decision to send you there." He gave orders for me to go to Helwan, a suburb of Cairo, to assist the medical inspector working there. This was a sort of holiday at the Government's expense. When I went out of Pinching's office I met my nephew, the assistant secretary, who showed me the map of Mousha I had drawn. I was not pleased to find that my signature had disappeared and had been replaced by that of Goodman but I learned afterwards that this was the rule. A student friend of mine, Dr. Iskandar, met me later and told me that Goodman had told everyone about the efforts I had made in preparing the map and said that my discovery of the infected well had put an end to the epidemic at Mousha. As a young boy this praise gratified me immensely.

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Cholera in Helwan

In Helwan I stayed in a comfortable room in a pension. The Health Department paid all the expenses in recognition of my services in fighting the cholera epidemic in Mousha and other villages in Upper Egypt.

I met a number of tourists who were staying there, the majority of whom were Germans who had come to this beautiful suburb, celebrated for its mineral sulphur baths.

Helwan, at this time, was the residence of the wealthy aristocracy who were of Turkish or Circassian origin, and descendants of the Mamelukes who had ruled over Egypt for a long time. There were many excellent hotels in this suburb and a large casino. Music was played daily at the Grand Hotel and at the Al Hayat Hotel.

The Khedive Tewfik and his wife used to spend most of their time at Helwan. Towards the end of his rule the Khedive suffered from nephritis which had developed following an attack of influenza. He was attended by Dr. Salim Pasha but when his condition deteriorated Dr. Comanos Pasha, the private doctor of the Khedive's wife, saw him in consultation

with four other leading foreign doctors. The Khedive, however, died from anuria after three days. After his death the local French papers carried out a campaign against Salim Pasha, who was accused by the foreign doctors of having been negligent in looking after the Khedive. They accused him of having overlooked examining the urine during the attack and as a result the Government ordered an investigation which cleared Salim Pasha and proved that the Khedive's urine had been analysed twice daily. However, the campaign in the press continued and did him undeserved harm.

My brother and some friends used to come to Helwan to visit me and I introduced them to the Health Inspector with whom they used to spend the evenings at the Casino.

During the two weeks I spent at Helwan, except for two suspicious cases, no cholera occurred. The first of these cases was that of a man who died in the village of Maassara a few miles from Helwan. The man died after an attack of severe vomiting. The village barber suspected cholera and informed the Health Inspector. I was asked to investigate the cause of death and to disinfect the deceased's house and the houses of those who had come in contact with him. I took the train to Maassara where I examined the body and asked for the history, as a result of which I became convinced that it was a case of poisoning. I therefore refused to grant the burial permit. I heard rumours during my stay there that the mayor had had a hand in the crime and that he had bribed the barber to make the Helwan Medical Inspector and me believe that the cause of death was cholera. When the mayor learned of my refusal to grant the burial permit he was irate and his followers threatened to kill me but I calmed them down and asked them to accompany me to the railway station where I could sign the burial permit. The station was a long way off and when I got there I informed the station-master of my plight and asked him to find a way of getting me to Helwan Station without the crowd knowing. The station-master then put me on a goods train which was about to leave the station for Helwan. No one noticed my departure as they never expected me to travel on a goods train. On my arrival at Helwan I found the Health Inspector, my brother and his friends at the casino. The barber had by then sent a telephone message to the inspector informing him of my refusal to grant a burial permit

and added that I had refused to disinfect the house. The inspector was annoyed and questioned me about my refusal. I informed him that the man had died of poisoning, not of cholera, to which he answered, "Even then you were wrong to do as you did and risk your life unnecessarily." I should have given them the burial permit and informed the police when I returned to Helwan. I learned later that the man had actually died of arsenical poisoning and that the mayor had been suspended. I do not know what was the outcome.

The other suspected cholera death was at Izbet Al Tabbana, a little village near Helwan. I was sent by the Health Inspector to investigate the case. There was no means of getting there except by boat. While we were in the middle of the Nile a leak was discovered in the boat. It began to fill with water and I felt sure I was going to drown. However, a little sailing boat came to our rescue in the nick of time and I arrived at the village to find that it was not a case of cholera at all.

The cholera epidemic had been checked throughout the country except in Alexandria. The local French press had carried on an offensive campaign against the Health Department accusing the British officials of negligence and inefficiency. As a result a new effort was made by the Health Department and Dr. Goodman sent for me and directed me to go to Alexandria to assist Dr. Garner who was in charge of the new campaign. I was delighted to go to this beautiful city which I had not seen before.

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At Alexandria

On my arrival at Alexandria I immediately went to meet Dr. Garner who told me that the continuation of the epidemic was due to infiltration into the city of patients suffering from cholera from a village by the sea not far from Alexandria called Dekhela. He gave me absolute authority to take whatever steps I found necessary to stop this infiltration. He also told me to contact him directly without an intermediary. I took the tram-car to Max and there hired a donkey to take me to Dekhela. When I arrived I explained my job to the village mayor and started work at once.

I found that the population of the village was about one thousand

and that they obtained their drinking water from six wells, dug along the beach, which were left uncovered. I started to inspect the houses, which took me three days. I found no new cases but only a number of convalescents whom I isolated and sent to the Government Hospital at Alexandria.

I then installed twenty pumps of the Abyssinian type, which drew the water from a depth of ten metres. I disinfected the old wells and placed guards to prevent the inhabitants drawing water from them. The water pumped from the new wells was quite sufficient for the people's needs.

I used to return to Alexandria in the evening where I was staying in a four-storeyed Government building in which Dr. Mahmoud, a friend of mine, had the room next to me.

After I had been working for a week at Dekhela, and while supervising the emptying of one of the wells one afternoon, I saw a German gentleman coming towards me, apparently in a very bad temper. He asked me my age and my job and if I had permission from the Public Health Department to work there. I answered his questions in a civil manner taking no notice of his abrupt tone. He then asked, in such a way as to belittle me, "Have you made sure that the inhabitants have enough water from these pumps for drinking and washing? Have you any idea how much water each person needs?" I was surprised at his tone and turned to him, saying, "And who are you, sir?" "Don't you know me?" he replied. I said I had not had the honour of being introduced. "Don't you know Kutchlich, the Director of the Alexandria Health Department? If you don't know him he is in front of you now and I order you to leave your work at once because you are unfit for it. I shall appoint someone who is more eligible. Leave the work and go back to Alexandria." He then turned to the workers and ordered them to stop emptying the well. I turned my back to him and said to the workers, "If any one of you stops working for one minute I will not pay him his wages." Thereupon the German doctor mounted his donkey and left with the threat, "You will regret what you have done, young man." At the end of the day I returned to Alexandria and called on Dr. Garner to inform him of Kutchlich's visit. He urged me to go on with my work and to pay no attention to what had happened. Two days later I was invited to tea at Dr. Garner's

house and there I found Kutchlich among the guests. Garner must have had a word with him for he received me exceedingly well in contrast with what had happened at our first meeting.

When I had finished with Dekhela I was asked to assist Dr. Raafat, Health Inspector of one of the Alexandria districts. He was one of the gentlest doctors I have ever met. I was introduced to him by Dr. Kutchlich under whom I was now working.

New cases of cholera continued to appear in a certain house in the district in spite of all the measures taken. Dr. Kutchlich supervised the disinfection personally but this did not put an end to the appearance of fresh cases. I therefore suggested to Kutchlich that the cook be put in quarantine as he might, in some way or other, be the cause of infection. I related to him what Dr. Sandwith, Professor of Medicine in the Medical School, had told us once about an epidemic of typhoid fever which had broken out among British soldiers at the Citadel in Cairo and how, in spite of all efforts made, the epidemic had persisted and had only stopped when the cook had died. Kutchlich said that he did not believe this could be the case with cholera. A week after my conversation with Kutchlich the cook in question died and no further cases of cholera occurred in that house. Had Kutchlich, who was a very competent bacteriologist, listened to me and investigated the matter, he might have made the discovery about microbe carriers.

I remained in Alexandria for about two months. Two incidents occurred during this period, one of which was responsible for me specialising in gynaecology and obstetrics.

As I mentioned before my friend Dr. Mahmoud, who was living in a room next to mine in the Government quarter allotted to me, invited me one day to dine with him at Nikita's Restaurant which at that time was the leading restaurant in Alexandria. He was in the habit of taking his meals there together with Dr. Shoukry, Assistant Director of the Government hospital. When we arrived I was introduced to Dr. Shoukry who was already seated. While dinner was being served Mr. Nikita, the proprietor, passed by our table and stopped to shake hands with his two clients. Dr. Mahmoud introduced me to him and when Mr. Nikita heard my name he asked if I were related to Mikhail Mahfouz of Mansoura. I said that I was his son. The man shook my hand fervently

and said, "I am delighted to meet the son of Mr. Mikhail, to whom I am greatly indebted for his help in saving me from bankruptcy when I was proprietor of a coffee-house in Mansoura." He then asked me where I took my meals to which I replied, "At Madam Bonard's restaurant." "How much do you pay for a meal?" he asked. "Approximately two shillings," I said, which was half the price charged at Nikita's restaurant. "You and your two friends can have your meals here at the same price you pay at Bonard's," he said. We thanked him and willingly accepted his offer. The three of us met there twice daily during the whole time I stayed in Alexandria.

One day Dr. Shoukry did not come to lunch but came to dinner looking very worried. He asked me to help him in a difficult case of labour. I replied that it would be a pleasure for I had seen neither an ordinary nor a difficult labour yet. I went with him to his clinic and there found on the operating table a lady whom they had tried, unsuccessfully, to deliver with forceps without anaesthesia. I began to administer the anaesthetic and reassured the patient, saying, "Rest assured your labour will soon end successfully." She answered, "In your hands I am not afraid for your face gives me courage." For two hours Dr. Shoukry tried, unsuccessfully, to deliver the head with forceps but it would not come down. He then asked me to change places with him and try to do a podalic version and bring down a foot as my hand and arm were thinner than his. I declined saying that I had no experience whatsoever in deliveries. Dr. Shoukry tried to pull down a foot and it took him a whole hour before he succeeded. He and his assistant were able to deliver the body of the foetus up to the shoulders only but the head would not come down. They went on pulling the shoulders until the body of the foetus was severed from the head. I suggested taking the patient to the Government hospital or else calling an obstetric surgeon into consultation. They replied that among all the Egyptian and foreign doctors in Alexandria there was not one who was an obstetrician. In the morning I asked Dr. Shoukry about the lady's condition and was told that she had died during the night with the baby's head still in her uterus. I was deeply distressed and could not eat all that day nor sleep a wink all night. I even took a hypnotic but still I could not sleep. The moment I began to doze the vision of the headless baby thrown on the

ground and the mother lying on the table with the child's head still in her womb haunted me. I spent two days in this state. On the third day I knelt down and fervently prayed to God to save me from my insomnia and help me to devote my life to the relief of patients in difficult labour. Strange to say, I had hardly finished my prayers when I felt a sudden calm. That night I slept without hypnotics. It was then that I resolved to do everything in my power to study obstetrics and gynaecology and to dedicate my life to help women suffering from difficult labour.

The other incident was a very trying temptation to which I was exposed. I was in the habit, when my work was over, of going to Nikita's restaurant for dinner and then going home but Dr. Mahmoud suggested that I should go with him after dinner to the Café du Paradis. This, he suggested, would save me the trouble of going down to the entrance of the building where we were living to open the door for him when he came late at night. I agreed that it was a good idea as I had always found it inconvenient to wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Now, Dr. Mahmoud and a few of his friends used to leave the music hall and enter an adjoining room where they played cards until 2 o'clock in the morning. When the show was over I too used to go to the room where they played cards and quite often one or other of them would ask me for a loan of two or three pounds which, however, they never paid back. One night a very beautiful woman was sitting at the gambling table and when she noticed me she began to exchange a few words of conversation with me. I found her very interesting and her company very charming. On my return home I asked Dr. Mahmoud about her. He told me that she was a French lady, married to a well-known merchant in Alexandria, and that her morals were not above suspicion. The following night I talked to the lady and found her even more charming. I missed her when she was absent and sought her company when present. I soon realised that my feet were slipping and that I was on the brink of an affair from which it would be difficult to retreat. She offered to drive me home one night but I refused, remembering my mother's warning to me when I was a child. I therefore decided to go home immediately and returned to my lodgings, sad, but with a firm resolution never to go back to the gambling house. When in my night's prayer I

came to "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" the words had more meaning than usual. I slept soundly, convinced that my prayers were accepted.

With the disappearance of the cholera from Alexandria my services there came to an end.

Chapter 11

A YEAR AT THE SUEZ HOSPITAL

When I returned to Cairo from Alexandria I went straight to the Public Health Department and submitted a report to Sir Horace Pinching on my assignment.

My final examination at the Medical School was due and I went to the school to prepare myself. The results were published in due course and I came out at the top of the successful candidates. We were then told by the Health Department that we should be invited to meet Sir Horace Pinching to decide on the posts we were to occupy.

I had, however, to go to Mansoura to conclude an agreement for the sale of the little that remained of the agricultural land inherited from my father. While I was away the Health Department sent letters to the successful candidates asking them to contact the authorities. I did not receive the letter until I got back to Cairo when I went to meet Sir Horace. He asked me why I had not come before and I explained the reason to him. He told me regretfully that the best places had already been filled by those who had arrived before me and advised me to wait until a good post was vacant. After a while he added, "I have in front of me now a vacancy at the Suez Hospital. Not many doctors are keen on taking this post because Dr. Creswell, the principal medical officer under whom they would work, is not easy to please. In fact most of those who have worked with him were given bad reports that were recorded in their personal files at the Ministry." I hastily replied, "I would very much like to go to Suez, and even prefer it to any other place, since Suez is the meeting place for all ships going to and from the Far East and undoubtedly there will be patients among the passengers who suffer from rare diseases with which we are not familiar in Egypt. Another reason is that at Ismailia, near Suez, there is a lot of malaria and I have always wished to study this disease." Sir Horace agreed, wrote a letter to Creswell, and asked me to hand it over to him on my arrival. I thanked

him and went to my nephew Fahmy to ask him to get in touch with Wahba Bey in order to hasten the formalities of the appointment. A week later these had all been completed and I was on my way to Suez.

The city of Suez is situated at the head of the gulf that bears its name and is separated from it by a vast plain. At the junction of the Canal with the Gulf the Suez Canal International Company had built a small suburb which they named Port Tewfik, or Terre Plaine. This small suburb is connected with Suez by trains that run every three hours. The area on which the city is built is paved with cement and consists of wide bars of concrete projecting into the Gulf. The bars are wide enough to hold a row of houses. A coast road stretches for a long distance on the bank of the Canal. Two rows of acacia trees are planted, one on either side, and in springtime the yellow flowers fall from the trees to the ground forming a sweet-smelling carpet.

The houses built on these pavements were inhabited by the Company employees and the pilots, who were mostly of foreign nationalities.

During those days there were two hotels in Port Tewfik. One, the Continental, was a small hotel run by a Greek and had a fairly good restaurant. The doctors working at the Suez Hospital used to live there at the Government's expense.

The plain that separates Port Tewfik from Suez is famous for its ebb and flow phenomenon. When the tide is flowing the water pours from a large channel constructed by the Suez Company into the open land of the plain, turning this large area into a lake on which little boats could sail. During the flow the roar of the water pouring into the plain can be heard from quite a distance.

When I arrived at Suez the tide had filled the plain and surrounded the Hotel Belvedere, where I was staying, except for a path two metres wide used by the residents of the hotel. When I reached my room I looked from the window and saw the water surrounding the hotel and one or two small boats sailing along, while the moonlight was reflected on the water making a breathtaking picture. When I went out the following day I was surprised to see that all the water had receded and that the little boats were lying on the dry sand. I asked the waiter about this strange phenomenon. He told me that it was the tide and explained its relation to the moon. He went on to say that it was in this

lake that the army of Pharaoh was drowned while pursuing the sons of Israel during their exodus from Egypt. The Israelites had crossed the lake when the tide was receding while Pharaoh's army crossed during the flow and was, therefore, drowned.

The following morning I went to the hospital and waited for Creswell so that I could present Sir Horace's letter. He received me well and began to explain the duties I had to perform. He told me that my quarters would be at the Continental Hotel in Port Tewfik where I would have full board at Government expense. He then explained the reason why I had to live in Port Tewfik. "Your work," he said, "will include the examination of passengers landing in Egypt from ships passing through the Canal, as well as those who have been detained at the quarantine centre on the Sinai peninsula." He also informed me that Rushdy, a clerk at the Government Office in the Terre Plaine, would record the names of people entering and leaving Egypt in a special register.

When I started work at the hospital I noticed that any changes in the treatment of patients were not recorded in the patient's file but were passed on orally to Miss Arbuthnot, the Hospital Matron, or to Taha, the head male nurse. I took great care to record all these changes. I also discovered that there were no progress sheets and I saw to it that every patient had one.

Once Creswell prescribed on a treatment card that a litre of normal saline solution should be given hypodermically to the patient. The card was sent to the hospital pharmacy, which was not run by a qualified chemist but by a mechanic who had originally come from Montenegro and who had some knowledge of pharmacy. He used to boast that his monthly salary was £12 while that of the King of Montenegro was only £10. When he read Dr. Creswell's instructions regarding the solution he became a little confused and resorted to a notebook, a sort of pharmacopoeia, which he used to keep in his pocket. In the chapter on disinfectants he found a solution entitled *The Normal Solution* and he thought it was the one prescribed. He prepared a litre of it and sent it to the ward. I was asked to inject the patient with the solution but noticed that it was pale pink, a colour which is used in preparing sublimate solution. I refused to inject the patient with it and told the head male nurse that it was not the solution prescribed. A few minutes later the hospital matron,

who was doing her round, asked if the patient had had his injection. Taha, the head male nurse, told her that I had refused to give the injection. I happened to enter the ward at that moment and the matron turned to me, drawing my attention to the fact that the patient's condition was serious and that it was imperative that I gave the injection immediately with the solution prescribed.

She then took up the needle and was about to give the injection herself when I explained to her that there was a mistake in the dispensing and that the solution in the bottle was probably sublimate solution. In spite of my warning she insisted that she would inject the fluid and I then warned her that, if this patient died, an inquest would be held. She put the injection aside, went to the chemist and found that the solution was indeed poisonous. She never again interfered with my work.

A few days later Dr. Creswell sent for me and told me that, owing to differences arising between the Public Health Department and the Quarantine Office regarding the medical examination of persons landing at Suez, it was decided that they should be examined by the representative of the Health Department and that this procedure should be carried out on every person returning from Sinai, even if it were the Director General himself. Creswell went on to say, "Sir Armand Ruffer, the Director of Quarantine, will return at dawn tomorrow from Sinai and you will have to carry out the Government's instructions to the letter."

When the boat carrying Sir Armand arrived I took a steam launch to meet him. I greeted him with the respect due to an eminent bacteriologist who had, at one time, occupied the chair of bacteriology and pathology at the Medical School. I then invited him to come over to the hotel where I was staying until it was time for the train to leave for Cairo. He willingly accepted the invitation and we had breakfast together. I then brought the Health Department Register and asked him to enter his name which he did. Then I accompanied him to the station and stayed with him until his train left. During breakfast I asked him about two pieces of research work published by him one of which dealt with his discovery of the bilharzia ova in some of the mummies of the ancient Egyptians, the other with his finding of streptococci and staphylococci in other mummies. He was extremely pleased to find me acquainted with these researches.

On my return to hospital Creswell did not ask me what I had done for at heart he resented the arbitrations of the Public Health authorities. However, he asked the clerk about the measures I had taken and was extremely pleased with the manner in which I had tackled this difficult situation. I noticed after this incident that I had risen higher in Creswell's esteem.

A month later, finding my friendly relations with Creswell becoming stronger, I enquired why patients suffering from ophthalmic diseases were neither looked after in the out-patient department nor admitted to hospital. He smiled and said that the reason was simply that he had no knowledge about eye diseases. I suggested that it would be well if we started an out-patient service on eye diseases on two days a week and admit to hospital those who needed operations. He willingly agreed and charged me with the work. I was pleased to be entrusted with this as I had acquired some practical experience in eye operations under Professor Fisher. I started work at the out-patient department and began to admit those in need of operations. Many of these were suffering from trichiasis and had been operated on by ignorant barbers who placed the skin of the upper lid between the two edges of a bamboo slit in the centre and left it there till the skin sloughed away. This procedure resulted in a horrible disfiguring of the eye, though it sometimes succeeded in directing the eyelashes off the cornea. For the treatment of such cases I devised the following procedure. I dissected the scar tissue off the lid and separated the edges to the extent of one and a half centimetres. I then performed an Anagnastaki operation, removed a skin graft from the patient's thigh and fixed it at the raw area between the edges of the wound. Creswell was so pleased with the results that he allowed me to treat well-to-do patients at their homes and charge them a fee. A short time later Creswell asked me to help him at his private clinic. This was an excellent opportunity for me to get acquainted with such work.

The majority of Dr. Creswell's patients were English, French and Italian. I learned a great deal from him about the manner of dealing with private patients and soon made many friends. A few months later Creswell was forced to go abroad for a month and before he left he asked me to take care of his private work with the English community. This community consisted of about a hundred families belonging to the

employees of the Eastern Telegram Company and was led by Mr. Payne who was married to a highly cultured Syrian lady, a daughter of Saba Pasha the Postmaster General. She used to say that she was a Coptic Orthodox Egyptian. Their eldest son fell ill and Mr. Payne did not think it fit to send for me. Instead, he sent for the Director of the French Hospital who treated the child as a case of mumps. In the morning the boy's condition had become much worse and his mother sent for me without informing her husband. I examined the boy and found that he was suffering from diphtheria. I treated him accordingly and he was cured in two days. As a result Mr. Payne recommended me to all the employees of the Company and insisted that they send for me whenever they needed a doctor.

A week after Creswell's departure the Health Department sent Dr. White to replace him during his absence. Dr. White was a very arrogant man who did not like the idea of Creswell entrusting me with his private practice. However, poor Dr. White soon caught diphtheria and a specialist was sent for from Cairo. His attack was very serious and complicated with septicaemia and despite all efforts he succumbed. White had a sister who worked as a head nurse at the Kasr El Aini Hospital and she gave me Allbut's *System of Medicine* in recognition of my services in looking after her late brother.

Many interesting incidents occurred during my stay in Suez. One day a P. & O. ship was passing through the Canal and among its passengers was the cousin of King Edward who was suffering from an incurable disease. He died while the ship was berthing. His body was brought to the hospital and I was asked to embalm it. I had learned to embalm bodies with formalin when I was at the Medical School and the body arrived in London in a good condition. On Creswell's return he charged the authorities £500, to be paid to the hospital fund, and he offered to pay me £50. I thought it was not right for me to accept a fee so he suggested buying books for the amount. This I accepted and asked him to choose for me books on obstetrics and gynaecology published in England and America. I must say that these books were of the greatest help to me when I specialised later in this branch of medicine.

Among the unforgettable characters I met in Suez was a resident of the Hotel Continental, Mr. Augustus Wilde, brother of Oscar Wilde.

He had served as British Consul in the Red Sea area and had written an important book on Abyssinia which is considered one of the best books written on that country.

Having retired, Mr. Wilde had settled in Suez where he spent the remainder of his life. The strange thing about him was the amount of whisky he drank—at least a bottle a day—without ever getting drunk. When some of his friends would advise him to stop drinking he would lift the glass in his hand and say, "My dear friend, this is the first whisky I have had tonight," when it would be his twentieth. I used to enjoy sitting with this man and discussing a variety of subjects. He was very cultured and I learned a great deal from him.

Among those who passed through Suez and stopped at the Continental was an English doctor who was the Chief Medical Superintendent of one of the shipping companies. He was a huge man with many idiosyncrasies. Mr. Wilde introduced me to him. A few days later he met me alone and said that as Mr. Wilde had spoken so highly of me he was going to propose that I supply all the materials required by the company's ships. These would amount to several thousand pounds yearly. He then whispered in my ear that the prices of the goods to be supplied should be doubled, the surplus money to be divided equally between us. I was so astonished and displeased with the man that I barely answered him and left the room. Consequently he chose someone else from Port Said. I heard six months later that an investigation was being conducted by the shipping company into these dishonest practices which resulted in their Medical Superintendent and the other doctor from Port Said, who had collaborated with him, both being found guilty.

My term of office at Suez soon came to an end. I decided to approach Dr. Creswell about my desire to get a post at the Kasr El Aini Hospital after leaving Suez. He promised to do everything in his power to help me and a short time later, when he went to Cairo to meet Sir Horace Pinching, he took the opportunity to tell him of my desire. Sir Horace replied, "Mahfouz deserves an exceptional promotion and I am going to appoint him as senior doctor at the Beni Suef Hospital." When Creswell returned he informed me of what he considered great news. He was surprised to find me not very enthusiastic and asked the cause of my disappointment. I had to disclose to him my resolution to devote my life

to assisting women in difficult labour and that this was the reason why I had asked him to choose the books on obstetrics and gynaecology. I told him I was sorry to refuse the exceptional promotion proposed by Sir Horace Pinching but that I preferred to work at the Medical School in any post, however small, as this would be the ladder that would lead me one day to my desire for specialisation. Creswell then asked me, "And what will you do if Pinching refuses to help you to realise your desire?" I immediately answered that I would be forced to leave the Government's service. Creswell paused for a minute and said, "Could I tell Pinching what you have just said?" "If you wish," I told him, "I will submit my letter of resignation now." "There is no need for that," he replied. Creswell then went to Cairo and put the matter before Pinching and on his return I enquired about the result of his meeting and was pleased to learn that Pinching's answer had been, "By all means, I'll do that for Mahfouz." Later on Creswell sent Sir Horace a letter, urging him to hasten my transfer to Kasr El Aini Hospital. Creswell's letter fell into the hands of Fahmy, my nephew, who was assistant secretary to one of the British inspectors. Fahmy wrote to me saying that Creswell had praised me highly but wound up his letter with a sentence which was not compatible with this praise. The gist of the sentence, as understood by Fahmy, was that Creswell was unable to recommend highly my behaviour and capacity. I was so astonished that I asked Fahmy to send me a copy of the text of the letter. When I read Creswell's remark I realised that Fahmy had misunderstood the meaning. The sentence read, "Of Mahfouz's character, capacity, and usefulness, I cannot speak too highly."

After I left Suez, Creswell employed his nephew, who was a competent man, as assistant in his private work. Four years later the nephew's wife gave birth to a child and subsequently developed puerperal sepsis. Her condition was very serious and Creswell telephoned me in Cairo to ask my advice. I replied that I would take the next train to Suez and I stayed with the patient for four days until she was out of danger.

My final story about Suez concerns the clerk who was working with me at the Health Office in Port Tewfik. While at Suez, a sailor in one of the ships passing through the Canal suffered an attack of gastro-enteritis and was sent to the isolation hospital in Suez as he was suspected

of having contracted cholera. I took a specimen, put it in a sealed test tube and gave it to the clerk, Rushdy, to take to the bacteriological laboratory in Cairo. Rushdy, then a youth of twenty, was naïve and amusingly simple. He had never left Suez before and was very excited at the idea of going to Cairo which had been a dream he hoped one day to realise. He left by the morning train and we expected his return, with the laboratory report, in the evening. When he arrived back I asked for the report and was surprised when he handed me the sealed package saying, "Have you not heard about the revolution which has occurred in Cairo? Thank God I managed to get back alive." He then explained how, on getting out of the train in Cairo, he found large crowds of people rushing to the train with their luggage on their shoulders, while others filled the platforms shouting and swearing and elbowing each other, trying to find a means of escape. Of course he was describing the usual commotion of Cairo Station but he felt sure that a revolution had taken place in Cairo and that the people were running for their lives so he remained in his seat on the train and told the ticket collector he wanted to return to Suez. I reproached him for his stupidity and wondered why he did not ask the ticket collector what was happening. Rushdy replied, "I was sure that no one was going to tell me the truth, for everyone was interested in his own safety." Luckily we had already discovered, before Rushdy's return, that the suspect was suffering not from cholera but from food poisoning.

Twenty years later I was sitting in my clinic when I suddenly recalled Rushdy and this incident. I smiled and was wondering whether Rushdy was still naïve or if he had matured with age when I heard a knock at the door. The attendant entered to inform me that someone by the name of Rushdy insisted on seeing me. I said, "Let him in." The same Rushdy walked in, smiling, and asked if I remembered Rushdy and the cholera sample and the revolution in Cairo? I shook hands with him and told him that the whole story had rushed to my mind only a second before he had come in. Rushdy then asked me if I could help to get his son admitted to the School of Medicine. He had just matriculated and wished to enter this school but was unable to do so. I said I would try and managed to get the young man admitted. I think the only explanation of this peculiar incident is that it had something to do with telepathy.

On leaving Suez I went to say goodbye to my friends and acquaintances. I am happy to say that the friendships I made there have lasted long and many of my Suez friends still come to Cairo to visit me.

During my stay in Suez I got to know a number of bumboatmen who board the ships from the Far East and exchange Egyptian goods for articles brought from India, China and Japan. Before leaving for Cairo I bought from them 10 sets of china consisting of 24 pieces each for £10 together with 10 jam jars for a trifling sum. I took all these with me on the morning train to Cairo and gave them to the family who were happy to see me and very pleased with the things I had brought. I always believe in the Arabic proverb which says, "If you go into a house carrying presents you will be welcome, but if you go in empty handed no one will bother to greet you."

Chapter 12

AT THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Between Bab-el-Sha'riya Quarter and the District of Tala

When I returned to Cairo I found a letter from the Health Department informing me that my position at Kasr El Aini Hospital would be that of Anaesthetist and that it would be vacant in two months' time when the person occupying it, Dr. Amin Nassim, would be retiring. I was further informed that I would spend those two months as a locum at the Health Department. I was asked to go immediately to the Tala district to replace its health inspector who would be away for a week's holiday. When I arrived there I found the clerk and the police captain in the sanitary inspector's office together with a man who had broken his leg in a fight with his neighbour. The police had brought him there and I was asked to examine him and submit a report. I found that he had a fracture, which I put in plaster, and wrote the necessary report for the police. I stated that the patient would need six weeks' treatment. The police officer retorted that six weeks were not enough and that the period of treatment should be eight weeks at least. I agreed in good faith but learned later that the police officer wanted the case to take a different course as, when the period of treatment was prolonged, this would be in the interest of the patient. In the morning the clerk informed me that the fee received was £40 and that my share would be £10. As for the remaining £30 this would be divided between the health inspector, the police captain and the district attorney, and the inspector would distribute this money on his return. When the latter returned he explained that this was the practice followed and he added, "My dear boy, Tala District is one of the richest districts in lower Egypt and the health inspector makes no less than £300 besides his salary." He was about to hand me £10, my share in the transaction, £5 of which was the fee for putting the leg in plaster and £5 for the extra fortnight on the report, when I

said that I was satisfied with £5 for putting the leg in plaster and returned the other £5 to him. He did not make the slightest objection and pocketed the money.

I bade the health inspector and the clerk farewell and returned to Cairo. Three days after my return I received another letter from the Health Department asking me to go to the health office at Bab-el-Sha'riya for a period of one month. While I was working there I used to study the ministerial orders in my spare time and classify them so that I could refer easily to them. I was surprised to find the great disorder in which the work was done and often came across ministerial orders contradicting one another. I was in a dilemma, when a case was at hand, as to which of the ministerial orders to follow. Soon after my arrival I received an order from the Department to inspect a booza shop where *booza*, a Sudanese alcoholic drink, was fermented and served to the clients. The shop was situated in the district of El Wassa which was the authorised brothel for professional prostitutes. I was disgusted at having to walk in such a district but I had to carry out the instructions of the Department. I asked the clerk to supply me with a list of the stipulated rules in such cases and went through them thoroughly. I then ordered a carriage. In a slum such as Bab-el-Sha'riya the carriages were extremely dirty, the horses worn out, and the coachmen old and debilitated. I took my seat in the carriage and asked the clerk to sit next to me but he refused and sat in the small seat opposite to mine. An attendant, wearing the Government uniform, sat beside the coachman carrying the official briefcase under his arm. The carriage moved slowly. When we arrived at the district I buttoned up my coat and sat on the edge of the seat looking very gloomy. We had hardly reached the Wassa when I noticed rows of prostitutes on either side, their faces extravagantly painted, and a great deal of black *kohl* around their eyes rendering them hideous. Some sat on the doorsteps or on chairs in the middle of the road.

I must have looked really gloomy because one of these women began to clap her hands on seeing me, saying, "Look! Look! How serious this young boy looks!" upon which all the others laughed and clapped their hands. A short time later another made a remark about the attendant sitting beside the coachman, carrying the official leather bag under his arm, crying "Down with the government officials!"

At the shop in question I was received by two pimps whom the clerk acquainted with our mission. One of them said, "You will have to meet the patrona, or head prostitute, first for you cannot inspect the shop unless she accompanies you." We were conducted to her room where we had to wait some time as she was finishing her toilette. There we were confronted by a lady, standing in front of a mirror, putting the finishing touches to her make-up. She held a black pencil in her hand with which she was drawing a line joining her two eyebrows, the effect of which made her appear somewhat repulsive to my eyes. This lady accompanied us on our inspection of the liquor shop and, when I saw a cupboard which I suspected contained stupefying drugs such as morphia and hashish, I asked her to open it. She, however, asked rather defiantly, "Excuse me, mon cher, have you got an order from the district attorney to open it?" I answered "No." She then replied, "In that case your job is to see only what is stipulated regarding the booza shop and no more." The clerk whispered in my ear that the lady was legally right so I wound up my inspection and returned to the carriage, listening once more to the stupid and scandalous remarks made by the prostitutes now that they knew for certain that we were government officials.

At the health office I wrote my report, pointing out what was missing from the shop according to government regulations. The clerk then said to me, "Do you think that the Health Department will pay any attention to your report and refuse to grant the lady her licence?" I said that I had no doubt about it. "Very well," he replied, "wait and see." Two days later the licence was sent to us with a covering letter in which we were told to give the necessary permit to the head prostitute and to make her write a declaration in which she agreed to fulfil all requirements. The clerk was right after all in saying that these people would get their licence, by hook or by crook, stipulations or no stipulations.

I realised from this incident and similar ones that I was quite unfit for this sort of work. I felt great relief when the health inspector returned and thanked God that I had a job waiting for me at the Kasr El Aini Hospital. A year or so later the same inspector came to visit me at the hospital, asking for my help to admit one of the patients to the hospital. He was the type of man who took life easily and knew how to adapt himself to circumstances. While we were talking he reminded me of the

booza affair which, of course, I still remembered. He said, "The owner came to my office and asked for the licence which I gave to her. Do you wish to know what she said about you?" I smiled and he said, "She wanted to offer you a glass of Black Label Whisky or Cognac V.S.O.P. but was afraid to do so. You looked so formal and raw!!"

Chapter 13

BACK TO THE KASR EL AINI

A thrill of joy overwhelmed me when I returned to Kasr El Aini. I entered the gate of the hospital and shook hands with the porter. My dream was realised. I immediately reported to Dr. Keatinge but was disappointed to find his reception chilly. He began by saying that he did not understand how I was appointed to Kasr El Aini without his consent. "That is not my fault," I said. He looked puzzled, and said, "That is true, but I still do not understand why you have accepted the post of anaesthetist instead of P.M.O. to the Beni Suef hospital. Do you know that your predecessor, Amin Nassim, was put on a pension of £10 after 40 years of service?" "My reason for this," I said, "is that I wish to gain experience by working with my teachers instead of burying myself in a provincial hospital with no senior man from whom to learn." He smiled and said, "Perhaps you are right. Go and report to Madden and Milton."

Next morning I began my work as anaesthetist. I liked my job and had no difficulty in gaining the appreciation of both Madden and Milton as I had gained a good deal of experience in anaesthesia at the Suez hospital. I learned much from watching the two professors, who were first-rate surgeons, at work. Madden explained every step of an operation to the students and, although he was superior to Milton in his academic qualifications and had a clear way of explaining his techniques, Milton was a quicker and to a certain extent a more brilliant surgeon. In giving anaesthesia in operations performed by the junior staff—the residents and house surgeons—I learned much about the difficulties that meet inexperienced surgeons and the mistakes they are apt to commit.

A few months after my appointment I was delighted to get offers from both Mr. Madden and Mr. Milton to assist them in the operations they performed in their private practices. Many operations were performed in the patients' homes, as there were then no private hospitals available,

but later on Herbert Milton (the brother of Frank Milton who was at Kasr El Aini) opened a private hospital in Garden City and the Anglo-American Hospital was founded a year later. I did my best to please them, looked after their patients during convalescence and made the necessary dressings. The anaesthetics we used were either ether or chloroform. I introduced spinal anaesthesia for the first time in Egypt and in *The Lancet* (August 3, 1918) I published an article on the *Routine Use of Stovaine Spinal Analgesia in Gynaecology and Obstetrics (1500 cases)*. Herbert Milton asked me to show him the method and was very pleased with it and the results obtained. He was kind enough to give me permission to admit any of my private cases to his hospital. As my practice developed this offer was a great help to me.

I was on very friendly terms with both Madden and Milton and was often asked to dine with them in their homes. During one of my visits to Mr. Madden I approached him with a project I had in mind. I asked him why it was that there was no gynaecological out-patient department at Kasr El Aini and why hardly any gynaecological operations or cases of labour were admitted to the hospital. This, I pointed out, deprived students of experience in these branches with the result that they qualified without having seen a single gynaecological or obstetrical operation. His answer was that many attempts had been made at different periods to open a gynaecological out-patient department and to admit cases but all such attempts had ended in failure. Egyptian men refused to send their wives to a teaching hospital like Kasr El Aini where young students had to look after them. Very hesitantly I proposed that I should be allowed to open a gynaecological clinic between the hours of 7 or 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. when the operating theatre opened. Mr. Madden seemed puzzled by my offer and said that he was almost sure Dr. Keatinge would not allow it, but Mrs. Madden came to my help, insisting that her husband should approach Keatinge on this question. I felt very grateful for her help. Madden tried hard and succeeded in persuading Keatinge to allow me to open a gynaecological out-patient department. Curiously enough, fifteen years later, I performed a successful major operation on Mrs. Madden, after which Madden presented me with a beautiful silver tray and sent me a letter expressing his thanks, saying that when he had taught me the rudiments of my profession he hardly expected

that he would be personally rewarded by the result of his teaching.

A week later, Dr. Keatinge sent for me and told me that he would give an out-patient clinic for gynaecology a two months trial, with the threat that if it did not succeed he would close it. During this period I dedicated myself to the task so that by the end of the two months the clinic was in full swing. Keatinge came to inspect it and congratulated me on my success. On seeing the large number of patients waiting he said, "Go on with your work here. I will send someone else to replace you at the theatre until you are finished."

By this time I had finished studying the obstetric and gynaecological books which Creswell had given me and began applying science to practice. The patients needing operations demanded admission to the hospital and sent petitions to the director. It became necessary to reserve two wards for gynaecological operations. The patients were divided between Milton and Madden and, besides my work as anaesthetist, I was appointed second assistant to both of them. In this new rôle I was at first given simple surgical and gynaecological operations to perform and later I was entrusted with major operations. The experience gained from my work with Milton and Madden in general surgery was of immense value and stood me in good stead when I began to perform major gynaecological operations.

In those two years I learned how to deal with difficult cases, whether in gynaecological, obstetric or in general surgery. Before performing an operation I used to read its description in my books and then carefully applied what I had read to the case in hand. But much of the experience I acquired in difficult labours was the result of an agreement I had with the medical officers appointed by the Public Health Department in the different districts of Cairo. These medical officers were entrusted with delivering cases of difficult labour in patients' homes and none of them had had any experience whatsoever in obstetrics. I informed them of my willingness to be called to attend all difficult deliveries they might meet with and promised not to ask for any remuneration, not even for my transport. They were only too glad to accept this offer and during fifteen years I attended in their own homes about two thousand women with difficult labour. During those fifteen years I do not think that I slept more than two nights a week at home. I stress this point, although I have

spoken of it in another chapter, because I feel that this was the foundation on which my success with difficult deliveries was built.

At the end of my second year of work in the hospital it occurred to me to publish an article in *The Lancet* entitled *Two Years of Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Egypt*. Madden kindly helped me in writing it. In this article I gave details of operations which we had performed, laying stress on diseases common in tropical countries, and gave details of 154 operations performed during the first year and 250 during the second.

Dr. Keatinge read the article and was pleased with it. He called me to his office and shook hands with me, warmly congratulating me on my success, and said, "You will henceforth give clinical demonstrations to the students on this subject." He also said, "I also want you to reorganise the School of Nursing and draw up a report on the modifications you propose." In reply I said, "I would like you to do something which is very important to me." He thought I wanted an increase in salary and answered, "I'll try to grant you your wish," whereupon I told him that I felt the need of going to Europe to study gynaecology and visit maternity hospitals where I would learn all the modern techniques. "If you do that," he said, "the whole gynaecological section here will disintegrate and you may never be able to set it up again after your return." "In that case," I replied, "the only solution is to bring a well-known gynaecologist over here so that I can learn the modern trends from him." He thought this over and promised to present the idea to the school council at its next meeting. This he did, without disclosing that the suggestion had come from me, and fortunately the council approved. An announcement was soon put in three English medical papers and Dr. Roy Dobbin, who was then Assistant Master at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin, was chosen. When he arrived I learned that he had read the article I had written in *The Lancet* and thought that there was wide scope for useful work to be done in the East.

With Dobbin's arrival my work as anaesthetist and as second assistant in the surgical sections ended and he immediately set to work with great enthusiasm and capacity. Many of the new methods he introduced were extended to other departments of the hospital. He was the first to impose the use of gloves in surgical operations and in dressing or examining

FIG. 5
In my office at Kasr El Aini Hospital.

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patients. No nurse was allowed to assist at an operation or delivery without a mask and he also insisted that surgeons changed into sterilised clothes before operating. The wearing of masks and gloves was imperative before a woman in labour was examined. He worked at the out-patient clinic from eight o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon. I used to sit at one table and he at another taking down the history of all out-patients on their record sheets. Discipline and order were enforced in admitting cases to the out-patient department. He used to enter the out-patient clinic from the same door as the patients, teaching them how to stand in a queue in an orderly fashion and stopping the policeman from being rough with the women. Benches and seats were placed in the waiting room and the patients were made to come for examination one at a time. He also forbade the giving of any medicine to out-patients except in a corked bottle.

After two months Dobbin left the difficult cases of labour entirely to me. Once he came as I was performing a difficult forceps delivery and his comments were most encouraging. In front of the students he once said, "I am glad to tell you, Mahfouz, that you are more capable in difficult labours than any obstetrician in the Rotunda." I learned later that he had repeated this statement in the school council.

I learned a lot from Dobbin, particularly regarding normal deliveries. He taught me to examine a patient only twice, once when she came in and again when the bag of water ruptured. He taught me patience and relaxation in conducting either normal or abnormal cases. He called the special techniques I used to perform for retroflexion of the uterus and the operation I had elaborated for complete tears in the perineum "Mahfouz's technique" and wrote this on the list of operations which was hung on the door of the operating theatre.

In mentioning these incidents I only wish to draw the attention of heads of sections to the benefits of helping and encouraging their assistants. I recall how, when I was still young and at the beginning of my career, Dobbin left all cases of urinary fistulae to me. He used to write the case history himself describing the method I followed and the results in his own handwriting in special files, some of which still exist in the gynaecological section. On the cover of the files he used to draw caricatures, one of which was a warrior in full armour riding a horse

and brandishing a sword, below which he wrote a caption: *Naguib Mahfouz declares war on urinary fistulae.*

In those early days surgeons in Europe and America did not achieve satisfactory results in the treatment of intricate cases of urinary fistulae. A famous English surgeon of that time wrote in one of his books that "The cure of urinary fistulae is extremely difficult to attain. Several attempts may be required before a fistula is closed." Failure was very common with me when I began and it was through a slow and tedious process that successful techniques were developed built on Mackenrodt's method of dissecting the bladder off the vaginal wall and closure of the bladder wall and the vaginal wall in separate layers. In the last consecutive 500 operations that I have performed at Kasr El Aini Hospital on these lines I have obtained one hundred per cent success, almost always at the first attempt. I have made coloured films of the operations and have exhibited them in the Universities of London, Oxford, Edinburgh, Vienna, Geneva, Freiburg and Lausanne.

An eminent French gynaecologist once came to Cairo and Dobbin invited him to visit our hospital. He was accompanied by Sir Hugh Lett, a great urological surgeon, who was then Vice-President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. While they were going on their round of inspection I happened to be examining two cases of fistulae, in one of which the wall of the vagina had sloughed away and the bladder and cervix were involved in a mass of scar tissue, while the other was a ureterovaginal fistula involved in dense scar tissue. They asked to examine the cases and after having done so they turned to me and said, "Do you really mean to attempt operating on these two women?" Dr. Dobbin answered for me, saying, "Yes, and he will do the operation through the vaginal route." They laughed and said, "We doubt if he can find access to either of them." Dobbin invited them to attend at the operations, which they did, and the two patients were cured at the first attempt.

When the First World War broke out Dobbin joined the army and, in his absence, I was able to accomplish our long-cherished plan of converting into a maternity hospital the small hospital, built in memory of the late Lady Cromer, that adjoined Kasr El Aini. I was also able to start a child welfare clinic.

Chapter 14

MY FIRST TRIP ABROAD

I had always felt a great desire to go to Europe to see with my own eyes what I had read about its beautiful scenery, as well as to visit the different medical schools and hospitals and to meet the authors of the books we used in the School of Medicine. But I lacked the necessary funds for the journey. In 1908, four years after joining the Kasr El Aini Hospital, I had saved £120 from my meagre salary and from the scanty income derived from my private work, so I decided to make the trip and was fortunate enough to obtain two months' leave from the hospital.

The first thing I did was to seek a way of meeting the eminent European doctors. I went round the hospitals belonging to the foreign communities in Egypt and obtained letters of recommendation from their doctors. I also got letters of introduction from my British professors at the Medical School to some of the leading men in England.

Mr. Madden, Professor of Surgery, and Mr. Herbert Milton, the well-known surgeon, gave me letters of introduction to Sir John Bland-Sutton amongst others. Dr. Brossard, the Medical Superintendent at the French Hospital, gave me two letters, one to Pozzi and the other to Faure. I also obtained two letters of introduction from Dr. Von Dittel, son of the famous Austrian surgeon, who was one of the surgeons invited by the Khedive Abbas to work at the hospital which he established next to Abdine Palace and which carried his name. One of these letters was directed to Wertheim and the other to Schauta, who were the heads of the Frauen Klinik in Vienna.

In order to derive full benefit from my visit to Europe I bought Baedeker's guide books and carefully studied all their contents. I almost learned by heart all that was important to know about the hotels, museums, theatres and hospitals that I intended to visit. I then got in touch with Thos. Cook & Son and asked them for an estimate of the total cost involved. This did not exceed £100 Egyptian, as in those days a first-

class ticket from Port Said to Marseilles cost only £9 Egyptian, and inclusive charges in different first-class hotels did not exceed fifteen shillings per day. My programme was carefully prepared in order not to miss seeing anything of importance. The mornings and afternoons were to be devoted to hospitals or museums, and the evenings to theatres and music halls.

However, an unforeseen incident delayed my departure for a fortnight. On the eve of the day fixed for boarding the boat from Port Said I was chatting with two colleagues who were on duty in the reception room. Our conversation was, naturally, about my intended trip. I told them the time-table I had prepared, and how I had fixed the days, and almost the hours of my programme. I showed them my railway ticket for the train leaving for Port Said at 8.30 a.m. next day and one of them said, "I hope, Mahfouz, that nothing will detain you." In answer I said, "Nothing can detain me but an accident or sudden illness" and then added, jokingly, "or an order from the Palace to attend Her Highness the Khedive's wife!" This was received with a roar of laughter. "This Palace, my dear sir, is out of bounds to Egyptian doctors." They said that my aspirations to enter the Palace were no better than Satan's aspirations to enter Paradise.

A few minutes later we heard a commotion outside, followed by the sound of a woman wailing. I went to the door to see what was happening and found a woman lying exhausted on the floor. From her clothes, which were soaked with urine, emanated the piercing ammoniacal odour characteristic of urinary fistulae. The hall porter informed me that this woman had come from a distant village in Upper Egypt. She told him that she had developed a urinary fistula after prolonged labour and had gone to the government hospital in Kena, where three unsuccessful operations were performed on her. The surgeon advised her to go to Cairo to see me at Kasr El Aini (I had by this time acquired a reputation for the treatment of these disorders). She was too poor to travel by train and had covered the six hundred miles on foot, begging her way. When she arrived at Minia—half-way to Cairo—she was so exhausted that the police sent her to the government hospital where, after another unsuccessful operation, she was discharged and told to go to Kasr El Aini. After four months of walking and begging she eventually arrived at Kasr

El Aini where she told the porter at the gate her reason for wishing to see me. When he informed her that I was leaving next morning for Europe on a long vacation she wailed in despair and beat her face with both hands so violently that she fell senseless on the floor. With the porter's help I put her on a stretcher and wheeled her to the section where I examined her. Fortunately I found her fit for operation. I then decided to postpone my departure for a fortnight in order to operate on this miserable woman and to remove the sutures later. When I went back to my friends and informed them of my decision they both thought that it was silly of me as I could have her admitted to hospital where she would be medically treated until I returned. I replied that considering the desperate efforts she had made I thought it would be most unkind to keep her waiting a further two months. Luckily I found no trouble in changing the tickets for my trip.

Next morning I operated on the patient and removed the sutures a fortnight later. All went well and she regained complete control of her bladder. When I paid her my last visit I was told by the nurse that she had inquired the name of the doctor who had operated on her and asked to see him in order to thank him. When they told her that it was I, she smiled and said, "Do you think that I am so stupid as to believe it? It could not be the youngster who comes round every day and whose moustache has not yet appeared!" They assured her that it was really I who had operated on her and, when I came to her bed to say goodbye, she looked at me in amazement saying, "May God reward you, sir." She asked me for my name and I said "Naguib," and that of my mother and I said "Mariam." She then said, "Naguib, son of Mariam, I implore God to reward you for me, and to place a jewel on your forehead and a piece of sugar on your tongue." I was so moved by these words that tears came to my eyes. Since then I have always tried to meet my patients with a pleasant smile and to be kind in talking to them, remembering always the simple wish of a simple woman.

I began my trip by visiting Vienna where I wished to meet Wertheim and Schauta to whom I had letters of introduction from Von Dittel. I went first to the Frauen Klinik where Wertheim operated in order to see his extended abdominal hysterectomy for the cure of cancer of the cervix. I met his secretary and handed over the letter of introduction.

She looked at me and said, "You are lucky to have come today. Wertheim has just returned from his two months' vacation." She promised to give him the letter of introduction and said that I would be able to see him perform the operation that carried his name in theatre No. 5 at 9 o'clock next day. I thanked Providence who sent me that poor woman to detain me for a fortnight in Cairo, as I would otherwise have missed seeing this operation which was the object of my visit to Vienna.

At the appointed time I took my place in the gallery, a few metres from the operating table. The first operation was a demonstration of the midwifery forceps he had invented for delivering the head in a Caesarean section when it was impacted in the pelvic cavity. The second was a Wertheim hysterectomy for cancer of the cervix. I saw the same operation performed by his assistants and must say they were more deft with their hands than he was. Moreover, I was not at all impressed by the manner in which he treated his assistants and talked to his patients.

A few days later I went to see Schauta perform an extended vaginal hysterectomy for cancer of the cervix by the technique he had developed. He was quite different from Wertheim in character and ability and, in spite of his fat fingers, showed an unusual dexterity. He was a hearty pleasant fellow, unlike Wertheim who seldom smiled.

After a fortnight in Vienna I went to Paris and saw Pozzi, Faure and Tessier. They were very able and brilliant surgeons and I was astonished to find Pozzi operating in the basement in a small theatre which was not well equipped, in contradistinction to Faure and Tessier who were operating in spacious, well equipped theatres. I noticed that the latter were both absolutely silent during their work and that they performed total hysterectomies for conditions in which conservative removal of the diseased part would have been sufficient. I asked Faure the reason for doing so and he answered, "A Frenchwoman does not want to be bothered with an organ, a part of which had become unhealthy and which may ultimately become diseased."

Before going to London I visited Naples, having heard so much of its bay. Looking from the ship's deck when we arrived at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I was really struck by the splendour of the scenery. The Bay of Naples and its beautiful surroundings glittered in the sun and

Vesuvius, looming in the background, made the view really worthy of the saying "See Naples and die".

Next day, while I was having dinner at the hotel, one of the fellow-passengers informed me that a party of tourists had arranged for a visit to the crater of Vesuvius for the next morning and asked if I would care to join them. I readily accepted. Next day at 9 a.m. the party of twenty-five took Cook's bus to the base of the volcano where we changed to a mountain train which took us almost half-way up. We left the train and continued our ascent on horseback by a narrow track. Each horse had two attendants, one at its head and the other at its tail. Almost half of the party thought it safer not to proceed any further and when we were about 200 metres from the crater we were told that it was impossible for the horses to climb further. Cook's had made arrangements beforehand that special guides would enable us to climb to the crater by pulling us up by means of ropes tied around our waists. Only two of us accepted this arrangement, a Brazilian doctor and myself. However, when we reached the crater we saw nothing but sulphur fumes. On our return we found the downhill journey even more risky than the ascent as the horses insisted on going down faster than their attendants.

The ship was due to leave Naples next day at 8 p.m. and we went on board at 5 p.m. An hour later Vesuvius began the eruption which blew up its crater, causing the death of some 80,000 people. The thundering sound of the eruption was deafening and the molten lava swept away everything in its path. Fumes and smoke turned the day into night. Flames roared hundreds of feet into the sky and their reflection transformed the bay into a sea of fire. The sea was very rough but the ship left the harbour safely although hardly anyone had a moment's sleep that night. For many nights afterwards I was haunted by nightmares. A thanksgiving service was held next morning for having escaped the horrors of the eruption which would have destroyed us had we stayed in Naples longer than we did or had we gone up Vesuvius when the eruption was about to start.

The main part of my leave was spent in London where I both learned a lot and had a most pleasant time. I visited the different hospitals and saw almost all the well-known surgeons to whom I had introductions.

The surgeon whom I admired most was Sir John Bland-Sutton who was kind enough, when I gave him Mr. Milton's letter of introduction, to invite me to assist him in different operations he performed during my stay in London. I particularly wished to see the operation of sub-total hysterectomy for which he was known. It happened that, while I was assisting him at one of these operations, after opening the abdomen and bringing out the uterus I suspected that, besides the fibroids for which he was going to remove the uterus, a pregnancy of four to six weeks existed. In those days we did not wear masks but just covered our head with a cap. He read on my face a desire to say something and asked me what was on my mind. I hesitated but ultimately said that I believed that besides the fibroids there existed a one or one and a half month's pregnancy. He examined the uterus again and said, "I doubt it, but I will give the woman the benefit of the doubt" and closed her up without removing the uterus.

In 1932, twenty-four years later, the British Medical Association was celebrating its Centenary and I was invited to be a guest of the Association and to give one of the three principal lectures in Gynaecology and Obstetrics. I accepted the invitation and spent six months preparing my lecture which dealt with rupture of the pregnant uterus. I am glad to say that it was well received.

After delivering the lecture I was having lunch with Dr. Aly Ibrahim, who represented the Egyptian University, and Ismail Sirry Pasha, Minister of Public Works, when a party of Egyptian women undergraduates headed by Miss Habiba Oweis came to the hotel and gave me a hearty welcome. They told me that Dame Louise McIlroy, President of the Medical College for Women, had said to them that after hearing the lecture she thought it more appropriate to send English graduates to Egypt to study than to send Egyptians to London.

Some days later Sir Comyns Berkeley, President of the Gynaecological Section at the Congress, gave a dinner in my honour and informed me that Sir John Bland-Sutton, who was then eighty-five years of age and who had always refused to go out at night, had asked for an invitation to this dinner. After dinner Sir Comyns, Sir John and I went out on the balcony where Sir John, addressing Sir Comyns, said, "Twenty-four years ago I invited Mahfouz, who brought me an introduction from

my pupil Milton, to assist at my operations during his stay in London. Once, when I was operating on a woman for multiple fibroids intending to remove her uterus, he called my attention to the fact that, besides the fibroids, there existed a one or two months' pregnancy. I doubted this but gave the woman the benefit of the doubt and closed her up without operating. The woman was actually pregnant and gave birth to a full term child. I was struck with the fact that during the puerperium the tumours dwindled and actually disappeared. I often told my students about this case and how fibroid tumours sometimes involute with the uterus during the puerperium and sometimes disappear altogether."

The only other thing that remains for me to mention about my first trip to Europe is that I left London for Paris where I again visited the different hospitals. On the last day of my visit I developed a temperature of 40° C. and felt very ill. This caused me great anxiety as what remained of my £120 would just cover my hotel expenses and my return journey. Fortunately the fever came down in the evening and I travelled to Marseilles next morning. I made a point of paying a visit, during my stay in Marseilles, to the Château d'If where Edmond Dantes was imprisoned in the story written by Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which I had read a few days before.

Next morning I boarded the P. & O. liner which took me back home.

Chapter 15

IN THE FIELD OF PRIVATE WORK

The present generation might think that when we started private practice, at a time when doctors were so scarce in Egypt, we had an easy time and our reputations were built up undeservedly, but this is far from the truth. In fact quite the opposite was the case. Our prospects were gloomy and I shall never forget the words of my colleague, Dr. Aly Ibrahim, when he said to me, "Mahfouz, if we don't make strong efforts to push our way through we are lost. The public has little faith in us."

In those days Egyptians had lost confidence in their fellow-countrymen. They just could not understand that an Egyptian doctor could be as competent as a foreigner who had studied and qualified in Europe. Foreign doctors were trusted and treated with respect regardless of their competence or qualifications.

At that time the upper class consisted of three main groups. The first was the foreign community; the second the naturalised Egyptians who had come from the Arab countries, particularly Lebanon. The members of those two groups occupied important positions in the government as well as in trade. The third group was composed of the wealthy, the majority of whom were of Turkish, Circassian, Kurdish and Mameluke origin, who had ruled over Egypt for a considerable time during which period they had robbed the country, ill-treated the people and lived on the fat of the land. Most of the arable land was bestowed on them by the rulers. The little that was possessed by Egyptians was bought from the government when its estates, known as "Domains", had been put up for sale. All these three classes looked on Egyptians with scorn and disdain and considered them fit for only the most menial and trivial jobs.

A conversation I had with a friend of mine, Doctor Saad El Khadim, may give an idea of the state of things at that time. Dr. Saad was looking after a very wealthy lady who lived in Helwan, a suburb of Cairo. She improved considerably as a result of his treatment and one day when a

Turkish lady was visiting her she asked the name of her doctor. "Saad El Khadim," she replied. The visitor looked astonished and said, "How can you be so ill, my dear, and not consult Dr. Fouquet?" "All right," the sick woman said, "we shall send for him." During his next visit to her, Dr. Saad was asked to call in Dr. Fouquet for consultation. When Dr. Fouquet arrived he asked the lady to take off her clothes and as she was a little hesitant, feeling somewhat embarrassed, he roughly took them off himself. After finishing his examination he was offered a cup of coffee which he haughtily refused. On the train journey back from Helwan to Cairo Dr. Saad, who spoke French fluently, could not control himself any longer and chided Fouquet severely for his rudeness towards the patient. Dr. Fouquet replied, saying, "My dear friend, you are young and do not understand the mentality of these people. You will see that tomorrow they will stop sending for you and will ask me to undertake the treatment instead of you." He was not wrong in his prediction.

Foreign doctors in Egypt were numerous at that time and some were indeed first rate, but the majority were of a very low standard. Some were quacks and most of them possessed no qualifications whatsoever. They were protected by the agreements, enjoyed by certain foreign countries, which paralysed any attempts by the government to stop them from practising. I well remember the day on which, after obtaining my diploma, I went to the Public Health Department to get my licence. I went to see Dr. Goodman who was the man concerned and received a warm welcome. We began to talk about our combined efforts in dealing with the cholera epidemic when a Greek, accompanied by the Greek Consulate attendant wearing his gaudy official uniform with ornamental sword hanging at his side, walked in. He was introduced to us as Doctor so-and-so who wanted a permit to practise medicine in Egypt. He was in possession of a diploma from a reputable American university and Dr. Goodman asked him to sit down and began talking to him in English. To our astonishment the man did not know a word of English and Dr. Goodman refused to grant him the licence to practise as he was convinced that the degree was forged. I learned later that the Greek Consulate had intervened and the Health Department was forced to grant the Greek a permit although they were sure he possessed no medical diploma.

The main reason for the deterioration of the Egyptian doctors' reputation in those days was the following. When the Medical School was founded in 1827 the authorities were faced with a huge problem, namely, the language in which medicine was to be taught. All the professors were foreigners with no knowledge of Arabic while the students were graduates of Al Azhar University with no knowledge of any foreign language. The solution arrived at was to have the lectures translated into Arabic. But who could make these translations? The only man in the country with a knowledge of a foreign language was a certain Anboury who understood Italian. Thus the French and German lectures had to be translated first into Italian and then from Italian into Arabic. In due course some of the graduates were sent to France on courses. These were well-chosen, many were first-rate and after a course of study in France, lasting five to six years, they obtained the highest qualifications. When they returned they were appointed assistant professors. In addition there was a group of famous foreign scientists such as Gressinger, the discoverer of the Ankylostoma worm, and Theodor Bilharz, who discovered the Distoma haematobium (bilharzia worm) in 1851. The school was vigorous and productive. A number of textbooks as well as a medical journal were published in Arabic.

The course of study lasted six years, and during seventy years group after group of Egyptian students qualified. The number of outstanding doctors had, however, gradually diminished. Some had died while others had reached the age of retirement and were put on pension. They were not succeeded by competent men who could have adequately filled their places, as educational missions had been stopped for a great number of years. Moreover, some of the recently appointed staff had been taught in Arabic and because they had no knowledge of any foreign language they were unable to follow progress in medicine. The Medical School gradually deteriorated and the number of students admitted decreased to such an extent that the school was on the verge of being closed.

Meanwhile, a great number of foreign doctors, most of whom were Greek, came to Egypt and almost monopolised private practice. It fell to the new generation of doctors, who had graduated after the renaissance of the Medical School in 1898, to work hard to retrieve the lost ground and regain the confidence of the public. The struggle was a bitter one,

but a great number of the graduates succeeded and many of them reached the summit in their field of specialisation. But we had to start from the bottom of the ladder and work our way upwards. For example, I was compelled to open my private clinic in a very poor district of Cairo, Bab-el-Bahr, and I had to treat my patients free for the first six months. All the patients who came to me were of the servant class and when they were cured they carried the news to the families they served. Gradually I found myself receiving patients from the well-to-do classes and I cannot deny that luck, together with the efforts I exerted, had a share in the success I obtained. Early in my career my colleagues and I felt that the great handicap we laboured under was the lack even in Cairo and Alexandria of any private hospital apart from the government institutions. On the other hand the foreign communities enjoyed great privileges, for the majority of them had their own well-equipped hospitals, staffed by first-class foreign doctors and efficient foreign nurses. There was the French Hospital, the Italian Hospital, the Greek Hospital, the German Hospital (Deaconess) and the Austrian Hospital (later known as the Kitchener Memorial Hospital), and other private hospitals. The late Doctors Ibrahim Fahmy El Minyawi and Iskandar Fahmy Girgawi and I approached the Coptic Benevolent Society and explained to them the crying need for a private national hospital. The idea was submitted to the Council of the Society which decided to build a large hospital. The President of the Society and his assistants helped a great deal towards the fulfilment of the project and the Coptic Hospital came into being. In his inauguration speech the President of the Society declared, "The hospital will be open to all nationalities and creeds without religious or racial discrimination. The name Coptic denotes simply the name of the Society that founded it." The building was completed and fully equipped in 1926 at a cost of £70,000. Later, two more floors were added and an obstetric department costing £30,000 was established. The hospital contained 250 beds, divided into first, second and third classes. Patients in the third class were treated free of charge.

A few years after the opening of the Coptic Hospital many other national hospitals were opened in Cairo and Alexandria. The most outstanding of these were the Moassat Hospital of Alexandria and the Agouza Hospital in Cairo, built by the Islamic Benevolent Society.

These were followed by many other public and private hospitals.

I would like here to relate some of the interesting cases I encountered in the course of my private work. The first of these concerned a famous and very beautiful Egyptian dancer who had been extremely rich. It was said of her that she went out every day for a drive in the Gezira, gracefully seated in a grey coach, wearing a grey dress, with lying at her feet a dog dyed the same colour, and her coachman wearing a grey uniform. The colour scheme was changed from time to time. This equipage did not fail to attract public attention, more especially as the carriage went at a snail's pace. Now this lady, unfortunately for her, caught gonorrhoea, the infection spread to the tubes and a pyosalpinx developed. She was admitted to the French Hospital where the abscess was incised from the posterior fornix of the vagina but in the process the knife injured the rectum, causing a recto-vaginal fistula. Another attempt was made to open the pyosalpinx, this time from the anterior fornix, but the bladder was opened resulting in a vesicovaginal fistula. The patient had, by this time, spent half her fortune at the French Hospital without obtaining relief. She then entered the Italian Hospital where they tried to close the urinary fistula, using silk-worm gut sutures, but with no success. They then tried to remove the sutures but failed. They therefore cut them flush with the vaginal mucous membrane and left the knots *in situ*. A week later peritonitis developed and it was found necessary to make an incision in the anterior abdominal wall. A loop of intestines, which was adherent to the abdominal wall, was injured and a faecal fistula resulted. By then the patient having lost all her fortune was forced to leave the hospital and return to her house where she was compelled to sell her furniture, piece by piece, and from which she was finally evicted for being unable to pay the rent.

She was found half-dead by a policeman on the pavement. He picked her up and brought her to Kasr El Aini Hospital where Dr. Dobbin and I examined her and discussed her case. He asked my opinion about the three fistulae, and whether it would be possible to do anything for her. I answered, "We shall first treat the septicaemia and later make a thorough examination to see what can be done to the fistulae." When the fever abated and her general condition improved, Dr. Dobbin asked me to attend his talk with the patient. He sat beside the patient's bed and

explained to her the grave danger a surgeon would be exposed to if he pricked his finger while operating on her. In spite of this, he said, Dr. Mahfouz had willingly agreed to perform the operation but had one request to make, which was that when she recovered she would not revert to her previous career. In answer she said that she understood what I meant and gave a solemn promise to do as I wished.

Next morning I began to operate by removing the knots at the site of the urinary fistula, which was an extremely difficult job as the sutures which had been cut flush with the vaginal mucous membrane were buried inside, and I was obliged to locate the sites of the knots by the sense of touch. Also, at that time, we were short of gloves which made the operation rather risky but I had no alternative. A few weeks later I was able to close the urinary fistula but the faecal fistula was a problem. It was situated at the vault of the vagina at the left fornix. Such fistulae were considered inoperable on account of the fixity of the tissues and sclerosis of the edges as a result of the chronic septic inflammation. However, I was able to close it by a technique which I published in the *Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics* some years later. One month later I opened the abdomen, closed the intestinal fistula, and removed the uterus and tubes. After a convalescence of six months the patient was completely cured and left the hospital in perfect health.

Four years later I got married and asked for two months' leave to go to Europe with my wife for our first trip abroad together. The evening paper, *Al Mokattam*, published the date of my departure. To see me off at the railway station were many of my friends, amongst whom were Professor Dobbin and Dr. Ahmad Shafeek. Just a few seconds before the train moved off a lady, with a Turkish veil covering her face, pushed through the crowd of friends until she came face to face with my wife. She shook hands with her and presented her with a bouquet of the rarest flowers. My wife thanked her courteously and then the lady came towards me, took my hand, bent over it and kissed it fervently. The train moved off before I could discover who the lady was and I was a little embarrassed in case my wife should take it amiss but she did not look the least annoyed. I must say, however, that it was quite an awkward thing to occur for a bridegroom leaving with his bride on their first trip abroad. A minute or so after the train left the station a colleague of

mine, who was the Medical Superintendent of a hospital in a town near Alexandria, came to shake hands with me and I introduced him to my wife. After a few minutes' silence he turned to me and said, "Did you not recognise the lady who kissed your hand?" I replied, "No indeed, I don't remember having met her ever before." He said, "How is that? Don't you remember the patient number 5½ in Ward 8?" (5½ was an extra bed placed between beds 5 and 6). I replied, "I still don't remember."

My colleague went on to say, "Four years ago I was a houseman at Kasr El Aini Hospital, attached to your section. The lady who kissed your hand was the dancer who was found on the pavement lying between life and death. Don't you remember you performed four operations on her while Dobbin refused to touch her with his fingers lest he should catch the infection?" I replied, "Yes, I remember now. But let me tell you that Dr. Dobbin did not refuse to operate on her because of the infection, but because he always left the fistulae operations to me." My colleague went on to say, "Anyway, it was Dr. Dobbin himself who told us so in one of his lectures." I said, "Perhaps Dr. Dobbin was trying to extol what I did and it was very noble of him. Dr. Dobbin is not the man to shirk his duty for fear of infection. He was confronted many times with operations endangering his life for patients with obstetric trouble who were suffering from exanthematous fevers."

My colleague then went on to relate the rest of the dancer's story. "After she was discharged from hospital, she worked as a housekeeper in the house of a certain wealthy omdah (mayor) of a town outside Cairo while the omdah's wife, who had had coronary thrombosis, was living in Cairo with her two sons who were still at school. The dancer looked after the family so well that, when the mother died a few months later, the sons begged their father to marry the housekeeper which he did. At the end of the school year both boys matriculated and the mayor returned to his town. It was through the lady's efforts and excellent management that the omdah found himself in better financial circumstances." My colleague paused for a while, then resumed, "Do you know what this lady did in the town she settled in? She established a home for delinquent girls who were forced by circumstances to go astray. Many of the inmates of the home became happily married. Gradually she acquired fame

through her charitable deeds. From time to time the government sends me on visits of inspection to this home which, I must say, is first rate." At that juncture the train arrived at my colleague's destination and he shook hands with us and left. Afterwards my wife said, "This lady deserves all respect."

Another incident which greatly influenced my private work occurred before Dr. Dobbin came to Egypt. My brother, Farid Mahfouz, Chief Accountant of the Ministry of Public Works, had a friend, an engineer, who held a high post in the Ministry. One day this man, looking very worried, called on my brother at his office and told him that his wife was ill. Dr. Fouquet, Dr. Milton and Dr. Gaglio, the Senior Surgeon at the Italian Hospital, had diagnosed her condition as inoperable carcinoma of the bowels and said that there was no hope of recovery. A medical consultation was, therefore, arranged to be attended by Hess Bey, Comanus Pasha, Fouquet, Milton, Gaglio and Brossard, to meet at 4.30 p.m. This engineer asked if I could attend the consultation as a friend of the family and inform him of the verdict. Half an hour before the consultation was due I went to the luxurious houseboat where the engineer's family lived. When I arrived the patient insisted that I examine her myself and tell her my opinion. I began by taking the history in detail from which I learned that, about four months previously, menstruation had ceased for two months and she thought that she was pregnant and was delighted as she had been married for ten years and had had no children. One day, however, she experienced such a severe abdominal pain that she thought she was going to die. A doctor was called in and diagnosed appendicitis and treated her on conservative lines. The pain subsided but she noticed that she had become very pale. She had no bowel movement for seven days except for streaks of blood now and then. She then noticed a swelling on the right side and consulted Dr. Fouquet who told her that her condition was very serious and that a consultation of doctors, surgeons and physicians must be called.

When she finished her story I made a vaginal examination and found that the uterus was enlarged and pushed forward by a boggy tumour filling the pelvis. I passed a finger in the rectum and found internal haemorrhoids. I came to the conclusion that the patient had had an ectopic pregnancy and that rupture of the pregnant tube had occurred and

been mistaken for appendicitis. The extravasated blood had formed a big retrouterine haematocele.

At 4.30 the consultation of physicians and surgeons took place but, naturally, although present I was not asked to take part. The diagnosis they arrived at was that the patient was suffering from inoperable cancer of the bowels and that she did not have long to live. Suddenly Mr. Milton, brother of Frank Milton the surgeon at Kasr El Aini, happened to notice my presence. He turned to the other members of the consultation and said, "We should have asked the opinion of the youngest doctor present first." None of the other consultants knew me by face or reputation. Dr. Milton asked me to examine the patient and I replied that I had already done so. "And what do you make of the case?" he asked. I hesitated a little and then replied, "It seems to me that this is a case of ectopic pregnancy of the right tube and that rupture of the pregnant tube occurred a fortnight ago. A haematoma has now formed in the pouch of Douglas. The accumulated blood behind the uterus is causing pressure on the rectum giving rise to constipation. As for the haemorrhage from the rectum, it is due to the presence of internal haemorrhoids." Dr. Fouquet, who was standing a little distance away and did not hear what I said, asked Dr. Milton to repeat what I had said in French as he did not understand English. When Mr. Milton had done so Fouquet said, in a low voice, "What cheek!" I did not hear this rude remark but if I had I would not have hesitated to reply as Fouquet was known to have a poor opinion of Egyptian doctors.

When Milton heard Fouquet's remark his face flushed and he said, "Look here, we have condemned this woman to certain death and there is another opinion which may be right or wrong, but at any rate it gives the lady some hope. I shall admit the patient to my hospital and shall make an exploratory laparotomy at 9 o'clock tomorrow. If Mahfouz's diagnosis is found to be correct I shall leave the operation for him to do." They all agreed and the patient was transferred to Milton's private hospital at Garden City. That night I could not sleep a wink. The following morning the consultation committee arrived and Milton made an exploratory incision along the abdominal wall while I assisted him. No sooner had the abdomen been opened than we found the case to be one of ruptured ectopic pregnancy. Milton immediately changed places

with me and I started removing the pregnant tube. The omentum was infiltrated with blood and the intestines were adherent all around, while clotted blood filled the pouch of Douglas. A three months foetus with its placenta was found embedded among the blood clots. I removed the pregnant tube and while I was closing the sheath of the rectus muscle Fouquet suggested putting in a drainage tube. Milton lost his temper and said fiercely, "Since when do physicians direct surgeons in performing operations?" The theatre sister and the two other nurses who were assisting did not fail to show their disgust with Fouquet, having heard of the insolent remark he had made when the consultation was being held.

Three hours after the operation I felt very exhausted and when Mr. Milton heard about this he visited me at home and advised me to spend a week's holiday at the San Stefano Hotel in Alexandria, promising to look after the patient himself during my absence. When the patient recovered, her husband asked me to give him six of my cards which he left, together with his own card and a generous payment, at the clinics of those who had participated in the medical consultation. For quite a long time the husband used to send me small gifts. Amongst them was a regular present of a basket of green dates, the product of a unique palm-tree which grew in Fayoum, where he was the Chief Irrigation Engineer. Each date was about eight centimetres long and very sweet in spite of its green colour. They were usually shared between the King and the Chief Engineer!

This incident was echoed in all circles and talked about everywhere since the patient was a well-known figure.

A month later I was invited by Dr. Hess, who was a member of the consultation committee, to deliver the wife of his son, Dr. Hess, Jnr., who was having a difficult labour. She gave birth to a daughter who now works as manageress of a large bank. Her husband, Dr. Hess, Jnr., died in 1954 at the age of eighty-five and throughout his lifetime, despite his advancing years, he was still called the young Hess!

The next case I wish to record is of particular interest from the medical point of view. It shows to what extent the human brain can be bruised without giving rise to any untoward symptoms. I had a friend, a chemist, by the name of Dr. Al Wedeiny who used to call to greet me regularly at Christmas and Easter without fail. One peculiar thing about

him was that he always wore a redingote which, in Egypt, was only worn on official occasions. If it happened that I was not in when he called he used to leave his card on which he wrote a few verses composed on the spot.

One day he called on me and asked me to accompany him to Dr. Kamel Samy's hospital in order to have a consultation regarding his sister who was having a difficult labour. Dr. Samy proposed to deliver her by a Caesarean section. When I got there I discussed the case with him and we agreed to wait a little longer. Three hours later the baby was born without interference. Dr. Al Wedeiny wanted to pay me my consultation fee but naturally I refused to accept a fee from a friend. A few months later Dr. Al Wedeiny came to see me, as usual, at Christmas. He brought a gentleman with him, who I was told was his brother-in-law, whose wife I had seen in consultation with Dr. Kamel Samy. He introduced him, saying, "This is Mr. so-and-so, the Head of a Department at such-and-such a Ministry. He has come to thank you for the consultation you attended at Dr. Samy's hospital." A few minutes later he asked me if I noticed anything odd about his brother-in-law's head. I hesitated a little, then said: "I find that his tarboosh is unusually long." He then turned to his brother-in-law and asked him to take off his tarboosh. When he did I found that his head was very elongated and conical in shape. The apex of the cone was the seat of a big scar devoid of hair. Dr. Wedeiny asked me what this head reminded me of. I said, "It looks just like a head that was crushed by the cranioclast and cephalotribe." He replied: "You are quite right. I will tell you how it happened. About thirty years ago the mother of the man in front of you had a difficult labour and Dr. Serge Voronoff and his brother George, who was an obstetrician, were called in. After fruitless attempts at delivery with forceps, lasting more than two hours, they perforated the skull of the foetus and applied the cephalotribe. Just at that moment the mother of the patient arrived. She was a rather muscular woman who got hold of Dr. George's arm and stopped him from crushing the head of the foetus, threatening to break his own head if he did not stop. 'No one will deliver my daughter but Naguib Mahfouz' cried the lady, who immediately went out and took a car and returned with you. You tackled the situation with great diplomacy, taking Serge Voronoff and his brother

aside and discussing the case with them. They said it was useless to attempt to save the baby as the brain had been badly bruised and the screw of the cephalotribe had already been tightened. You replied that there was no harm in trying and they finally acquiesced. You removed the cephalotribe and examined the patient and found the child to be in an occipitoposterior position. You brought it forward and delivered it with forceps. You examined the head of the foetus and sutured the wound and came regularly to dress the baby's head. The baby survived but his head remained in the shape you see now." I then remembered the incident, particularly as it was through it that I got to know Serge Voronoff who remained in Egypt for a few more years before emigrating to France where he started a hospital in Paris for rejuvenation. I visited him there and he showed me the method he employed which consisted of grafting a monkey's testicle to the patient's testicle. Most of his patients were Americans whom he used to charge £1,000 for the operation, plus the price of the monkey! In this way he claimed that he made a considerable sum of money.

Another case refers to a conversation I had with Lord Allenby when he was British High Commissioner in Egypt. A banquet was given at the British Embassy in celebration of the Palestine campaign. Several Egyptians and foreigners were invited and my wife and I were among the guests. Before relating my conversation with Lord Allenby I must mention the two items which were the subject of the conversation.

The first of these concerned the wife of one of the British advisers to the Egyptian Government, who fell ill and whose condition was diagnosed as an ovarian cyst with a twisted pedicle. Dr. Philips, Professor at the School of Medicine, called me in consultation and told me that, if I thought fit, the patient would be admitted to the Anglo-American Hospital where I would perform the operation. I examined the patient and, finding that she was suffering from endometriosis of the ovary which had spread in the pelvis and involved the intestines, I suggested treatment by hormonal extracts together with deep X-ray therapy. I was entirely against surgical interference as the bowels were badly involved. Dr. Philips and the British adviser became convinced by my arguments and it was decided to start the treatment but, unfortunately, the husband was appointed ambassador to one of the great powers and was obliged to leave with his wife before the therapy was started.

The second item concerned my attitude at the Council of the School of Medicine when it met to select a professor of pathology and a professor of bacteriology. The two vacant posts were advertised in European medical journals and when the applications for the post of professor of pathology were received the School Council met to elect one of the candidates for the post. Dr. Aly Ibrahim and I were the only two Egyptian members on the Council, the others being British. Before the applications were opened Mr. Richards, the Chairman of the Council, said, "I have received a recommendation from Sir Reginald Patterson, Adviser to the Ministry of Education, concerning a famous pathologist who I suggest should be appointed to the post as Sir Reginald knows the applicant personally." I protested and said that we must examine all the applications first, decide on the most suitable, and then compare this candidate with the person proposed by Sir Reginald. Richards, however, did not approve of my proposal so I called for a vote which was carried. We then began to examine and compare every application on its own merits and the result was that we chose someone other than the person proposed by Sir Reginald Patterson to whom Richards had to write apologising for not choosing his candidate.

A few weeks later the post of professor of bacteriology was to be considered by the Council and, once more, Richards surprised us with a name proposed this time by Lord Allenby who had known the candidate in Palestine. Once more I objected and insisted on following the same procedure as before in choosing the professor of pathology. Mr. Richards became angry and warned me that if I persisted in my objection he would put it on record in the minutes of the meeting. I said to him, "Of course you should." We then adopted a similar procedure to the one previously used and once more chose an unrecommended professor.

It was a month later that we were invited to Lord Allenby's banquet. After dinner, while my wife and I were sitting with some friends, someone came from behind and patted me on the shoulder. I turned round to see Patterson, who was a friend of mine. I had previously treated some of his relatives and acquaintances. He told me that Lord Allenby would be pleased to meet my wife and me. We went to meet him and found him very charming and fascinating. He talked about my work and what I had done for the School of Medicine, and then he said, "It gives me

pleasure to give you a message from our Ambassador in . . . who says that if he had listened to your advice and his wife had been treated as you suggested she would have lived but, unfortunately, the doctors in that country to which they went recommended an operation which ended fatally." Lord Allenby paused for a while and resumed, "Richards and Patterson have told me about the attitude you took at the Medical School Council concerning the appointment of the professors of pathology and bacteriology and I assure you, Dr. Mahfouz, that if every Egyptian took the same attitude in his field of work Britain would not find an excuse to stay in Egypt for twenty-four hours!"

The last case I am going to relate proves the truth of a common Egyptian saying, "One portion of luck is better than twenty-four of skill." I had acquired some reputation in curing sterility when, one day, a fairly old lady came to my surgery accompanied by her husband who was then an Under-Secretary of State for Justice. He told me that his wife had passed the menopause and that menstruation had ceased for the last seven years but he hoped that I could still do something to enable her to have a baby. I had to tell him that I was sorry not to be able to do anything for her but the lady retorted, "God is Almighty, and I am certain that if you give me a prescription he will do the rest." I gave her one as she desired: "Tabloid varium 5 grains, three times a day after meals for ten days." She did not return to report the result but exactly one year after her visit at 5 a.m. on the 5th of January (which happened to be my birthday) I was called by Dr. Ibrahim Hassan, Health Inspector at Saida Zeinab District, to help him in a difficult case of labour. He had applied forceps and pulled hard for two hours but to no avail. Although it was raining hard and I had meant to take the day off, I left immediately for the lady's house. Having examined her I found that it was a persistent occipitoposterior. I brought the occiput forwards and terminated the delivery by forceps. When the patient recovered from the anaesthesia, I went to her room to congratulate her. I was astounded to find that she was the wife of the Under-Secretary of State for Justice to whom I had given tabloid varium a year ago. She thanked me and told me that twenty days after she had stopped the pills menstruation started. A month later she conceived.

Twenty years later, when I had reached the age of sixty and was

about to retire from the School of Medicine, I was giving my last lecture to the final year students and chose as my subject *The Menopause*. I had chosen that subject because it coincided with my age of retirement. In the lecture I mentioned that very occasionally, in a woman who had been menopausal for several years, an ovum might form in the ovary and find its way to the tube. If it happened that there was a sperm in the tube then it could fertilise the ovum and pregnancy result. In support of this I mentioned the case of the lady whom I attended with Dr. Ibrahim Hassan, who had ceased menstruation for seven years and yet conceived and gave birth to a full term baby. I said that the lady was fifty-two years old when she was delivered but had hardly finished my sentence when one of the students put up his hand. I nodded to him to speak and he then said, "Sir, she was fifty-three and six months old." All his friends turned round and stared at him enquiring, "How do you know her age, Mohamed?" to which he replied "I ought to know, I am that baby!" People talked a great deal about this incident at the time, attributing the occurrence of pregnancy to the treatment I gave the lady, but the truth is of course that it was sheer coincidence.

Fig. 4

At the Coptic Hospital, demonstrating a specimen to my two grandsons, Dr. Samir Mahfouz Simaika and Dr. Amin Helmy Makram.

Fig. 5

In the operating theatre of the Coptic Hospital.

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Fig. 6
My wife.

Chapter 16

MY WIFE

Every man, in his early youth, builds a picture of the girl of his dreams—the ideal wife. I prayed God to guide me in my endeavours to find a wife who would be cultured, religious, beautiful, a good companion and from a good family. God in His goodness gave me all that I desired and my cup of happiness was full to overflowing when, in November 1911 at the age of twenty-nine, I was married to Miss Fayka Azmy who was just sixteen years old.

I consider my marriage to her the beginning of my good fortune and the turning point in my life; from a struggling life devoid of pleasure to a life full of hope, happiness and joy. When I married her, I realised that life was a precious gift from God. At home I found a haven of peace and happiness after a hard day's work at the School of Medicine, the Kasr El Aini Hospital, and my private clinic. Once inside my house all fatigue left me and I became relaxed and comfortable. My wife often suggested that I should go to a club with friends but I used to reply that at home I had all the happiness, enjoyment and companionship I would wish for. It was real bliss to live with her and a pleasure to talk to her. Along with great intelligence and nobility of character, she combined humour and wit made all the more charming by never being used at the expense of others. Her loving nature, sweetness and delicacy would never allow her to hurt the feelings of anyone.

Before the end of our first year of marriage we travelled to Europe where we had a most enjoyable holiday. My wife used to urge me to spend my time visiting medical institutes, thus depriving herself of spending our leisure time at theatres and places of entertainment. The following year I decided to go to Europe once more but she was very reluctant and fortunately we decided to spend our holiday in Alexandria for the First World War broke out during the month in which I had

decided to travel. Had it not been for my wife's objection we would have been exposed to endless difficulties and hardships.

I must confess here that in many cases her wisdom, sound judgement and advice brought me success in difficult situations, and I must admit that every time I went against her wise counsel I had reason to regret it.

A great part of my success was due to the charming personality which earned her the admiration of everyone, Egyptians and foreigners alike. As an example, I will repeat here the words of Lord Dawson of Penn, President of the Royal College of Physicians, at a reception given in my honour when I was granted the Fellowship of the College. "I never realised," he said, "the truth of the saying that behind every successful man in life there is a woman, until I met Mrs. Mahfouz. After the long conversations I have had with her during the last few days, I have become fully convinced of the validity of the rôle a wife can play in her husband's success."

I have often heard people around us wondering how, after forty-one years of marriage, our love remained undiminished, but there was no need for wonder for in our companionship there was the joy of life. I shall never forget the cruel and unbearable calamity which befell us when we lost our only son, Samy, at the age of nineteen, and how deeply and violently we were struck by the bitter blow. He was the pride and joy of our life and would have been a credit to the most exacting and loving parents. A few years later our grief was more intensified by the heart-breaking loss of Rawheya, one of our daughters, at the age of twenty when she was in the flower of her youth and beauty. Her loving nature, her sweetness and her most attractive and outstanding personality, spread happiness amongst all who came in contact with her. Tragedy after tragedy left hardly any life in us but my wife's love for our other children and her utter unselfishness made her soar above these calamities though her heart was crushed and her health irreparably affected. In my presence she hid the pain of the loss of our children, showing me such kindness and affection that she inspired me with peace. To me she was a messenger of God's grace who brought peace to my heart, the peace that God promises to those who abide by His will.

Although she joined her Maker in 1952 she has left me with happy memories of our life together. She has also left me my dear daughters

Samira, Isis and Shahira, their children and their husbands, in whose company I shall find consolation and enjoyment to the end of my days. To me they are the torches which light my way. I live on their love and pray to God, with all my heart, to grant them happiness and comfort.

In loving memory of my wife, may God have mercy upon her, I should mention something of the charitable societies she founded. She never boasted of anything she did; nobody knew of most of her charitable actions and even I only heard of some of them after her death. I shall just make mention of the associations she created and which are still yielding fruit.

In 1939 it occurred to my wife to establish the "Friends of the Holy Bible Association," enlisting the help of ladies and young women desirous of participating in charitable work.

I quote here the words of Dr. Wadie Farag, a great friend and eminent lawyer, in a speech delivered in a memorial service held for her in 1952. "The late Mrs. Fayka Mahfouz in taking the decision to enter the field of school work had two praiseworthy aims in view; and one means by which to reach them, and that is the Association of the Friends of the Bible.

"Her first aim was to open schools, free of charge, for boys and girls of poor families in order to provide education and religious teaching and, at the same time, to supply food, clothing and medical care for them and their families. Six schools have been opened in Cairo and four in the provinces. Over one thousand eight hundred pupils are cared for. Most of them obtain the Government's Primary Certificate." But my wife often thought of what would become of these poor children after having obtained the Primary Certificate and after deep reflection she decided to set up a vocational school where they could continue their education and learn crafts which would enable them to earn their living and to become respectable citizens.

"With this purpose in mind she bought a piece of land of about 1,000 square metres at Kubbeh but death overtook her before she could complete her noble project. The Society Council, however, went on with the scheme and named it the 'Fayka Mahfouz's Vocational Foundation'. It consists of two sections, one for boys containing four departments; carpentry, printing, rug-making and typing. The second

section is for girls, again comprising four departments; dressmaking and dress designing, sewing, knitting and embroidery, and domestic sciences.

"The second aim is not as obvious at the first. It was her love of doing good and inspiring all those around her to do the same. From her hard work and dedicated service for others she derived her happiness and serenity. As founder and President of the Association she was outstanding and shed her light on all who worked with her."

Lastly I should like to give a brief historical account of my wife's ancestry. It is especially interesting in view of the light it sheds on the historical events which occurred at the end of the reign of the Mamelukes, and the appearance of the Mohamad Aly dynasty which governed Egypt from 1805 to 1952. My references in this brief account are taken from the celebrated historical book *Wonders of Antiquity* by El Gabarti, *The Copts in the Nineteenth Century* by Tewfik Skaros, and from the archives of the library of the Abdine Palace.

In his book El Gabarti mentions Rizk, my wife's earliest ancestor on record, who lived at the time of the Mamelukes. To quote him, "He was the Chief Counsellor, and the Chief Treasurer in charge of the Royal Mint, and charged with all financial matters." No Copt ever reached the high position he occupied. Some members of his family lived in the Province of Sharkia, others in the Province of Dakahlia. His two sons were known for their wisdom and sagacity. The inhabitants of their province used to refer to them to settle disputes and problems. Ali Bey the Great heard of their ability and issued the following decree to the Governor of the Province of East Delta, "Coming to you, the brothers Gabriel and Nessim, to be put in charge of all legal matters, including the application of Muslim Law." Signed Ali Bey El Kebir, dated 1st of Moharram 1183 A.H. (This is probably the only case in which a Copt was appointed as judge in the Mohammedan Law Courts.) It may be well worth mentioning what El Gabarti says about Aly Bey El Kebir, Chief of the Mamelukes. It was he who proclaimed Egypt's independence from the Ottoman Empire and introduced many important reforms. He was, however, betrayed and killed by one of the Mamelukes who worked under him. His counsellor Rizk escaped this fate by the influence of a number of Mamelukes who had a very high opinion of his capabilities. Some years later, during the rule of Mohammed Ali,

Viceroy of Egypt, his grandson, also named Rizk, was granted the title of Agha for his services. This title was granted only to very few important governors. He was also put in charge of a large part of the Province of the East Delta which today comprises the provinces of Dakahlia and Sharkia.

Rizk Agha was a very powerful and outstanding man whose influence was felt throughout most of the provinces east of the Damietta branch of the Nile. He was a very competent and firm ruler who managed to maintain peace and security. Gabarti refers to official letters, written by Mohammed Ali to Rizk Agha, addressing him as "Rizk Agha Gabriel, the Pearl of the Honourable, Governor of the Dakahlia. Signed Mohammed Ali, dated 5th Ragab 1245."

In March 1822 Ibrahim Pasha and Moallem Ghali, who was head clerk of the Mohammed Ali Government, paid Rizk Agha a visit and stayed for some days. After the visit they went to a nearby town but when Moallem Ghali criticised the Pasha's wish to impose double taxation on certain lands the Pasha shot him dead and gave orders that the body should be left in the open as a prey for the vultures. None dared to bury the body until Rizk Agha, learning of it, rode to where the body was lying and buried it in the Coptic Church. When Ibrahim Pasha asked him why he had dared to disobey his orders, he answered, "My Lord, you can only take your revenge from the living."

Rizk Agha died leaving two sons. One of them, Youssef, became a member of the Legislative Council and from the other, Rizk, my wife was descended.

Chapter 17

THE 1914-1918 WAR

The School of Medicine in 1914

The 1914 war was a catastrophe to the whole world and Egypt had her ample share of suffering. A side effect of the war was that it was instrumental in demonstrating to the whole world the capacity of Egyptians to manage their own affairs. As an example I shall mention the effect it had on the staff of the School of Medicine.

When the war broke out, most of the British professors at the Medical School volunteered for service with the army. German and Austrian members of the staff had to leave the country with the result that the Egyptian assistant professors at the Medical School and at Kasr El Aini Hospital had to fill the vacancies. The competence they showed in teaching and administration earned for them the admiration of their professors, and professorial chairs were created which were gradually occupied by the assistant staff.

Moreover, many of the leading professors of the medical schools in Great Britain, who had also volunteered for service, came to Egypt and witnessed for themselves the ability of their Egyptian colleagues which became even more evident when the military hospitals could not accommodate the wounded and Kasr El Aini Hospital was taken over by the army. The hospital was soon filled with the sick and wounded who were looked after by the Egyptian staff. For instance, although a gynaecologist and obstetrician and not a general surgeon, I was put in charge of a section of forty beds and performed all the necessary surgical operations on Australian and British soldiers, while I also looked after Turkish prisoners of war in their special ward.

Within a short time I was invited by the British authorities to be a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology to the wives of British officers. All gynaecological and obstetrical operations necessary were performed

by me at the Anglo-American Hospital and this arrangement continued throughout the war. Friendly relations with the leading British surgeons who came from time to time were thus established.

In the latter years of the war the wife of a great medical personality suffered a serious illness and was brought to the Anglo-American hospital. Dr. Keatinge, Dean of the Medical School, asked me to look after her. I operated on her and the operation not only cured her disease but also her sterility and when she returned home to Australia she ultimately gave birth to two sons and two daughters. In 1932 she and her four children accompanied her husband who was on his way to London to take part in the celebrations of the Centenary of the British Medical Association. When their plane stopped at Cairo they went straight to my clinic and, without my knowledge, hung a water-colour painting of their four children in the reception room. They also left me a beautiful cystoscope as a present. Fortunately, I met them later at the Centenary celebration in London where I was able to thank them for their gifts.

In May 1919 I contracted typhus fever which I caught from a patient through not having noticed a scratch on one of my fingers when I operated without gloves, which we were short of during the war. Thirteen days after performing the operation symptoms of typhus appeared. The attack was exceptionally severe and I was looked after by my two friends Dr. Sami Sabongi and Dr. Iskandar Girgawi. I had all the possible complications that may follow this disease, one of which was thrombosis of the femoral vein which occurred a week after recession of the temperature.

During my illness the wife of one of the well-known generals in the British Army went into labour. I had previously treated her for a fibroid of the uterus but was naturally unable to look after her and asked one of my colleagues, Dr. Ahmed Shafik, to replace me. She gave birth to a girl who was the delight of her parents as they were advanced in years and had given up hope of having children. Twenty years later I was spending a short holiday at the Mena House Hotel, near the Pyramids, when I was asked to look after one of the hotel residents. She happened to be the sister of the British General, whose wife had been attended by Dr. Shafik. I inquired about the little girl and was told that she had become a leading London beauty.

The 1919 Revolution

When the First World War came to an end, the yearning for independence which had long been smouldering in the breasts of all Egyptians suddenly flared up into a conflagration that swept the whole country. Egyptians expected that the fourteen principles put up by President Wilson, which assured human rights and the rights of every nation for self-determination, would come into effect. Unfortunately those principles were violated and no sign of their fulfilment was in view.

A revolutionary spirit pervaded the whole nation and was nurtured by the national leader Saad Zaghloul and his courageous collaborators. The spark needed for the outburst of revolution came when they were arrested. The whole nation participated in the revolution, the illiterate as well as the educated. Peasants, workmen, lawyers, medical men and engineers demonstrated throughout the country, demanding Egypt's independence, carrying banners on which the crescent and the cross were intertwined. Mohammedan Ulemas delivered inflammatory orations in the Christian churches and Priests did the same in Al-Azhar Mosque. Women of all classes of society took off their veils and joined in the demonstrations.

Within a month of the revolution the British authorities found it absolutely necessary to free Zaghloul and his colleagues and later on the Protectorate was abolished.

At a much later date the army of occupation was withdrawn to the Suez Canal zone, and later still the restrictions which had been shamefully and unjustly imposed upon Egyptians were abolished.

All these vital successes were ultimately crowned by the achievement of complete and unconditional independence and the withdrawal of the occupation army after the 1952 Revolution led by President Gamal Abdel Nasser and his brave colleagues.

Chapter 18

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MATERNITY HOSPITALS AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES

In a previous chapter I related how, for the first time since the Egyptian School of Medicine was founded, I had succeeded in opening an out-patient department for gynaecology. This was followed by the reservation of two wards of ten beds each in the hospital for gynaecological cases and difficult labours.

Before long many of the poorer classes of patients, who could not be admitted to hospital for lack of beds, began to ask for my help, free of charge, in their own homes. Responding to their appeals gave me a golden opportunity of applying what I had learned in books on difficult labour, such as those by Herman and Jellett and Galabin and others. After a few months the medical officers of health appointed by the Government in the different quarters of Cairo, whose duty included attending women suffering from difficult labour, began to ask for my help in delivering such cases. I did so willingly and ultimately made an arrangement with them that I would help them in all their cases of difficult labour without remuneration, leaving all fees to them.

I bought a sterilising apparatus, some instruments and a portable operating table, which I took with me to the patients' homes. I was also lucky in finding a male nurse, Hassanein, whom I taught to sterilise instruments and give anaesthesia. I also found it necessary to take sterilised water with me in a cylinder of ten litres capacity.

In order to be able to answer these calls promptly I had a telephone fixed beside my bed with a switch to the clinic where my male nurse slept. As soon as a call came I would contact him and he would bring the necessary equipment, which was always kept sterilised and ready for use, with him in a cab, pick me up and we would go to the patient's home. I carried on in this way for fifteen years and I do not recall having slept at home more than two nights a week throughout all these years.

In those days my work was, undoubtedly, very strenuous but I did it with pleasure and gained valuable experience in dealing with difficult labour cases. This experience stood me in good stead when teaching at the faculty.

Our great handicap in those days was the non-existence of maternity hospitals in Egypt. This situation could not go on indefinitely and I had to find a solution to the problem. After the death of the first wife of the British Ambassador, Lord Cromer, a group of her friends decided to start an orphanage for abandoned children in her memory which they called "Lady Cromer's Refuge". This was built next to the Kasr El Aini Hospital and was put under the same administration. It was soon found that this orphanage was not serving its purpose as the abandoned children who were picked up from the streets were in such a bad state of health that most of them, if not all, died of pneumonia. I therefore made a report on this state of affairs and asked to have the orphanage turned into a maternity centre, while reserving some beds for the waifs. I handed this report to the Director of the Hospital, Mr. Owen Richards, with a request that it should be submitted to the Board of the orphanage. This he did and presented the case with such force that the proposition was unanimously accepted. I should point out that many of the members of this ladies' committee were my clients. The building was composed of three floors, so I reserved the ground floor for an out-patient clinic, the first floor for normal deliveries and the second floor for cases of difficult labour. The number of deliveries soon exceeded the capacity of the hospital and I had therefore to find another solution to the problem.

In 1919, during my convalescence from typhus fever, I had ample time to think out a solution. I thought of starting an external midwifery service beginning with two centres, renting one or two rooms in a house and making one of the qualified nurses (hakeemas, as we call them in Arabic) or a pupil nurse responsible for answering calls from anyone desiring to have his wife attended at home free of charge. I would furnish each centre with the necessary instruments and medicines. I explained my project to the hospital administration but it was not received with enthusiasm either by the director or the matron. They agreed, however, that I could start the work on my own responsibility. More serious opposition came from the Department of Public Health

which forbade the hakeemas of the hospital to work on this project and even threatened to suspend their pay if they did so. This threat was carried out and the pay of two nurses was suspended for six months but this did not deter me for I paid their salaries regularly out of my own pocket. It was slow work at the beginning but by the end of two months the two centres were so inundated with applications that I had to send final-year students, under the guidance of an assistant obstetrician, to conduct the normal deliveries. Difficult cases were removed at once to the hospital. I used to inspect the two centres regularly to see how the work was carried on. For the first time in Egypt it was possible to effect domiciliary deliveries with all the necessary aseptic precautions. (It is interesting to note that a similar plan was started in England almost a year later.)

Nevertheless, I was subjected to quite unexpectedly severe criticism in the daily press for inviting the co-operation of students of both sexes in this work without sufficient supervision and without the permission of the parents of the female students. I was held responsible for whatever misconduct might occur in these centres or during the visits of students and nurses to the homes where they assisted in the deliveries. To counteract this malicious attack I immediately called the parents of the students and had a talk with them. I asked them what they would do when their daughters graduated. Would they appoint eunuchs to chaperone them? They laughed and said, "Certainly not." "In that case," I said, "I wish you to sign a statement saying that you accept full responsibility for allowing your children to continue this work." They all signed willingly. It is worth noting that during the last forty-three years there have been no complaints whatsoever of misconduct by students or nurses, either in the centres or in the patients' homes.

When the Department of Health was convinced of the success of domiciliary deliveries it refunded the nurses' salaries for the period during which they had been suspended. Seven years later the Department of Health, which had then become a Ministry, opened similar centres and their success has been such that they effected a quarter of a million deliveries last year.

The next step I took was to open a section for ante-natal supervision for all patients who applied for delivery at the hospital or in the centres

which we opened in the slums. Following upon this I established a child welfare section in the Kasr El Aini Hospital. My colleague, Professor Dobbin, had volunteered in the First World War and had undergone a serious operation later. When he had recovered and returned to work he was very pleased to see what I had done during his absence. I have explained all this in detail in my book, *History of Medical Education in Egypt*, which I wrote in English and which was published by the University in 1935.

I will quote here part of the address given by my friend and colleague, Professor Ibrahim Shawky, at the reception given on my retirement from the Faculty of Medicine. He was then Rector of the Cairo University and later Minister of Health.

> "I wish to emphasise today that the great success that Dr. Mahfouz had in opening maternity hospitals and centres for domiciliary midwifery depended to a great extent on the efficiency of the graduates of the School of Nurses and Midwives. This school owes everything to him. Mahfouz Pasha reorganised this school, and taught general nursing and midwifery to its pupils for over thirty years, so that not less than a thousand experienced midwives graduated under him. His two books on nursing and midwifery were, and still are, the principal sources on these two subjects. He did this exhausting work in addition to his work as Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the Faculty of Medicine.
>
> "He, moreover, established the first ante-natal clinic for pregnant women in Egypt and, a year later, the first child welfare centre services which grew and flourished in all parts of the country. He started by devoting two days a week to examining pregnant women and following them up until their delivery when either they were sent to hospital or, if they preferred to have their deliveries at home, a midwife or student or doctor was sent to them.
>
> "When I returned from my education mission in September, 1920, I took charge of a part of what Mahfouz had started in the Maternity Centre, which was the clinic for the newly born. It was by following the success of this centre that the Ministry of Public Health established, in 1937, maternity and child welfare centres which now number over a hundred in all parts of the country."

Mortality Rate of Children

I must add here that the death rate in children has fallen considerably, thanks to the many private hospitals which were opened by Government and private organisations. The former were sponsored by Dr. Ibrahim Shawky, who gave his valuable help to the two hospitals which he founded at Abou El Riche and Kasr El Aini. In the same field Dr. Hafez Afifi deserves much credit for building a well-equipped hospital for children which he annexed to the Faculty of Medicine. Later he erected another children's hospital at Sayeda Zeinab which is the biggest hospital of its kind in Egypt. The present Minister of Health, Professor El Nabawy El Mohandes, is its President and I am a member of its Board.

I also wish to mention here my great appreciation of the work done in the different child welfare centres erected in Cairo by the committees of the Lady Cromer and Lady Lloyd Dispensaries. These dispensaries are now run efficiently by Mme. Hafez Afifi with the co-operation of some well-known Egyptian ladies, gentlemen and doctors, of whom I am one.

Chapter 19

DANGERS TO OBSTETRICIANS ON BEING SUMMONED TO CONDUCT HOME DELIVERIES

When maternity hospitals increased in number and several gynaecologists started their own private hospitals, they solved a problem which had been a source of anxiety to many obstetricians and midwives previously called upon to attend deliveries in patients' homes. Most of these calls were made in the small hours of the morning and some professional thieves used to ask doctors and midwives to attend non-existent deliveries where, under armed threat, they subsequently robbed them of their money and jewellery.

I remember, for example, three incidents which happened within one week. The first involved Mr. Madden, Professor of Surgery at the Faculty of Medicine, who was summoned by a well-dressed handsome young man to perform a Caesarean section in a town in the Delta. This young man informed the Professor that two of his pupils, now doctors, had prepared everything for the operation and were awaiting his arrival. The man urged Mr. Madden to accompany him immediately on the 3 p.m. train, which would arrive at the town in question at 5 o'clock, so that he could return to Cairo by the 8 o'clock express train after finishing the operation. When they arrived at the railway station the thief pretended that he had left his wallet behind and asked Mr. Madden if he could lend him £10. The young man took the money and went to buy the train tickets but never came back. While waiting Mr. Madden looked for his watch and found that it too had gone.

Two days later a man called at 2 a.m. on Mrs. Aisha Sami, a well-known midwife, and asked her to attend his wife's confinement. The midwife responded to the call but the man drove her to a deserted place where, at gunpoint, he took her jewels and money.

The thieves did not think fit to refuse me this honour. Less than two weeks had passed after Mr. Madden's experience when a Mr. Shaker

visited me. Unfortunately for him he had no idea that Mr. Madden had told me of his mishap. This Shaker told me a story similar to Mr. Madden's whereupon I immediately invited him into the drawing-room, waited until his coffee was served and excused myself for a few minutes to make the necessary preparations, and took the opportunity to get in touch with the police. I gave the police officer, who happened to be the husband of one of my patients, the details and he arrived almost immediately with a policeman. Mr. Shaker was arrested and led to the police station.

There is a humorous sequel to this story. On my return home from the police station I found the servants gathered in the drawing-room. One of them, Hassaballah by name, had noticed the thief hide something under the armchair when the police officer entered. He thought that it was a bomb which was about to explode and he tried to draw it out with a curved cane. However every time he tried to do so the other servants, who had come to his assistance, would jump back fearing that the bomb would explode. When I entered the drawing-room I suggested lifting the armchair to see what was under it. We did so and found that it was the thief's wallet, containing his papers, which I immediately sent to the police. Later I learned that the thief was a former law student who had failed his course and had been jailed several times before for fraud. This time he got a sentence of six months.

There was another attempt to rob me and that too miscarried. A man called at 1 a.m. informing me that his wife was in labour and I went with him, taking my bag, and hired a horse-drawn carriage. On the way I asked him a few questions about his wife's condition but he seemed to hesitate and stammer and began to contradict himself. By this time we had neared a police station so I asked the driver to stop, saying I wanted to ring up home and tell them where I was going. I got down and as soon as I did so the man jumped from the other side of the carriage and disappeared into the night.

And now I wish to refer to the brighter side of my experiences. Once, in 1921, I was spending my holidays on a small farm which I owned when a friend of mine who was holidaying at the town of Port Said contacted me by telephone and told me that his daughter was having a difficult labour and had had a severe haemorrhage. The doctors who were attending her

had requested my presence so I immediately headed for Port Said by car. I had scarcely reached Ismailia when I found that traffic on the road had been stopped because a new irrigation canal was being dug. There was only one way to continue my journey and that was for my car to be carried across the excavated canal to reach the other side. I stood there wondering what to do. It happened that some of the workers returning from the fields discovered my predicament, came to my help and carried my car, with me in it, across the canal. I offered a handsome tip to their foreman but he refused to receive money for an emergency. At last I arrived at Port Said and the baby was delivered safely. It was a boy who is now one of my medical assistants at the Coptic Hospital. Ten days later a strange coincidence occurred. A lady who was having a difficult labour was brought to the Coptic Hospital where I delivered her baby. When her father came to pay the fees I found that he was the same man who had refused money for carrying my car across the canal. I refused to take any fees from him and exempted him from paying the hospital expenses as well.

I was asked to attend another difficult labour at a town called Al Saf in Giza province at the time of the Nile flood. The Nile waters were very high, threatening the river banks. However, I managed to get to the village accompanied by a relative of the patient. We arrived there at noon and I stayed by her bedside for six hours until the danger was over. The lady had a rupture of the posterior wall of the uterus and I treated her conservatively.

On my return home in the evening I found the road blocked. Stones were brought to strengthen the river bank which blocked the road. However, what had happened on the previous occasion was here repeated. Some peasants came and carried my car over the stones and I was surprised that they too refused at first to take any money for their services. However, this time I insisted that they should accept.

Chapter 20

IN SUPPORT OF JUSTICE

At the Law Courts

It often happened that I was called to give an opinion in cases brought before the Law Courts in which obstetrical and gynaecological problems needed clarification. Two of these cases filled the press and were the talk of society for a long time.

The first concerned a rich lady who was married to a wealthy man who had an estate consisting of thousands of acres of land in the Dakahlia Province. The husband had been previously married and had a son and a daughter by his first marriage. A year before his death he married for the second time. Five months after his death the new wife alleged that she had given birth to a son and that she and her son were entitled to half the estate of the deceased. The case lasted for a long time in the Law Courts, in the course of which the new wife managed to get a certificate from the head of the Medico-Legal Department confirming that she had definitely been pregnant, and that symptoms of previous birth were present. She won a verdict in her favour. The first wife took the case to the Supreme Court and a controversy arose among the doctors who were called upon to give their views. So the Supreme Court decided that I should examine the lady and give the final opinion in the matter.

Two days before the day fixed for examination the lady came to my clinic accompanied by a well-known colleague. Her companion told me all the details and opened a briefcase which the lady carried with her, saying, "All the money in this case is yours" intimating that one thousand acres were at stake and that, if the lady offered me the price of a hundred acres of land for a favourable opinion, she would not be the loser. When the doctor had finished all he had to say I gave him a severe lecture on professional honour and I dismissed him and the lady without making an examination. I at once wrote to the President of the Court,

asking to be relieved of the task, but the Court insisted that I should examine the patient and give an opinion. I had no alternative but to do so. On examining her I found the scar of a wound in the perineum and a tear in the cervix. Both of these were evidently the result of incisions made with a knife and not the result of delivery. I made my report and submitted it to the Court with the result that the lady's suit was rejected. An interesting footnote to this case is that the lady quarrelled with the doctor who had made these incisions for a fee of £100 and she took him to Court where the whole plot was disclosed.

The second case was that of a lady who had married a rich man who held a farm of a thousand acres under a deed of trust. The trust stipulated that the land would only go to male offspring and not to female. The heir died, leaving five daughters, so that the land was automatically given to the younger brother's son. However, the wife of the deceased declared that she was in her second month of pregnancy at the time of her husband's death and the Court referred her to the Chief Medico-Legal Officer for examination. The latter did not immediately submit his report but asked the lady to visit him every month until she gave birth to her child and then he would submit his report. The day came when the patient went into labour but when the Chief Medico-Legal Officer was summoned he was nowhere to be found. A well-known obstetrician was called and he effected the delivery. He was assisted by an anaesthetist who was an assistant professor at the Faculty of Medicine and who happened to be present at the lady's house at the time of the delivery. She gave birth to a boy. An hour later the Chief Medico-Legal Officer appeared and the lady asked him to examine her and submit a report. This he refused to do and said that the lady was never pregnant and that the baby was not hers. Subsequently he submitted a report to this effect to the Court, which had no alternative but to ask another doctor to examine her. However, the latter's report did not agree with that of the Medico-Legal Officer and a debate arose between the two doctors which lasted for forty days. Finally the Court asked three gynaecologists, Dr. Dobbin, Professor of Gynaecology, Dr. Hamilton, the Medico-Legal expert, and myself to give our opinion. Drs. Dobbin and Hamilton refused to examine the patient, saying that signs of recent delivery usually disappear after forty days. I, however,

disagreed with them, although Dr. Dobbin was my chief, and carried out the examination alone submitting my own report to the Court. The Court referred the report to the other two members for opinion. They studied it and suggested that the three of us should re-examine the patient. I pointed out to them that there were three signs present which were in favour of a recent delivery. These were the subinvolution of the uterus, metrorrhagia, and the presence of milk in the breasts. They agreed with me and mentioned in their report that the Head of the Medico-Legal Department had made a big mistake in refusing to examine the patient when he arrived one hour after delivery, when all the signs of a recent labour would have been easily detected.

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At the Council of the Faculty of Medicine

Political as well as other currents often tended to influence decisions taken by the Faculty Council of which I was a member. I firmly stood against this and endeavoured to maintain justice, placing scientific considerations above all else. Indeed, I have often put myself into difficult situations in trying to do so. I shall refer here to a few of these incidents in order to give the reader an idea of the pattern of life in those days with its good and bad sides. This may be of help to the younger generations.

The new buildings in Manial University Hospital were not completed because of a shortage of cash amounting to £20,000. The Cabinet was rather reluctant to allocate the money and subsequently the Dean of the Faculty went to the Prime Minister to discuss the question with him and was promised the sum. As it happened one of the housemen, the Prime Minister's son, wanted to be appointed to the staff of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department. The rule was that no houseman could be appointed to the department's permanent staff unless he had gone through the following procedure. Firstly he would complete one year's housemanship. If he proved satisfactory he would be elected as resident gynaecologist in the department for two more years. If at the end of that period he again proved satisfactory, he would be sent to study in

England and sit for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. If he obtained the qualification he would be appointed tutor at the department for a period of two years and then promoted to assistant surgeon when a vacancy occurred. However, we were all amazed to read in the *Journal Officiel* a decree appointing the Prime Minister's son an assistant surgeon in the Obstetric and Gynaecological Department.

At the next meeting of the Faculty Council we discussed this question for a considerable time and at the end the Council decided to approve the appointment. The Council was badly in need of the Cabinet's good will in order to obtain the money required for the buildings. I, however, objected to the Council's decision and asked for permission to call on the Prime Minister myself, especially as I was the family gynaecologist and had attended his wife's labour when she had given birth to the son who was the subject of the controversy. The Council agreed so next day I went to the Prime Minister's office and explained to him the ill effects of this decision, warning him of the repercussions of such a promotion in terms of professional experience and of the hatred his son would be likely to earn from his colleagues. I also explained that such exemption would be a precedent which would have serious effects on the rules of appointments at the Faculty of Medicine. The Prime Minister saw my point and thanked me for the attitude I had taken. He informed me that he was unaware that the decree was in conflict with the byelaws of the Faculty and that the Dean of the Faculty did not mention anything about such rules. He then said that he was keen on the idea of his son joining the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology because I was head of it, hoping that I would make a good doctor of him.

The Prime Minister requested me to inform the Faculty Council of his intention to withdraw the decree.

A similar case occurred some years later when the Faculty Council was asked to appoint as assistant in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology a resident who was sent to England to obtain the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons but failed to do so after having studied there for seven years. According to the rules he should have been dismissed and this was done. Some years later he obtained the Fellowship and applied again for the post. The senior members of the Gynaecological Section refused his application because of a most undesirable

situation in which he had become involved and the Council also unanimously refused his application.

However, the candidate went over the Council's head to the Prime Minister with whom he was on very friendly terms. The Prime Minister tried to use his influence advising the Faculty Council, as well as the Board of the University, to alter their decision and agree to the candidate's appointment but he did not succeed. The Prime Minister then paid me a visit at home in order to persuade me to alter my attitude. When all his endeavours had failed he issued a Cabinet decree appointing this doctor as Assistant Professor at the Department. The School Council acquiesced. Professor Dobbin, Professor Shafeek and I promptly sent in our resignations in protest as did Professor Henry, the Head of the Surgical Department, and the four of us left the Faculty. Three months later the Cabinet fell and Ali Maher was chosen as Prime Minister. On the very day of his appointment he issued a decree annulling the decree of his predecessor, which had been the cause of our resignation, and we were asked to return forthwith to the Faculty and resume our work.

The next incident had strange international aspects.

The Faculty Council had announced a vacancy in the Medical Section for a Professor of Clinical Medicine but none of the applicants was up to the standard required. One of these was a physician named Schrumph Pierron. He did not wait for a reply to his application but came straight to Cairo accompanied by his wife. He managed to make friends with several cabinet ministers and subsequently received an invitation to the Palace. When Schrumph's application was being discussed at the Faculty Council I called the attention of the Council to a point I had noticed in the dossier presented by Schrumph, which appeared to me to be peculiar; this was that he had never kept any appointment for more than six months. On two occasions he had left before even three months had elapsed. I therefore suggested to the Council that enquiries be made to find out the reasons which led to his leaving his posts before his contracts had expired. However, my proposal did not seem to meet with Professor Wilson's views; nor did it meet with the approval of the left-wing front of the Council whose leader at the time was Dr. Khalil Abdel Khalek, a capable man and a very good debater. Dr. Abdel Khalek explained to the Council that Schrumph had written an important

book on cardiology and that Professor Vaquez, the world famous cardiologist, had written its introduction. Moreover, Schrumph submitted about a hundred papers on various diseases which he had published and, as a result, the Council approved his appointment.

A few weeks later the School of Medicine became a Faculty of the University, resulting in a Committee being set up to look into the qualifications of the medical staff of the School. We used to call this committee "The Sieving Committee". Among its leading members were Doctor Wilson and Doctor Schrumph. After several meetings the committee recommended the dismissal of a number of Egyptian professors and assistant professors among whom was a great surgeon who was accused of being careless in his lectures to the students and in attending his hospital patients. This raised a big storm which led to the omission of the surgeon's name from the list of those to be dismissed and to the reduction of this list to twelve members only, five of whom were very capable teachers. The Faculty Council did not seem to disapprove of the committee's decision although the Council members were aware that the persons dismissed were far more capable than some of the members of the staff who were not recommended for dismissal. Consequently I took on myself the task of having the committee's decision revoked since it was a biased one.

I went to the Prime Minister Adly Yakan whom I knew personally, having been his family's doctor for many years, and revealed to him the corruption prevalent at the Medical School and Hospital, pointing out the injustice and ill-will of the committee's decision. The Prime Minister ordered a close investigation of the affair which led to the rejection of the committee's decision and the reinstatement of the dismissed doctors with the exception of one who had managed to get a better post at the Moassat Hospital in Alexandria and who refused to return.

In my book, *The History of Medical Education in Egypt*, I referred to the state of degradation into which the Faculty had fallen during the days of Schrumph and I state here once more that during his period of service the Faculty was subject to plots, conspiracies and even espionage. Schrumph and his hangers-on from among the junior doctors managed to get the students on their side by going to the lecture hall just a few days before the examination and dictating the examination questions to them

and even by going so far as to advise them on the way in which questions should be answered.

As for Schrumph's incompetence, there was no end to it. He once diagnosed a patient as having an ulcer of the stomach and asked Doctor Ali Ibrahim to operate. When the surgeon operated he could find no trace of an ulcer and as soon as Schrumph got wind of this he claimed that the patient had been substituted for another just before the operation. Postmortems made on some of his patients proved that the man was no good whatsoever as a diagnostician.

It was a great pity that this man received the support of some of our cabinet members and that even the King himself did not suspect the man's dishonesty. At long last, however, the Faculty Council decided that it could remain silent no longer. Some of the Council Members wrote to the world famous cardiologist who, Schrumph alleged, had written the introduction to his book and asked him if he had read Schrumph's book and if he had really written the introduction. The eminent cardiologist replied stating that he had only known of the book's appearance on receiving the letter and, having now read it, found it to be worthless. Moreover, he promised to take the necessary legal action against Schrumph for having used his name without permission. Now, the Professor of Chemistry at the Faculty had a sister who was married to a French professor at the University of Strasbourg from which Schrumph had qualified. The Professor wrote to his sister asking for information regarding Schrumph and received in reply a record of this man's black and dismal past.

Meanwhile Schrumph and his principal supporter, Dr. Wilson, continued to harm the Faculty. Schrumph's next step was to write an unsigned article in the magazine *Al Kashkol* attacking the competence of the British professors at the Medical School and accusing them of being a group of ignoramuses. One of the British professors brought the article to the attention of the British Embassy in Cairo who carried out an investigation and discovered that Schrumph, who was a French subject, was a spy for the German Government. Schrumph and Wilson got wind of this enquiry and as a result Wilson contacted me and hinted that some of the medical staff were hatching plots against him and Schrumph. He asked if I could use my good offices to stop them stating that the

punishment for the plotters would be severe as his friend, Schrumph, had the support of King Fouad and the Cabinet.

The following day Schrumph stood on a table in the hospital garden and told a crowd of students who had gathered, "The time has come to put through the reforms which would contribute towards improving the Faculty's reputation. These include the sacking of some of the incompetent professors who will be replaced by the assistant staff who have long been trodden on and who are far superior to the heads of their departments." Schrumph went on, saying, "I am sorry to say that Naguib Mahfouz, who in my opinion and that of Dr. Wilson is a very competent man, has of late joined the plotters' camp and, consequently, will be the first to be dismissed." He had just reached this point in his speech when a messenger from the Ministry of Education quickly made his way towards him, saluted and handed him a message. No sooner had Schrumph read the message than he began to sway and finally collapsed. The message was from the Minister of Education who informed him that his services at the Faculty were no longer required and ordered him to leave the premises at once. At the same time police officers had sealed his office on account of the charges brought against him by the French Government. Two days later Wilson was relieved of his post as Dean and was returned to the Physiology Department where he stayed for another six months before being put on pension.

After his dismissal Schrumph remained in Cairo until the French Government completed its investigations. In the meantime Crown Prince Muhammad Ali had an attack of coronary thrombosis and Sir John Patterson was called in to examine him. He advised the Prince to remain in bed for two months. The Prince, however, insisted on going to Europe and was advised to call in Schrumph who examined him and decided that there was nothing wrong with his heart. He immediately published his report in the local press. By this time, however, the French Government had finished its investigation and Schrumph was deported to Strasbourg where he was arrested by the French police and sent to court on a serious espionage charge. He was sentenced to death and was executed.

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Within the Walls of the Council

I shall now describe, in a few words, how I was defeated in an attempt to improve the method of selecting house officers. Selection of housemen was left to the heads of the different departments. The names were submitted to the Faculty Council as a formality but the Council always approved the recommendations, however unjust or biased. Many members of the Council tried hard to put an end to this injustice but to no avail. Our objections were completely disregarded. It then occurred to me to draft a law governing the appointments of the housemen and registrars in the various departments, stipulating that only those with the requisite qualifications should be appointed. I suggested that a special card for each student should be kept in every department where he had served. At the end of his term the head of the section would sign the card, giving the grade the student deserved. The scale of grades was excellent, good, average, pass, unsuitable. I also recommended that a special file be kept for each student containing all his cards and that the marks obtained at the final examination, as well as a report on his conduct, be included. When a house officer's post fell vacant a list of applicants would be made and put to the Council for selection.

Having prepared the draft I waited for a suitable time to submit it to the Council. This moment arrived when the Council received letters from the Palace recommending the appointment of two graduates as housemen. Fortunately the candidates were academically very poor and unsuitable while two other worthy candidates, who had won their teachers' admiration and support, were on the list for selection. As soon as this question was put to the Faculty Council all the members objected to the recommendation from the Palace and insisted on following the rules for selection, whereupon the Dean said that there were no rules for selection. I took the opportunity to submit the draft of the law I had prepared. It was vehemently attacked by the Chairman of the Council but the members of the Council were enthusiastic and approved it with the result that the two more suitable men were selected. A few months later the value of the scheme became evident. The Council agreed to follow this method in selecting demonstrators and in the choice of candidates for courses abroad.

This law was applied for three years, during which time many candidates who later proved to be the pride of the school were selected, but an incident occurred at the end of these three years that destroyed all our efforts. A new post was created in the administrative staff of the Kasr El Aini hospital. The holder of this post was known as the Inspector and among other duties he kept the dossiers of the students. During this time I was Deputy Dean of the hospital and one of my jobs was to examine the students' cards before they were presented to the Council. I went through some of the cards which were submitted by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and, much to my dismay, I found that many of them had been tampered with and my signature forged on them. I immediately went to the Dean of the Faculty and showed him the forged cards and he said that it would be best to bring the case before the Council. Ultimately the case was hushed up and the forged cards replaced by others.

I was deeply disappointed and tried to bring the case before the authorities but to no avail. There were always some undercurrents that obstructed and spoiled our efforts. I had no alternative but to tender my resignation as Deputy Dean but, of course, retained my post as Professor. A few months later I resigned from the University Council as a protest against outside interference.

Chapter 21

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF TROPICAL DISEASES

The Medical Congress held in Cairo in 1935 was the biggest conference held in Egypt in modern times. We had taken all necessary precautions to prevent the disorder and confusion which are so common at big conferences. The committee was under the chairmanship of Dr. Aly Ibrahim and was composed of Dr. Khalil Abdel Khalek, myself and others. King Fouad received the members of the committee and was pleased to have the Congress held under his auspices. He asked about the measures we had taken and when we described them he gave his approval. He then asked that a special book be written on the history of the Medical School in Egypt. We regretted that no such book had been written and explained to him that there was little time left to write one as the Congress was due in barely three months' time. However the King insisted and Dr. Aly Ibrahim said, "In that case may His Majesty command Naguib Mahfouz to undertake this responsibility." The King promptly asked me to write the book. I had to agree despite the fact that I was preparing to leave for Europe in a few days to spend my summer holidays. I therefore asked for the King's permission to have access to the Palace Library in order to study the decrees issued by Mohammad Ali and his successors regarding the foundation of the School of Medicine and this he readily granted.

At that time I had a friend in the Palace by the name of Mohsen Fawzi who was of Circassian origin and who spoke Turkish very well. He was of great help to me in finding and translating all the documents from Turkish into Arabic. It was certainly a very difficult task to unearth them from the huge piles of stored documents but he did it willingly. I was now able to gather all the information connected with the establishment of the Medical School, the Nursing School and the public schools. I then visited the scientific institute, which was founded by Napoleon

during his campaign in Egypt, to look up the references on the subject. When that had been done I sat down to work and completed the book which I entitled *The History of Medical Education in Egypt*. I wrote it in English. The book was printed by the Government Press and was to be distributed to the members of the Congress. I took infinite trouble to have it ready before the Congress was held. I also took the opportunity of exhibiting, for the first time, a collection of specimens on Gynaecology and Obstetrics which I had prepared for my private work. The collection consisted of three hundred and fifty specimens representing all types of gynaecological and obstetric diseases. The Congress was attended by a number of the most eminent scientists who, on seeing the collection, advised the authorities that steps be taken to accommodate it within the school premises for the benefit of the students. Professor Dobbin, who was President of the Gynaecological and Obstetrical Section of the Congress, and I delivered a paper on the value of the lower uterus segment when performing Caesarean sections. I also delivered two lectures, one on *Solid and Cystic Tumours of the Ovary* and the other on *Urinary and Rectal Fistulae* in women. Sir William Gilliatt, who was representing the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire* at the Congress, asked the authorities for permission, which was granted, to publish the two lectures in the Journal before they appeared in the Congress Transactions. When the Congress was over I discovered that Miss Bitter, the daughter of the late Dr. Bitter former Professor of Hygiene at the Medical School, who was acting as assistant secretary at the Congress had for some reason or other omitted to distribute my book *The History of Medical Education in Egypt* to the members of the Congress. At the time I was greatly displeased but I realised that this was beneficial as it gave me the opportunity later on to distribute copies to members of the medical profession who were genuinely interested in the history of medicine in Egypt and in this way the book became widely read in medical circles.

Strangely enough, when the Congress was over, articles appeared in the local press criticising certain passages of the book. I did not bother to reply, however, as the attack did not affect the substance of the book but was concentrated on a difference of opinion regarding the ability of certain members of the school staff mentioned in it. I realised later that the person responsible for those articles was Dr. Mohamed Khalil Abdel

Khalek, Secretary of the Congress. I was not at all surprised at what he did because we held different views on such matters.

In due course Dr. Mohamed Khalil Abdel Khalek was promoted Under-Secretary of State for Public Health. He had quite a hard time with his new job at the Ministry. Once he had left the Medical School he began to look at things in a different light. He rang me up one day and asked for an appointment to see me at home where we had a long chat and recalled some of the arguments we had had as members of the Faculty Council. He then told me the reason of his visit, which was that he wished to satisfy his conscience by giving a reception in my honour at which he would make a speech referring to my contributions to the revival of the Medical Faculty. I did not agree with his wish and pointed out that I myself had always appreciated his criticism and objections and was certain that they were given in good faith. However he insisted and gave the party at the Semiramis Hotel to which he invited a large number of senior officials and delivered an excellent and eloquent speech worthy of his high office and his great reputation as a scientist. After he had delivered his speech I got up to express my thanks for his great hospitality, assuring him that the reasons which prompted him to give that reception in my honour had deeply touched me.

Two days later I went to see him in his office to thank him once more. He talked about my book *The History of Medical Education* and advised me to have it reprinted. I said that I had already started preparing the second edition and suggested that he contribute an article on the history of the Section of Parasitology, where he had spent many years as Head of the Department. He wrote the article and gave it to me and I submitted the plan of the new edition of the book to the University, suggesting that it be reprinted on the occasion of its Silver Anniversary which was due in three months. However, the University had to refuse to undertake the new edition due to lack of funds.

CHAPTER 22

MY MEMOIRS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

IN 1938 Chamberlain and Hitler met to reach agreement on the differences existing between the Western Allies and Germany. Chamberlain flew back to England where, on his arrival, when he was asked by press correspondents about the outcome of his visit he waved his famous umbrella saying "Peace in our time". However, in spite of the agreement Germany swooped down on Czechoslovakia as it had done on Austria, annexing its territories. Nevertheless the summer of 1939 approached and people were still optimistic. Consequently hundreds of Egyptians decided to leave for Europe on holiday or for treatment.

My family and I were amongst them and our destination was Karlsbad to which I went every year to undergo a treatment consisting of drinking the Karlsbad waters and taking its mineral baths. As soon as we arrived at the Imperial Hotel, where we were to stay, an official of the German administration which was then ruling Czechoslovakia informed me that my present visit to Karlsbad was the fifteenth and this entitled me to the freedom of the city. The official presented me with the customary document together with a collection of copies of beautiful paintings of Karlsbad, its surroundings and its famous institutions. I thanked him for the gift and we prepared ourselves for an enjoyable holiday. However, when walking in the streets next day, we were astonished to find that the city had a desolate appearance. The Alta Viza, which visitors to Karlsbad used to call the Rue de la Paix, was empty except for a few shops with shabby goods displayed. All shop-owners had sold their goods at low prices and fled. We stopped at a china-shop and found that the owner was selling out. We bought for £10 a china-set which had originally sold for £30. We had little hope of getting it safely to Egypt but nevertheless arranged for it to be sent and on our return home were surprised to receive it intact.

At the Imperial Hotel we were no longer served the variety of foods

we were used to and even the bread we ate was old and stale. I asked the head waiter, whom I knew well, "Is it true that the dough you use contains sawdust?" He retorted, "That is not true at all. The sawdust is only used as a crust for the loaf!" However, this did not stop us from staying at Karlsbad for the period prescribed for my treatment.

On our former visits we used to employ a middle-aged lady to do the washing and ironing. This lady used to live comfortably with her father but when she came to us that year we found her in a miserable state. She told us that the German government had deprived them of all comfort; the food was very bad, meat and butter had disappeared from the market, and she asked us to keep what was left over from our meals, our coffee-dregs and even the cigarette-ends to give to her invalid father as that would be the only comfort she could provide for him.

It was noteworthy that the people of Karlsbad, who were well known for their gaiety, were looking despondent and grim; the welcome smile with which they used to receive tourists when passing them in the fields or in the street or even at the spa centres had disappeared.

When we had finished the treatment in Karlsbad we left for Switzerland, taking a car through the Black Forest to Baden-Baden where we arrived to spend the night. In the morning we asked for breakfast. Black bread, very little tea and milk and a small piece of foul-smelling butter was served to us. When we complained to the chief waiter he replied, "We are simply carrying out Hitler's orders." We asked him to smell the butter and he said, "I know it has gone bad, but didn't you hear Hitler in his speeches saying 'Guns rather than butter'?" Hitler meant, of course, that what is spent on securing pure butter is better spent on making guns, but the way the chief waiter said it, it sounded like, 'Exposure to guns is easier than eating butter'. We laughed and the waiter laughed with us.

We left Baden-Baden by the first train and had just reached the Lucerne railway station when we were surprised to hear that Germany had concluded an attack-and-defence agreement with Russia. I then realised that war was imminent and I decided to return home at once. My family objected but I took no notice of what they said and went to Cook's to book tickets. At Cook's I was informed that there were no bookings on ships going to Egypt and we therefore decided to go to London.

When we arrived in London I went to the Egyptian Embassy for news but they did not seem to be expecting war. We could not find rooms in London to accommodate us all so we went to Weybridge on the outskirts of London where we stayed at the Oatlands Park Hotel. As we were very comfortable there we decided to remain for the rest of our holiday. However the situation was getting tense and the hotel residents used to crowd around the radio in the main hall to listen to the news broadcast every hour.

Two days later when I went up to my bedroom for my usual afternoon nap the telephone rang and I was told that the call was from Alexandria and that Mr. Ellis, the Manager of Cook's, was speaking. He informed me that he had booked tickets for all of us on the liner *El Nil* which would leave Marseilles in a few days. I wondered how he knew we wanted to book passages and remained in the dark about this until we returned to Alexandria. There we learned that my daughters Samira and Isis who were spending their holiday in Alexandria had read in the press about the agreement between Russia and Germany and were afraid that war might break out at any moment. They sent a letter to Karlsbad requesting our immediate return. We had not informed our daughters of our failure to obtain passages lest they should worry and tried from England to get in touch with them by 'phone. When the call finally went through they had all their questions prepared on a piece of paper and began by asking the date of our return. When I said that we intended to stay on until the end of the holidays they burst into tears and did not go any further with their questions. We told them that we were unable to book passages on any ship going to Egypt and gave them the name of the hotel at which we were staying. It was very difficult to hear their voices and they did not catch the name of the hotel properly. However, Samira went to Cook's office and got a directory of London with the surrounding districts and hotels where she found the names of two towns beginning with Wey. One of them was a town on the coast and she knew it was not that. The other was Weybridge. Another difficulty was the name of the hotel, whether it began with Oak or Oat, but ultimately she decided that it must be the Oatlands Park Hotel. She got in touch with Mr. Ellis who in turn telephoned me saying that he had booked our passages home.

I went downstairs immediately and informed the members of my

family of the telephone call and they retorted, "You must have been dreaming. We just heard a broadcast saying that the threat of war is no longer imminent." However I insisted and went to London to get our tickets from Cook's.

In London one of my daughters read in a special edition of one of the morning papers that navigation on the Mediterranean had stopped and we realised that war must have been or was about to be declared. It was very crowded at Cook's but we managed to get our tickets. We were, however, unable to book tickets on the boat-train from Victoria to Calais but got them the following day through the help of one of our friends. Before leaving London I called on the Egyptian Embassy and there learned that a plane had been chartered which would leave Cairo for London in order to take me and my family back to Egypt. This was being done because the Queen was in her seventh month of pregnancy and the King was afraid that she might give a premature birth as Dr. Calzolari of Alexandria expected. However we were advised that it would be safer to travel by boat lest the Germans should shoot down the plane. We were also warned that we would meet with many obstacles and delays in going to Marseilles as most of the trains were being used for moving troops.

Nevertheless we were lucky enough to be taken straight to Marseilles while other passengers had to change trains more than once. In Marseilles there were no porters at the station as they had all been mobilised but luckily we found someone to carry our bags although he insisted on warning us that we would not find accommodation in any hotel. We drove to the Hotel *Le Louvre* where we had usually stayed on our previous visits but the hotel porters refused to take our baggage. We left the luggage outside and went into the dining-room. There we met Dr. Fouad Rashid who told us that Madame Hoda Sha'rawi, the well-known Egyptian feminist leader, had come to Marseilles with him on the same train and that they had been forced to change trains three times. He had had a lot of trouble in carrying their luggage from one train to another as there were no porters. He also told us that they had had to spend the previous night on easy chairs in the hotel corridor as there were no beds available. However I was not discouraged and went to the hotel secretary's office where I put down, under the file in front of her, a

five-pound note and sat nearby without uttering a word. Ten minutes later she nodded to me and said, "Another five for the manager," which I gave her and resumed my seat. A few minutes later we were led by a waiter to the back door of the hotel and taken up to the fourth floor where we were shown to our rooms which consisted of three double-bedded rooms. When I offered the attendant a ten-shilling note he smiled and said, "In that case, come, and I will take you to better rooms." I went downstairs later and related what had happened to Doctor Rashid and Madame Hoda Sha'rawi, advising them to do the same.

In the morning the ship berthed and we got ready to go on board. Among the Egyptians sailing on the ship were Talaat Harb, Director of the Bank Misr, and Tewfik Doss, the well-known lawyer, who informed me that passengers had got into the cabins by force and that we would never get our booked cabins as they were all occupied. However they asked the Misr Company agent in Marseilles to book three berths for me and my family on the ship *Kawthar* which was specially chartered from Egypt to return holiday-makers. Talaat Harb and Tewfik Doss introduced me to the Egyptian consul in Marseilles, Dr. Albert Mansour, and requested him to do everything possible to facilitate our embarkation. The ship *El Nil* sailed on schedule but faced great difficulties on her voyage home, including a storm and a collision off Italy which put her engines out of order, but in the end she managed to dock safely in Alexandria. Dr. Albert Mansour contacted us and, in spite of the complicated French routine on account of the war, he had been able to solve all difficulties. The ship *Kawthar* arrived at Marseilles twelve days after the appointed time but this gave us the opportunity of visiting the city and its beautiful surroundings. French taxi-drivers used to buy the English pound for more than the rate of exchange for the French franc had gone down. We were greatly moved at the sight of the French women, whose sons had been recruited, wandering through the streets wailing and crying and beating their breasts. When interrogated they told us that France did not want war, that she had suffered enough in the 1914 war and had not yet recovered.

The day finally arrived when the ship was to sail. It was a terrible day and we almost gave up hope of getting on board but the experience I had learned of the magic value of the English pound in settling crises

helped me to penetrate the iron curtain surrounding the ship and we managed to get to our berths and eventually have our luggage, which had been lying on the quay, brought into our cabins at a cost of £10.

Just as the ship was about to sail a train arrived from Paris carrying the last Egyptian contingent consisting of fifty students. Naturally there was no room on board to accommodate them. The company's agent was in a dilemma and asked my advice. I went with him to the ship's captain and pointed out that many of the passengers on board the ship had no right to travel by the *Kawthar*. He replied that this was true but as they were all shareholders in the company there was nothing he could do about it. I argued with him that the ship was sent especially to bring Egyptians back home and, moreover, we should make sure that everyone on board had a visa to enter Egypt. He said that I was right and that he would investigate. I suggested that all passengers should disembark and only those who had a visa be allowed to get on board.

This advice was followed. The ship's agent, five policemen and I examined the passports before allowing anyone to embark. We only passed those who had a visa and thus we managed to find room for the fifty Egyptian students. The passengers not allowed to board the ship complained to the French authorities but the captain sailed before they could interfere, while the large crowd of deprived passengers on the quay shook their fists and shouted curses.

On board we found that the number of passengers was four times the ship's capacity. A third of these slept on the upper deck and the remainder were accommodated in the corridors. Even first and second class passengers had to sleep in the corridors or in the saloons. In the evening I met the ship's captain, accompanied by Maitre Wahib Doss, who informed me that the students on board threatened to force the foreign passengers out of their cabins. I had a meeting with the students and advised them not to use force, warning them that the foreign passengers carried firearms while the Egyptians did not. I suggested that we should reorganise the accommodation. If a man and his wife had a cabin all to themselves, they would vacate it some time during the day and four men or four women would take their place. I further suggested that those who had cabins should occupy them between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. and then move out for others from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. My suggestion met with the

approval of the passengers and the reorganisation was made. The captain asked for our help in the formation of a food and drink committee, to organise the distribution of meals and to make sure that the food in the stores would last till we got home. The captain also asked me to look after the passengers' health with daily rounds of inspection. This was carried out satisfactorily.

On board the lights were put out, even inside the cabins, lest we should be attacked by submarines or aircraft. On the fourth day of our voyage two submarines surfaced at night but fortunately we found that they were British. When we reached Italian territorial waters the captain cut off all wireless communication with Egypt. When the authorities in Egypt were unable to contact us *Al Ahram*, the daily newspaper, gloomily suggested that the ship might be lost. At last we arrived in Alexandria just as we had run out of food and drink. It was very difficult for the ship to enter port because the Italians had sunk the *Amerwia* in order to block the entrance to the port. However I found General Omar Fathy, a Palace official, waiting in a small launch to take my family and me ashore. A car drove us to our hotel and then I accompanied Omar Fathy to the Palace where I examined the Queen and found her quite fit although a little disturbed. A doctor had told her that her confinement was imminent a good two months before her expected date. I advised the Queen to move to Cairo, as Alexandria was now being subjected to air raids and torpedoes, and anyway summer was nearly over. She agreed. When I met the King, he asked me, "Who do you think is going to win the war?" I replied, "From what we saw in Marseilles, the French are not going to resist." "And the English?" he asked. I answered, "They look as if they are going to resist till the very end. They are sure that they are going to win this war." He said, "Time will show."

For about a year Italy did not enter the war and so it was possible to import vital chemicals and medicines, the lack of which we had experienced during the First World War. The country was well supplied but the drug stores hoarded these items and refused to sell to the public. Ali Maher, the Prime Minister, gave orders that the Chairman of the Delmar Company, owner of the biggest drug stores in Egypt, be arrested and flogged. When the day arrived for the whipping and the man's back was uncovered he fell into a state of terror and begged to be

released promising to flood the market with medicines. This made an excellent example, the public was able to buy everything it wanted, and no drug store dared to exploit them.

As soon as the Queen had moved to Cairo many left Alexandria and stayed in small towns and villages to get away from the air-raids. As predicted, Alexandria was heavily bombed and many places completely demolished. I remember once when I was holidaying in Alexandria during the war a bomb dropped a few yards from the hotel where I was staying. It shook the whole place savagely and the sea front was completely destroyed, while many people were killed or wounded. The explosion of the bomb caused fantastic air pressures which drove a man into a wall from a distance of about two feet.

Blackouts during air-raids were a great nuisance, especially to obstetricians. I was often called out on emergencies and, while driving, the siren would go and lights including the car's headlamps would be put out making it impossible to continue the journey. Sometimes the siren sounded when I was actually delivering a case and even then the lights had to be put out causing great difficulties for me and great hardship to my patients.

During the war I was asked by the Allied Army to act as a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology to the officers' families and I willingly accepted. Sometimes I had to go to the suburb of Maadi which is some distance from the centre of Cairo. The road was notoriously dangerous during the war, especially at night, as many robberies and assaults were carried out against car passengers during the darkness of the raids.

During my service as consultant to the Royal Army Medical Corps, I became very friendly with some of the army leaders. Field Marshal Montgomery got in touch with me one day and informed me that there was a patient at the Abassia Barracks in grave danger and in need of my help. He asked me to go there and examine her before she was taken to hospital. A private car took me to the barracks where I went to Montgomery's quarters and there I found him sitting at his desk reading the Bible. He got up and shook hands with me. Having examined the patient I found that an operation was urgently indicated and I accompanied her in the ambulance. At the hospital I operated on her and all went well. This was not the first time I had met the Field Marshal for I

had met him before at his eldest sister's house. She was married to Mr. Andrew Holden who was at that time Director of the State Domains. Montgomery referred to his sister in his Memoirs as the only member of his family who was particularly kind to him in his boyhood.

From August 1942 onwards the situation in Egypt was very critical. Rumours that Rommel had closed in on the British Army in Alamein were being circulated. At that time an Egyptian lady came to my surgery for treatment. She was staying at the Mena House Hotel near the Pyramids, where senior Generals of the British Army were staying, and she happened to meet General Auchinleck who was General Commander of the British Forces at the time. She told me that a plan based on the retreat of the Eighth Army from Alamein to the Delta had been prepared. The plan was that in case of retreat, if the Eighth Army could not hold its positions in the Delta, it would move east to Palestine or south to the Sudan. However Auchinleck was soon afterwards relieved of his command and succeeded by Montgomery who put forward an entirely new plan massing all his troops for the decisive battle. Montgomery took very strict security measures not to let the plan leak out but it was no secret that Rommel had been in touch with the Governor of Alexandria, informing him that the German Army would take over the port in two days' time and warning him that force would be used in the face of any resistance. Moreover I know for a fact that a cable from London to the General Commander in Cairo ordered that the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works be ready to flood the Province of Behera and destroy all bridges as soon as instructions to retreat were issued to the British Army.

On the 27th October, 1942, at about noon I was attending a Faculty Council Meeting when the matron of the Anglo-American Hospital requested my immediate presence. On arrival I met, at the hospital's staircase, a patient I had admitted for confinement. She informed me that she and her sister were working for the British Intelligence Service and that before their arrival in Egypt they had been in Germany to collect information of the German Army's movements. The German government discovered this and ordered them to be put under arrest but the two ladies had managed to escape though their names were put on the German black list. The patient also told me that her labour pains had started in the morning and that she was at a loss to know what to

do as secret reports had it that the German Army had breached the Alamein line and that in twenty-four hours the Germans would be in Cairo. If that happened, she continued, the first thing they would do on arrival would be to execute her. I examined her and found that the birth of the child would occur in nearly eight hours and proposed that she should be moved to Palestine. In ten minutes a car from Army Headquarters arrived and took her immediately to the airport. From there an aircraft took her to Jerusalem where she gave birth to her child six hours after arrival.

I had hardly finished dealing with that lady's problems when the matron phoned again informing me that an American Embassy official's wife, whom I had promised to attend at the Anglo-American Hospital, had been admitted. This official, who was the Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, wanted to see me on important business. Five minutes later he came to my room at the hospital and asked to see me alone. He said, "Reports received today indicate that the Eighth Army is retreating and it is probable that the Germans will be in Alexandria soon. If they take over Alexandria they will be in Cairo in no time. My wife, as you know, is about to give birth and she is now under your care at the hospital but if the Germans come they will not allow her to remain here and will move her, with me, to be put under house arrest as is customary with diplomatic staff." He then asked if I would still go and deliver her in that house. I said, "Of course I will, it is my duty." He thanked me and left, promising to get in touch with me by 'phone from time to time. Three days later he rang me up and said, "The danger of the German invasion of Egypt is over." He came to see me later, explaining that the authorities in London were very pessimistic but the 300 Sherman tanks which arrived at Suez last September, and the close collaboration between the Eighth Army and the Air Force under Cunningham, were responsible for Rommel's defeat. The Allied forces had closed on the Germans from three points, while the Air Force were mercilessly bombing them day and night.

On Tuesday, November 3rd, I heard from the American Embassy that Rommel's Army had withdrawn. On that day I had an appointment with Ahmed Naguib, a well-known jeweller, to have some repairs done to my wife's ring. When I met him he was highly disturbed and asked me

about the situation. I allayed his fears and gave him an account of what I had heard. He then exclaimed, "Thank God! Thank God!" I looked at him in surprise and said, "But I thought you were a supporter of the 'Forward Rommel Movement'." But he replied, "Doctor Mahfouz, one's interest is one thing and one's desire is another. If the Germans had invaded Egypt they would have looted my shop which has in it half-a-million pounds worth of pearls and diamonds!"

Now the time had come for the Queen to give birth. I attended her but the baby was not a boy. Great gloom overshadowed the Palace but it soon vanished when it was rumoured that, if the baby had been a boy, the British would have forced the King to abdicate in favour of the newly-born, exiled him and formed a Regency Council.

As the war years dragged on I became completely exhausted by overwork. I therefore decided to spend the summer months outside Cairo and I went to my home town of Mansoura where I had spent my childhood. I was fortunate enough to rent a house which used to belong to an Italian family who had been repatriated. There was nothing wrong with the house except that it was near the Talkha Bridge and bridges are normally subjected to air-raids.

During my stay at Mansoura one of my colleagues, who was Principal Medical Officer at the government hospital, invited me to a banquet. His wife prepared some of the famous Abazya dishes. A gentleman of the Abazya family who was well known for his huge appetite sat beside me at dinner. My host said to me, "Why do you take such small helpings, Doctor Mahfouz? Look at your neighbour and see the large helping he has taken. Do you know that this cousin of mine once ate a whole calf by himself?" The gentleman got up angrily, banged the table, and shouted, "Did I eat the small calf in one sitting? Didn't I divide it into three meals, breakfast, lunch and supper? Besides, this is nothing to what Abu Sa'ada is capable of. Abu Sa'ada eats a whole lamb for lunch and a turkey for his dinner." And he continued devouring his food.

I enjoyed my stay at Mansoura with its quiet life and beautiful weather. I visited all the scenes of my boyhood and went to see the house where I was born and asked the tenants if I might be allowed to go up to the fourth floor and see my bedroom. I was so sorry to see several houses built between it and the Nile entirely blocking the view of the river.

I also used to enjoy hiring a horse-drawn carriage and driving along the river bank once in the morning and once in the evening. One day while I was taking my drive I happened to see a friend of mine, who had been a fellow-pupil at the American School, sitting with three of his friends at a café. When he saw me pass he hastened to greet me and while we were talking together a balcony on the first floor of the building fell down on the people sitting at the café, killing my friend's three companions. Had he not rushed to see me my friend would probably have met with the same fate.

On my return to Cairo I received a message from the Anglo-American Hospital informing me that the General Commander of the Allied Forces had sent a lady who was gravely ill to the hospital suffering from a gynaecological ailment. I immediately went to the hospital, examined her, and found that she was suffering from an ovarian cyst with a twisted pedicle. I ordered the theatre to be prepared for an emergency operation. I removed the cyst and found it had become almost gangrenous. On the third day she was progressing favourably and two weeks later she left the hospital in perfect health. The matron told me later that the lady came from a very well-known English family and that, as she was a good dancer and singer, she had formed her own group from members of the British aristocracy to entertain the troops. Some time later this lady and her company gave a performance for the troops on New Year's Eve at the Gezira Sporting Club to which I was invited. She also invited the anaesthetist and the nursing staff giving us seats in the first row. Her performance was excellent, both dancing and singing. For the last number the lady sang a song of her own composition about her illness and the operation that was performed. The whole group acted as a chorus and in the refrain they repeated the words Anglo-American Hospital. At the end of the performance the lady came down to greet us all, wishing us a Happy New Year. We all thanked her and wished her every happiness.

Chapter 23

THE GYNAECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS MUSEUM

My chief object in being attached to the School of Medicine, instead of working in the Ministry of Health, was to prepare myself to gain the necessary qualifications to enable me to help women suffering from difficult labour. In another chapter I explained how one of my chiefs, Mr. Madden the Professor of Surgery, managed to get the authorities to agree to the setting up of an out-patient department, entirely devoted to gynaecology, recommending that I should be in charge of it.

When I started working I realised what a great responsibility it was for a young man of twenty, with neither experience nor maturity, to fill such a position. However I was determined to overcome every obstacle so I resorted to the books given to me by Dr. Creswell and studied them carefully. At the out-patient clinic I tried to put into practice what I had learned from my books. Many of the patients who attended the out-patients clinic came to cure their sterility. In order to win their confidence and to be able to effect a cure I always insisted that they brought their husbands with them on their next visit so that I could make the necessary analysis on them as well. I was fortunate in some cases to discover the underlying cause and, when favourable results began to appear, the reputation of the out-patient clinic began to grow in stature.

After some time Dr. Keatinge, the Dean of the Medical School, came to inspect the out-patient department. It was 9 a.m., the time for me to go to the theatre to give anaesthesia. He was astonished as well as delighted to see the number of patients present and asked me to get on with my work in the out-patients. "I'll send someone instead of you to the operating theatre to anaesthetise the patients," he said.

The following day he told me that he had decided to attach six students to my out-patient clinic for training. Two months later he asked me to look into the state of the Midwifery School and to submit a report with my recommendations. He also requested that I should give

clinical lectures to students in obstetrics and gynaecology. I submitted the requested report but I had quite a problem with my clinical lectures for there were no beds allocated at the hospital for gynaecological or obstetric work. I referred the matter to the Dean who was quite responsive, allocating two wards for the purpose. I was pleased with the result, though far from being satisfied, for there was a crying need for far greater accommodation.

As far as the Midwifery School was concerned I found that the pupils had no books whatsoever on the subjects in the curriculum. All they relied on were some notes, duplicated for a small profit by a hospital clerk. On examining these duplicated notes I found that they were quite inadequate and that there were several errors caused by the clerk's ignorance of the subject. No one had corrected these errors and so the pupils learned the mistakes by heart. Some of these were quite amusing. "For treatment of peritonitis" the notes read "Put a bag of dates on the abdomen." What was meant was a bag of ice. The words ice and dates in Arabic are identical except for a dot on one of the letters. Another mistake was regarding the length of the foetus inside the uterus. The clerk read that the length of the foetus at nine months was 45 centimetres so he imagined that the uterus at nine months must be at least 10 centimetres longer, little knowing that the baby in the uterus lies with its legs flexed on the abdomen.

I decided, therefore, to write books in Arabic on gynaecology and obstetrics, with chapters on nursing. I wrote a book entitled *The Art of Obstetrics*, and another *Preliminary Gynaecology*. I proposed to the school that it should undertake their publication but in the school budget there was no allowance for publishing books so I had to publish them myself at a loss since the number of nursing pupils never exceeded twenty in one class.

When I began my clinical lectures I realised that I had no specimens to help me explain the various pathological conditions. Not one specimen was found in the school pathological museum. Knowing how important they were I decided to prepare some specimens from my private work and use these for teaching. I had to buy the jars from abroad, as well as the various chemicals necessary for the preserving solutions. After a few years of continuous hard work I managed to have three hundred speci-

mens mounted and some of these I used to carry with me to the school for my lectures.

During one of my visits to Europe during the summer holidays I stored the specimens at the Pathology Department. A friend of mine, who was Assistant Professor in the department, thought that he could replace the solution in the jars for preserving the specimens with another solution which he had discovered and which he thought was better for keeping the natural colours of the specimen. On my return I found that three hundred specimens, on which I had spent so much of my time and energy, had all gone bad. Although almost in despair I still persevered. I prepared new specimens. This time I had had more experience in preparing them and they were decidedly better than the damaged ones.

At the Medical Congress held in Cairo in 1929 to mark the Centenary of the Egyptian Medical School my specimens were prominently displayed. Some of the scientists visiting the Congress suggested to the authorities that these specimens should be housed in a special room to form a nucleus for a future museum. The authorities responded to the suggestion and I continued in my preparation of new specimens, which later amounted to 1,500 kept in glass jars and another 1,500 kept in sinks until we got jars for them. In 1930 I offered the museum as a gift to the Medical School, which had by now become a Faculty of the newly formed University. A description of every specimen was placed in a frame below it. I took microscopic sections of tumours and made microphotographs which I put in special frames. I also wrote a guide to the museum which the Faculty published but which was soon out of print. I also made drawings of the specimens, some in colour others in black and white, with explanatory notes under the pictures. I divided the museum into three sections; one for gynaecology; one for obstetrics; and one for foetal abnormalities. I made a hundred coloured plates and put them on revolving stands.

My colleagues, Professor Dobbin and Professor Ahmed Shafik, were kind enough to supply some rare specimens. When the Gynaecological Museum was progressing and Anatomical and Medicological Museums were being formed, it was found necessary to appoint a curator and an artist. We advertised the posts in the press but were unable to recruit suitable personnel except for two White Russian refugees whom we

engaged. These were Dr. Bulgakov, who was appointed curator, and Mr. Strekalovsky, who was appointed artist. I tried to obtain Egyptian nationality for them both in order to have them placed on the permanent staff. I went to the Ministry of Interior to take the necessary steps and, as I happened to be on friendly terms with the Minister and Under-Secretary of State, I thought it would be an easy matter to obtain the naturalisation papers. I was surprised, however, to hear from both the Minister and his Under-Secretary that granting Egyptian nationality to Russians, whether they were White or Red, was quite impossible.

Coming out of the lift on my way out of the Ministry I met a friend of mine, Dr. Abdulla Al Arabi, who asked me what I was doing at the Ministry. I told him the story and said that neither the Minister nor the Under-Secretary were of any help. In answer he said, "If you have time to spare, come for a while to my office and we will see what can be done." In his office he told me the following story.

His father had a farm. On some occasions the irrigation water was not sufficient. He found by experience that, if he went to the Chief Engineer or any high official and asked for their help, they always failed to give it; whereas, if he went to the guard in charge, the most junior official, the work was easily accomplished. "The question of naturalisation," he said, "is no different. We will tackle it in the way my father suggested." He then accompanied me from one government department to another, and from one ministry to another, getting the necessary signatures until we managed to get the naturalisation papers. Ironically enough, three days after we had achieved our object, the Minister of the Interior visited me at my clinic and said that he was sorry he could not do anything about the naturalisation of the curator and the artist but in future things might be better and he might be able to manage it. I did not wish to tell him that my object had been achieved and changed the subject of our conversation. When the appointment procedures had been completed I prepared everything for putting the two men on the permanent staff. They proved to be most efficient and did their work to everyone's satisfaction.

I used to go to Bulgakov's office at the Anatomy Department with the tumours I removed at operations in order to prepare the specimens and we used to invite Strekalovsky. I would spend an hour a day with them

explaining the nature of the tumour I had brought with me, pointing out the pathological changes that had taken place. Then Bulgakov and I would make sections of the tumours in such a manner as to expose all the salient points. Then I would dictate the necessary descriptions and explanations, which he finally typed, placing a copy in a frame below the specimen. Strekalovsky used to enjoy listening to my explanations on the subject which he would deal with, whether it be anatomical, histological or pathological. He found these explanations very helpful to him in forming a mental picture of what he had to draw. This mental picture, he used to say, affected the execution to a great extent. He also used to attend some of my operations and made drawings which illustrated the articles that I published.

I used to ask Bulgakov also to attend the operations I performed on procidentia and perineal tears, where he saw in the living the exact rôle the muscles play. This was the basis of the ten dissections we made on the levator ani muscles and the sphincters of the rectum, and on the perineal muscles, which I published in my Atlas.

As to the preparation of specimens I can do no better than quote passages from a speech Bulgakov made at a dinner given on the occasion of my retirement from the School of Medicine.

"We first met," he said, "in 1922, when Mahfouz Pasha offered to the Medical School his collection of three hundred specimens which he himself had prepared during the First World War and before it. This collection was the nucleus of the present great Museum of Gynaecology and Obstetrics. At our first meeting we spent ten minutes introducing one another and then went straight away cataloguing our specimens and preparing them.

"In 1932 a special room was allocated for this great collection of excellent specimens, together with a number of specimens involving legal medicine. In 1934 the first catalogue for the Museum was published. After that a great number of specimens, resulting from Mahfouz Pasha's operations and those of his colleagues, were made but there was no room for them. The authorities were forced to find a bigger place for the Museum, so as to make them available to the students and staff. Mahfouz Pasha's interest was not to increase the number of specimens but to select the best and to classify them according to the diseased organ in the body;

and then, of course, to provide a thorough explanation of every specimen. Dr. Mahfouz had used these specimens in his lectures and based his researches on them, publishing a great number of articles on subjects like *Rupture of the Uterus, Fibroid Tumours, Chorion Epithelioma, Ante-partum Haemorrhage, Urinary Fistulas*, etc., etc.

"I must here say that Mahfouz Pasha used to carry the specimens himself to the Museum and to supervise the preparations from beginning to end providing every necessary explanation. When these specimens were completed we used to catalogue them after taking microscopic sections of them. After this we used to write down the microscopic description and register it carefully in the catalogue. In this way Mahfouz Pasha knew every little detail of the specimens. He continued to supervise and look after them, even after he had reached his international status. I am happy to say that he used to invite me to witness his operations and to interest me in seeing the patients both before the operations and after they were healed. Undoubtedly, Dr. Mahfouz has devoted all his intellectual energy to his work, exerting himself to the utmost. He did all this to raise the School to its present level. Thus he becomes one of the corner stones over which the fame of the Medical School in Egypt is built. I attach a great part of his success and the success of the School to his genuine interest in his patients, for whom he gave his whole life. My small contribution is but an expression of my loyalty and appreciation of this great man."

In 1945 the Egyptian Government asked Sir Eardley Holland, then President of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in London, to submit a report on the state of the Departments of Gynaecology at the Cairo and Alexandria Universities.

In this report, he wrote of the Museum: "No account of the Cairo School would be complete without reference to this remarkable collection of obstetric and gynaecological material at present numbering three thousand specimens. All are fully described and all are photographed or drawn in half tone or colour in a catalogue of twenty-five volumes. It is possible that there is a more complete and better catalogued collection in the world, but it is doubtful. It is a wonderful monument to the name of the founder. Moreover, the range and quality of the Museum places it in a position of great importance to medical science, and it is hoped

that arrangements will be made for the work to be carried on in perpetuity. It should be enabled, too, to continue as a source of supply to other museums."

I am pleased to say that I provided the Gynaecology and Obstetrics departments at Alexandria University, the Faculty at Ein Shams University and the College of Medicine in Khartoum with many specimens.

I am rather hesitant in relating the following incident which will show how far a dispute between one professor and his colleague may reach, inflicting great harm on scientific research. When I was at Kasr El Aini Hospital I prepared, with the help of my friend and colleague Dr. Mustafa Fahmy Sourour, Professor of Pathology, fifteen hundred microscopic slides representing the various gynaecological diseases together with complete explanations. I was very proud of the effort I had made and I decided to put the slides and explanations in the Museum which would later be transferred to the new building at Manial. I therefore put these reports inside the iron safe which Bernard Shaw, former Professor of Pathology, had obtained to keep papers of value. When his successor, Dr. Sourour, retired he was succeeded by a colleague with whom he had been on bad terms. The new man was rather peculiar in his ways and no one expected him to become professor but he obtained the Chair—nobody knows how or why. When he started work he decided (may God have mercy on his soul) to destroy everything that his predecessor had done. He found the opportunity to do so when the Pathological Department was being moved to the new buildings at Manial. He took all the papers containing the details of microscopical reports and put them in a large open box which he left on a balcony. The wind blew all the papers away. When I knew of the tragedy I was deeply distressed and was glad that I had kept the slides somewhere else and they are still in my possession.

I am sorry to say that after the retirement of Bulgakov no curator was appointed. I especially felt this need when a unique specimen of ectopic pregnancy in the infundibular end of the tube, due to an intra-ligamentous cyst, was stolen. The operation had been performed by Professor Dobbin and when he removed the cyst he noticed a bulging in the distal part of the tube. He made an incision over it and discovered

Fig. 7
Demonstrating a specimen to my grandson, Dr. Samir Mahfouz Simaika.

Fig. 8
A view of the Nile taken from a window of the Gynaecological Museum.

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Fig. 9
A corner of the Gynaecological Museum.

Fig. 10
A corner of the Museum.

the foot of a foetus. The fertilised ovum could not reach the uterus on account of flattening of its lumen by the intraligamentous tumour. Bulgakov and I took infinite care in mounting this valuable specimen. Two days later I went to visit the museum and discovered its loss. An investigation was carried out which revealed that a foreign doctor had obtained permission to visit the Museum and had stolen the specimen.

Chapter 24

MY BOOK *ATLAS OF MAHFOUZ'S MUSEUM*

In January 1942 when I reached sixty, the age of retirement, I received a letter of thanks from the Rector of the University for the work I had done at the Faculty during the last forty years.

As soon as my colleagues, Dr. Shafeek, Dr. Magdi and Dr. Mahmoud Ismail, learned of this they wrote at once to the Dean of the Faculty to ask the University to extend my services for a period of five years. They supplemented their request by informing the University authorities of my intention to write a book which would include my professional experiences during the previous forty years. In this letter they honoured me by saying that my book would be an important milestone in obstetrics and gynaecology and would contribute a great deal towards Egypt's reputation in scientific research. Dr. Shafeek took the plan of the book to the University Rector, Dr. Ali Ibrahim, and discussed it with him. Dr. Ali Ibrahim told Dr. Shafeek that he felt the same about me but the government was not prepared to embark on granting concessions. However, Dr. Shafeek left him without being convinced by such an argument and formed a delegation to meet the Minister of Education to inform him of the views of the obstetricians and gynaecologists of the Department on this matter. The Minister of Education referred the question to the Cabinet which unanimously agreed to extend my term of service for five years.

The University informed me of the Cabinet's decision and I wrote back thanking them, accepting the extension provided that it did not stand in the way of promotion of any eligible person to my post, and insisting that my post should be outside the cadre. As for my Chair, I suggested that they should select a worthy person to fill it. Many negotiations ensued and happily ended with the acceptance of my terms. As a result the Faculty, whose Dean at the time was Dr. Soliman Azmi, gave me a room facing the meeting hall of the Faculty Council to make it easier for them to ask my opinion on questions put before them.

The allocation of a room in such a position was of great help to me in writing the book. I used to go to the Faculty at 7 a.m. and remain there working until 2 p.m. I left in my room a great number of reference books, eight of which I had borrowed from the Faculty library. However, scarcely two months had passed when the following incident occurred.

It was a Friday, the official weekly holiday, and the hospital staff were all away with the exception of the housemen on duty, some male and female nurses and about half the number of servants. At 10 a.m. a lorry arrived at the main entrance of the hospital and five well-dressed men got out and presented a letter, signed by the Under-Secretary of State for Public Health, requesting permission from the Administrative Staff of the Faculty and Hospital for the bearers to dismantle the air conditioning apparatus in the theatre halls together with the connecting pipes. No one objected to carrying out the order and the servants even assisted them in their task. When all was dismantled they entered my room on their way out and opened the cupboard and took all the books and most of the papers that were in it. On leaving they promised to return in the afternoon to instal the new apparatus. However they never came back and in the morning it became clear to the Administration that the five men were professional thieves. One investigation followed another but to no avail. The thieves were not found. Consequently I was compelled to buy copies of the stolen books and the Faculty charged me the price of the books which I had borrowed from the library estimated by them at £57. I had no alternative but to pay.

Writing my book was a difficult task. My colleagues could not help me for their hospital work took all their time. I had neither typist nor secretary to assist me. I decided, therefore, to secure a private typist, but good ones were not available at the time as they were all employed by the British authorities and were handsomely paid. At last I found a young man who was an ex-student at the Faculty of Commerce and who had some knowledge of typing. He could not get a government post because he had failed the medical examination on account of bilharzia and ankylostoma. I took him, treated him and paid him £12 a month to do the job. However, when he had acquired enough skill in typing and had learned all the medical terms, he heard of a job at the

University for £18 a month, applied for it and got it. I managed, however, to get someone from a typing agency to work overtime at £14 a month. This lasted for the five years which it took me to complete the book.

I decided to dedicate the book to the University in whose service I had spent my best years. I wrote to the University giving it all copyright and all royalties on the book on condition that it would undertake its publication. I sent a letter to the Faculty Dean, accompanied by twenty-four volumes containing pictures of specimens of the Museum and all microscopic slides and their microphotographs. The Faculty referred the matter to the University Administration and a committee was set up to investigate the matter. The University agreed to publish the book at its own expense and sent me a very flattering letter of thanks. They sent the book to a number of publishers requesting an estimate but all excused themselves because of inadequate equipment, recommending that it should be printed abroad. The cost of printing was estimated at £E8,000 and the Ministry of Finance agreed to pay the sum. At long last the University got in touch with me and asked me to choose a printing firm in England or America.

I wrote to Sir Comyns Berkeley in England, informing him of the University's intention of publishing the book at its expense, and put to him the following questions: (1) Is there a real need for publishing a book of this sort? (2) What was his considered opinion of the scientific value of the book? (3) What service would it render? (4) How much would it cost to print and which publisher would he suggest? (5) How long would it take to print the book?

As all means of transportation were cut off because of the war, I went to the British Embassy to enlist their help in forwarding the manuscripts. I was encouraged to do so because the Ambassador's wife was my patient and I had delivered her of three children. The Ambassador got in touch with the British Minister of War and obtained permission to have the two boxes containing the manuscripts, pictures and diagrams sent on an aircraft with the diplomatic bag.

The aircraft left for England and the boxes reached London but were mislaid with other luggage. I became very anxious when I heard of this and the British Embassy put me in touch by telephone with the warehouse in England where the boxes were likely to be. The telephonist

asked for my name and was subsequently very friendly and helpful. She told me, in the course of our conversation, that she had been one of my patients in the Anglo-American Hospital and that I had refused to charge her any fee. She promised to do everything possible to find the boxes, which she eventually did, and took them herself to Sir Comyns Berkeley.

Having read the draft, Sir Comyns Berkeley wrote back, suggesting a reputable company which he considered the best in England. The cost of publishing was estimated at £8,000 and it would take eighteen months to have the book printed. Sir Comyns Berkeley enclosed a copy of a letter he had written to the publishing house in which he told them that publishing such a book would make them a fortune and that it would have a world wide circulation. I conveyed the letter to the University which, in turn, asked me to act on its behalf to sign the contract, etc. The University also informed me that it would put the sum required in the Bank to be at the disposal of the printers. I wrote to Sir Comyns asking him to get a solicitor to write the contract and have it signed by the publishers and send it to me for signature. The book was now ready for publication.

Meanwhile, the Royal College of Surgeons of England informed me that the Council of the College had elected me by a unanimous vote to the Honorary Fellowship. They asked me to be present at the ceremony, giving me details of the day and time. In their letter they said that it was going to be an historic reception as the degree was going to be conferred on Sir Winston Churchill at the same meeting. Unfortunately I was unable to go through lack of transport and I was granted the Fellowship *in absentia*.

The Royal College decided, however, to confer this honour on me in Cairo and delegated Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, senior Vice-President of the College, as well as three members of the Council who happened to be in Cairo to do so at a reception which would be held at the premises of the Faculty of Medicine. Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor was at the time in Moscow and had to come specially for the occasion. He accepted willingly, in spite of the fact that he was in poor health, the white corpuscles in his blood having fallen to 1,000. The speech he delivered while conferring the Fellowship is given in an appendix (page 190).

At the reception Professor Ali Ibrahim, Rector of the University,

made a speech congratulating me on the honour, but I was surprised to hear disquieting news about my book from him next morning by telephone. He gave me to understand that the University were unable to finance publication of the book as the Minister of Finance had withdrawn his sanction to do so. He added that I should cable to the publishers to annul the contract, but I told the Rector not to worry as I would finance the publication myself. He thought it was a lot of money to pay out of one's pocket and that it would be a great risk. In answer I said, "In this case I would not be the only person who has gambled and lost." As a matter of fact I felt rather relieved at hearing the news for I wanted to add some more material to the book and have it published in three volumes instead of two. This raised the cost of publishing from £E8,000 to £E12,500.

I paid for the first instalment and waited for the first volume which was due in three months but it did not appear. At that time I was asked to go to London to receive another Honorary Fellowship conferred upon me by the Royal Society of Medicine. I accepted and thought it would be a good opportunity for hastening the appearance of the book.

When I arrived in London I duly received the Fellowship and Abdel Fattah Amr, the Egyptian Ambassador, paid me a visit at my hotel to congratulate me on the honour. Then he said, "I am sorry to inform you that we had some bad news from your publishers concerning your book. The printers cannot carry on with it." I was greatly disturbed and hoped he was misinformed, but while he was still with me I was told that a gentleman in the lobby of the hotel wanted to see me. When he came to my room I found that he was the manager of the publishing firm and he began by expressing his deep sorrow at being unable to publish the book. He went on to say that the employee who was in charge of the draft and plates had gone mad and had cut off the page numbers together with the captions under the photographs, which were given in seven languages, and added that he had brought the drafts and the figures with him to hand over to me. I did not want to be rude to him, as I still had some hope of putting things in order, so I asked him, "Will you carry on with the book if I classify the pictures and write the captions again?" He replied, "Yes". I took him immediately to the Ambassador to write a new contract. I spent twenty-one days at the

hotel working on the draft every day from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. until I managed to put everything right. Fortunately a pupil and friend of mine, Dr. Abdalla Rafla, who was the Director of the New End Maternity Hospital in London, and who had remained in this post for fifteen years, came to visit me at the hotel while I was working on the pictures. I asked him if he could help me during his spare time and he kindly agreed.

I left London for home, hoping that the first volume of my book would come out soon, but I waited in vain for a long time. At last I wrote a memorandum to our Ambassador in London and to the Presidents of the Royal College of Surgeons, the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, of which I was an Honorary Fellow, requesting their help. They held a meeting at the Egyptian Embassy in London and decided to ask Mr. Attlee, then British Prime Minister, to intervene. The Egyptian Ambassador was delegated to see him. He did so and a few days later Mr. Attlee sent for the head of the firm and asked the reason for the delay. He was told that the delay was due to the absence of first-class paper on the market which was indispensable for the diagrams and plates. The Prime Minister asked him, "Will you print the book straight away if we provide you with the paper?" He agreed to this.

Two days later, on 12th April 1949, our Embassy in London received the following note from the Foreign Office: "Mr. Attlee offers his kind regards to His Excellency the Egyptian Ambassador. He is honoured to inform him that with regard to the report sent to him, Reference 797-11-39 on 23rd February, concerning Professor Naguib Mahfouz's book now being published, it has been agreed that the first volume will come out this month, while the second and third would appear in July and September respectively."

Proofs of the book began to arrive in Cairo but the plates in the chapter dealing with urinary and faecal fistulae appeared in black and white when they should have been coloured. My daughter Samira helped me with the proof reading and I was ready to accept the urinary tract plates in black and white, to save time, though that would have decreased their value. My daughter, however, urged me to insist on coloured plates even if I had to take the publishers to

court. I acted according to her advice and the plates appeared in colour as a result.

The second and third volumes, however, did not come out in July and September as promised but were delayed a few months. Nevertheless I must say here that the quality of the printing and the binding of the book were both excellent.

I was tremendously relieved when the book came out and thought that my worries were over. But I received a cable from Dr. Clifford White informing me that my book was not available in any bookshop. I was puzzled by this but a few days later the book was put on the market. As soon as it appeared the demand for it was so great that within the following two years enough copies were sold to cover a good part of the expenses.

When the first volume appeared in 1949 the publisher sent me a few copies. At that time censorship in Egypt was very strict and the books were withheld at the customs, waiting for efficient translators to check the legends on the plates. These legends were written in Arabic, French, English, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian. I tried hard to convince the customs officials of the absence of any doubtful material in the legends but to no avail. However one day Dr. H. E. Hurst, the famous Hydrological Consultant to the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, came to visit me and informed me that *Nature*, the well-known British scientific magazine, had reviewed my books and had spoken very highly of them. He congratulated me, saying, "Authors who have their books reviewed in *Nature* must consider themselves highly honoured." I took a copy of the magazine and hurried to the customs officials. Two days later the copies were released.

I must confess that when I wrote my book I was afraid that it might not be well received in America and Europe, for relations between them and Egypt were at their worst. At that time Egypt's political question was being discussed at the Security Council and the Egyptian Premier, Al Nukrashi, had condemned the British in a speech, calling them pirates. However my fears were unfounded for my book was widely and appreciatively received as science knows no boundaries.

After the publication of my book I was delighted to find that the authorities in Egypt, having received reports from the Egyptian Ambas-

FIG. 11
President Gamal Abdel Nasser conferring on the author the First Class Order of Merit and the State Prize of Distinction for Science.

facing page 152

sadors in Europe and America about its success, hastened to honour me. I was first granted the First Order of the Medal of Education, as well as the highest prize for science for the year 1950, together with a gift of £E1,000. It was granted to me by the Government and handed over by the Doyen of Arabic Literature, Professor Taha Hussein, who was then Minister of Education.

I was also overjoyed and greatly honoured when, at a later date, the Government of the Revolution granted me the State's highest prize for science. This comprised the Gold Medal and the Order of Merit, First Class, together with a gift of £E2,500.

Chapter 25

THE HONORARY FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

It was an unexpected pleasure to receive, in 1947, a cable from the Royal Society of Medicine in England, whose President at the time was the famous scientist Cassidy, informing me that the Executive Council of the Society had conferred upon me the Honorary Fellowship of the Society and that a letter with the details was on the way. A few days later I received a letter asking me to go to England to receive the Fellowship personally, explaining that there were two other candidates who would receive this honour with me. One of them was Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, the other an important atomic scientist. The ceremony was to take place on the first of July, at 1.30 p.m., at the premises of the Society and it was to be preceded by a luncheon at 12.30 p.m. As it was almost impossible to get a passage by ship or air at that time, the Society of Medicine got in touch with the British Ambassador in Cairo, requesting him to facilitate my passage to London in time for the ceremony.

The British Ambassador informed me that he had asked Miss Nimo, who was the person concerned, to put my name at the top of the waiting list. Two weeks passed and I had no news from the Embassy so I went and met Miss Nimo who welcomed me warmly and reminded me of an operation I had performed on her mother a year previously at the Coptic Hospital. She said that she would do her best and I asked her to try and book two passages instead of one as Dr. Fadel Selim would be accompanying me. A week later she telephoned me, saying, "I have good news for you. I was able to book two berths on the cargo boat *Baharistan* which will arrive at Port Said in two days' time." Fadel and I hurried to Port Said but the ship arrived a week late, having been detained at Djibouti. It was a very small and shabby ship but we had no choice so we boarded her and were soon on our way. We were

scheduled to arrive in twelve days if everything went well and we should be in England three days before the ceremony.

There were eight passengers on the ship, all of whom were retired officials. Of these three were ladies who worked as secretaries at the oil refinery in Abadan. It was very difficult to distinguish these ladies from the men for their hair was closely cut and they had little moustaches on their lips and were also very stout through lack of exercise.

The ship was entirely devoid of comfort. We had to climb from our cabin to the upper deck by means of an iron ladder and were advised to climb backwards, leaning on the ropes while doing so. There was only one bathroom which looked antique. Water for drinking and bathing purposes was carried in buckets by the servants. To top it all the ship rolled violently, even when the sea was calm.

We tried to convince ourselves that we were travelling under the best conditions, passing the time chatting with the captain on deck. One of his stories concerned the history of the ship we were travelling on. Apparently this ship and another sister-ship were built six years previously in Liverpool for the Abadan Petroleum Company. They sailed together on the same day, heading for the Persian Gulf, with our captain as skipper of the *Baharistan* and his cousin captain of her sister-ship the *Pakistan*. The two ships were sailing together when an explosion was heard. The *Pakistan* was split in two and all the crew and passengers were lost. The *Baharistan*, however, reached Abadan safely and had done the journey twice so far. However she had spent the last six months at the port of Abadan and as a result barnacles had stuck to her bottom. She was partially cleared of this burden and prepared for this voyage but it was discovered just before she sailed that her engines were not in perfect order. Some repairs were carried out but the rest were left until the ship's arrival in Liverpool. The ship was going slowly on account of the barnacles on her bottom and we were told that the trip was expected to take fifteen days instead of twelve. All our conversations centred around the dismal history of the ship and the fact that it was going to take fifteen days instead of twelve to get to England.

A few days after we sailed one of the lady passengers complained of what seemed to be an inflamed appendix. Dr. Fadel suggested that we

should head for Naples and take the lady to a hospital there and then resume our journey by rail. The captain got in touch with the shipping company for permission to stop at Naples but the answer was in the negative, for to stop at Naples would have cost them £500. I suggested stopping at Malta instead but this was not accepted either. Eventually the lady recovered and the ship plodded on. When we reached the Marseilles Gulf, which is famous for its bad weather, a storm arose and shook the ship up and down with such violence that Dr. Fadel fell out of his bunk but fortunately was unhurt. However our suitcases fell off the racks and burst open and some tins of jam and marmalade which they contained opened and soiled all our clothing. The storm abated, however, while we were in sight of the Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan coast. The weather improved and we were able to see the beautiful houses and factories built on the shore.

As soon as the ship left Gibraltar and entered the Atlantic Ocean we were confronted with a dense fog which took us ten hours to cross. We felt uneasy because the ship had no protection whatever against collision and were relieved when we had passed through it.

At last we arrived at a small port near Liverpool and berthed at 7 a.m. on July 1st, the very day of the ceremony. We would have got there in time had we caught the 9 a.m. train to London, but we were delayed for another two hours until a ship occupying the quay had left. I telephoned Cook's and asked for a car to take us to the airport from which we could fly in a chartered plane to Croydon. Unfortunately, just as we were ready to land, the captain discovered that he had mislaid the key to the iron rail which normally surrounds cargo boats. We managed, however, to climb over it but without our luggage which was later sent to the Dorchester Hotel in London where we were staying. Our car sped along to the airport where we found the plane waiting for us. It was a small training plane with just enough room for two passengers besides the pilot. Its roof was made of plastic and as it was transparent we had a good view of the farms, mines and forests of Wales. We arrived at Croydon Airport a few minutes before 1 p.m., giving us half-an-hour to get to the Royal Society of Medicine. It was very difficult to get a taxi that could cover the distance in thirty minutes but a very old taxi-driver who came to our help drove us to London at such a speed

that we arrived at our destination only a few minutes after 1.30 p.m. I offered him a big tip but he absolutely refused anything more than the usual 10 per cent.

As we were entering the Ceremony Hall Professor Cassidy, the President, had just handed Doctor Alexander Fleming his medal and, as I was supposed to be next, Professor Cassidy went on to say, "I am sorry to announce that Doctor Naguib Mahfouz cannot be with . . .", but on seeing me entering the hall shouted, "Here he is!" The hall thundered with applause. I greeted them and explained the circumstances of my delay which caused a great deal of amusement. My Fellowship was then handed to me, and I was followed by the atomic scientist. When he had received his Fellowship I shook hands with him, saying, "It is a great honour for me to be a fellow recipient of the Fellowship," to which he ironically retorted, "The honour is mine, for you have spent the best years of your life in curing the sick and alleviating their pains, while I have helped develop a bomb which is likely to destroy humanity." I replied, "I think that the atomic bomb has come to end wars and give the world the chance of lasting peace and security. I'm sure that atomic power will eventually be used for peaceful purposes." He looked at me, smiling, and said optimistically, "I hope that we meet again when this will have been fulfilled."

At the end of the ceremony press reporters came rushing to me and enquired about the reasons for my delay. I told them everything and the evening papers came out with the headline, "With Only Five Minutes to Spare."

I left the Royal Society of Medicine and went to the Egyptian Embassy to sign the visitors' book and then returned to my hotel. The Ambassador followed me there, apologising for not having attended the ceremony as he was told that I had not arrived. He was accompanied by the Head of the Egyptian Education Mission in London, Dr. Hussam El Dine, who came to congratulate me and invite me to a reception given in my honour by the mission members. At that reception I delivered a lecture on the *History of Medical Education in Egypt*. At the end of my lecture I was asked by Lord Alfred Webb-Johnson, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and also by the Director General of the B.B.C. to broadcast my lecture in English and Arabic.

My British friends invited me to several parties and receptions, one of these being given by Dame Louise McIlroy, who was then Dean of the Women's Medical College. This reception was attended by distinguished members of society among whom was Enid Blyton, the well-known author of children's books, who had qualified from the Women's Medical College.

The Egyptian Embassy gave a banquet attended by the leading British medical staff as well as members of the Egyptian community in London.

On the eve of my departure for Dublin I gave a dinner reception in honour of all my British and Egyptian friends, about eighty in number, at which I asked the Egyptian Ambassador to act as host.

It was very difficult for us to find transportation to Dublin as neither the Embassy nor Cook's could book us any passages. However my nephew, Fouad Aziz, who was Secretary at the Egyptian Embassy in London managed to get us two seats on the Dublin plane, which had been booked for a couple who were taken ill suddenly. The Irish plane was excellent and we had a lovely trip over the Irish Sea and could see the high waves for which it is famous. When we got to Dublin the porters were on strike but we were surprised to find two young men rushing to our help and found that they were two Irish doctors, one of whom had attended my lectures given at the Hammersmith Postgraduate School. As for the other, I had treated his sister at the Anglo-American Hospital in Cairo not long before. The two young doctors kindly carried our luggage and accompanied us to the Rotunda Hospital. I asked if they would join us for dinner at the hotel to which they agreed and we spent a pleasant evening together.

During our week's stay in Dublin we met many world-famous medical men who were attending the Congress representing their countries.

I had the honour of being the Chairman at three sessions of the Congress and during one of these sessions I managed to settle a dispute between Professor Mitra, an Indian delegate, and the head of another delegation. The Indian delegation was so pleased at the attitude I had taken that my friendship with them was considerably strengthened.

On the last day of the Conference a farewell dinner was given to the

delegates, who amounted to 830 in number. Our host was the President of the Irish Republic. Egypt was given the seat next to the President of the Congress, where I took my place. The President of the Republic delivered a speech and I was asked by all delegations to propose a toast to the President. I finished my speech with a Gaelic sentence, wishing long life to the Rotunda, and to Ireland.

Doctor Fadel and I were invited to many parties and receptions given by the Rotunda Hospital teaching staff and I thought of returning their hospitality. I asked the President of the Congress, Dr. Ninian Falkener, who was Master of the Rotunda Hospital to recommend a good restaurant. He suggested Jamet, the French restaurant, and the food turned out to be really excellent. The proprietor of the restaurant was very obliging and did not overcharge me, in spite of the excellence of the menu and the large quantities we had consumed. He said that he liked Egyptians because he had qualified in engineering at the École Centrale in Paris and was a fellow student of Hussein Sirri, who later became Egyptian Prime Minister.

We prepared to leave Dublin but could not find seats on a plane and had to go by sea. Doctor Fadel, my companion, advised me to take back presents of Irish linen, tablecloths, serviettes and handkerchiefs. But after we purchased these items we were informed at the hotel that we were not allowed to take any Irish linen out of the country without a special permit and that it would be better to get rid of all the Irish linen we had, so we went back and returned them.

A few minutes later the Congress Secretary told us that Fadel and I were invited by some wealthy man to have tea at his beautiful country house. A car came to take us and we headed for the country taking our luggage with us to resume our journey back from there. We had a wonderful example of traditional Irish hospitality and left later for the port. Our host was kind enough to present us with several boxes of chocolate and sweets and we were driven in his car to the port. When we got there two customs officials came to greet us but did not even bother to open our luggage, making us very sorry that we had got rid of all the Irish linen we had bought. Apparently the officers knew that we were delegates to the Rotunda Hospital Congress and so were not at all strict about inspecting our luggage.

A few minutes after we sailed one of the famous Irish Sea storms arose and the fog was so dense that we spent hours in fear for our lives. We remembered our cargo ship *Baharistan* and our sufferings on the way to England but realised that it had not been as bad as this. I was reminded of the Arab poet who said, "I was glad to get rid of Amr but when I got to know worse people I felt like going back to him." When we got back to England we found the customs officials very strict and thorough but our Congress badge saved us a great deal of trouble.

The reason I wanted to visit Manchester was to see the printing press and find out what had happened to my book *Atlas of Mahfouz's Museum*. The employees there assured us that the book was coming out shortly but this proved to be untrue. At any rate they were all very pleasant and took me to the press and even made me put on an apron and tried to teach me how to work one of the machines. We could have spent a couple of days in Manchester but we preferred to return to Egypt because at that time food in England was very scarce and rationing severe. I remember going into a large hotel in Manchester and asking what they had for breakfast. I was told they could offer me some tea and herrings. I asked if I could have a boiled egg and the reply was, "With pleasure, but have you got the egg?"

Chapter 26

THE LION'S LEAP

Though Egypt's 1919 revolution did not realise all its political aspirations, yet it kindled in the heart of every Egyptian the fire of nationalism and the thirst for independence.

This revolutionary spirit, which filled the hearts of the younger generation, manifested itself in 1952 when a number of brave young officers liberated Egypt from corruption and misgovernment and proclaimed it a Republic. Two years later complete independence was realised. The names of President Nasser and his colleagues will remain alive for ever in the hearts of every Egyptian as the liberators of Egypt.

For the first time in more than 2,000 years Egypt was governed by its own people. Nasser, liberator of his country, did not stop at that. In order to maintain this independence he developed Egypt's natural and economic resources and took the necessary steps to industrialise the country. All kinds of locally manufactured goods, especially in the form of textiles, began to invade foreign markets. The results were not long in making their appearance. The standard of living was raised and education in all its stages was made possible for rich and poor alike.

Thanks to his efforts Egypt now occupies an eminent position among the nations of the world. I happened to be spending my holidays with my daughter Shahira in Burgenstock, near Lucerne, when news of the evacuation of foreign forces was broadcast by Gamal Abdel Nasser himself.

To give the reader an idea of how the Egyptian public received the good news, I quote a letter sent to me by my daughter Samira, wife of the engineer Youssef Simaika.

My Dear Father and My Dear Shahira,

I hasten to write this letter to you to share with you the happy news, as I feel my heart almost bursting with joy and rapture. Just

a few moments ago tidings of great joy were announced to us, which were as unexpected as they were of overwhelming happiness. Tonight the feelings of every Egyptian have exploded in joyful manifestation, beyond all restraint, in celebrating Egypt's rebirth.

But let us begin at the beginning. This evening on my return home I found everybody in the house assembled near the radio. They told me to hurry as it was announced that we would soon be hearing eventful news.

Meanwhile patriotic anthems were being broadcast, filling the house with a feeling of exultation. From time to time the announcer would interrupt the programme to say that news of the greatest importance would be announced in a few minutes. You can imagine our impatience to hear the news. Then at 10 o'clock Gamal Abdel Nasser, in a voice calm, but deep with an emotion which he tried hard to contain, and in stirring words, announced to the people that our beloved Egypt will no longer be profaned by foreign occupation.

You can easily picture our indescribable relief and happiness when he announced that the last foreign soldier would for ever quit our sacred motherland, and that our army would shed the chains that had shamefully and unjustly bound our hands, thus regaining our previous strength and glory after hundreds of years of foreign occupation. How deeply moved we were when he asked all Egyptians to join him in giving thanks to God, and not to fail to remember on this memorable day all those who gave their lives to the cause of independence and whom God had called back to Him before they could see the achievement of their relentless struggle. He added that at this moment they must be rejoicing with us as we, on our side, remember them in homage and gratitude.

After Nasser had finished his announcement our famous singer, Om Kalsoum, said a few words. She said that we love Egypt with every beat of our hearts and every drop of our blood. Her voice when she talked was as moving as when she sings. Then with her beautiful voice she sang a national hymn, which was in fact a hymn of love to Egypt, and every one of her words found an echo in our hearts. I actually felt that every drop of my blood was pulsating with love and pride for Egypt. That blood flowing in my veins was but

the heritage of the glory of Ancient Egypt which lasted several thousand years and which was transmitted to us, a sacred trust to be in turn transmitted to our children.

I can't tell you, my father and dear Shahira, how deeply moved I was when I heard Gamal Abdel Nasser. His voice brought back to my mind the ring of truth and loyal love to Egypt which I used to hear every day when our dear Samy used to talk about Egypt, which was not only his greatest and only love but, in fact, was life itself for him. From Samy, dear father, as from you and my dear mother I learned true patriotism in its purest form, absorbing the soul in complete self-denial. After Samy, in vain did I strain my ears all these years to hear the voice of this true and unadulterated love, and in vain did my heart wait to respond to its accents; but at long last its memory came back to me and I truly felt how much Samy was rejoicing with us tonight.

On hearing this sudden and unexpected happy news I was so deeply moved that I felt the need for fresh air. I went out on the balcony, raised my eyes to heaven, and from the depth of my soul I thanked God who made us at last realise the dream which seemed to us, after all these years of expectation and struggle, doomed to remain only as a dream. Then I called upon Samy and told him, "Rest in peace, beloved brother, and enjoy the paradise you so well deserve, as our Egypt has at last found a true patriot among her loyal sons."

Then I saw Youssef standing at my side—with eyes full of tears —that man who usually has so much self-control could not, on this occasion, contain an emotion which was no less than mine. Even the children and all the household were overwhelmed with joy.

To you, my dear father and Shahira, I send this message of happiness across the seas and mountains that separate us so that we may all rejoice together.

Yours affectionately,

SAMIRA.

Referring to that part of my daughter's letter in which she addressed

herself to her departed brother, I would like to explain the reason which urged her to call upon him on this occasion.

Samy had consecrated his life to the cause of Egypt's freedom. But his most untimely and tragic death in 1933 while on his way to the centre where youth was being trained to defend their country put an end to his patriotic activities.

Akher Saa, the weekly magazine, paid a tribute to his noble work when it mourned his premature death in its issue of May 1933 where it described him as one of the leading members of the Executive Committee of Students.

Aly and Mostafa Amin, the well-known and distinguished journalists, who were fellow-members of the Student Committee would probably know more about the patriotic activities of the youth organisations of that period than I do.

Several newspapers also published the following obituary notices:

> On behalf of 5,000 volunteers of the Piastre Project Society, I present my sincere condolences. Samy was at the head of the Piastre Project volunteers. He was a brave militant youth of the Misr El Fatah and an example to his colleagues. His death is an irreparable loss. But such is life. Let us bear it with resignation and patience. I was struck down by the news as I lost by his death a champion and a friend.
>
> The Secretary—Misr El Fatah Society.

To the departed Piastre Project volunteer, Samy Mahfouz.

My Dear Samy and dearest friend of the Piastre Project,

Having lost you, shall I lament you? But my eyes are tearless!—Shall I address you an elegy? But words seem so empty and meaningless. . . . But I come to render you homage . . . and I render this homage to you in death as I did when you were alive—the day I placed on your chest the golden medal of outstanding distinction, and I cheered you by your name, O my friend. . . .

You were a believer, you were brave and loyal, and you struggled with us to place Egypt above all.

Today as you are snatched from life with such cruelty and such

suddenness, you are still worthy of homage since you are teaching us that life is cheap and not worth sparing. So let us offer it willingly and with joy for the Motherland, for Virtue and for Truth. Therein your name will be engraved in the golden pages of the Piastre Project for bravery in the struggle, and for all that Misr El Fatah stands for. The volunteers will treasure your name as an everlasting example among the highest examples to youth.

Farewell, my dear friend, till we meet, as life in this world is not eternal.

Egypt above all—Long live Egypt.

AHMED HUSSEIN,
Student at the Faculty of Law.
Secretary, Piastre Project.

I would like to mention here what my friend and colleague, Dr. Kassem Abdel Khalek, Professor of Radiology at the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, told me. He and Samy had both been members of the Executive Committee and also of the "From One Egyptian to Another Egyptian" Society, which was founded by Salama Moussa in 1929. This Society used to publish a periodical called *The Egyptian*. It appealed to the public to encourage local industry and dispense with foreign products, thus the foreign-made tarboosh was to be replaced by the locally made one. The same applied to everything that could be made in Egypt in the way of apparel.

Samy used to deliver patriotic addresses to his fellow students and I have in my possession a gramophone record of one of these.

Chapter 27

DANGERS I ESCAPED

In the course of my life I have been exposed to many dangers, some nearly fatal, but God in His mercy and kindness saved me. Here are a few incidents.

The Rock of Salvation

I still remember the day when I almost lost my life in attempting to cross the Kasr El Nil bridge in Cairo. I had received a telephone message from the Anglo-American Hospital informing me that a patient was going through a difficult labour. This was at 3 o'clock on a December morning. It was very foggy and visibility was bad but I had no choice but to answer the call.

I awoke my chauffeur, who had his lodgings over the garage in the garden of the villa where I live, and asked him to drive me to the hospital. As he could not see his way very well on account of the dense fog he drove very cautiously. We reached the Kasr El Nil bridge and as the driver turned the car to cross it the front hit what seemed to us a big rock. The engine stalled and the driver got out to see what had happened. He was stunned to discover that the bridge was open and that we were barely two yards from its edge. There was no red light to warn drivers, no guard, no chain which was normally put over in such cases to stop the traffic. We thanked God for our delivery but could not explain the mystery of the rock. We had only to drive a little further to meet our doom.

A Child's Desire Saves Us from a Train Collision

I was spending a summer holiday with my wife and children in Karlsbad to undergo my annual course of treatment. When this ended we headed for Strasbourg, cabling the day and time of our arrival to our

hotel. On our way we passed through Nuremberg in Germany and as my children expressed the desire to stop overnight there I agreed. We got off the train and wandered through the new and the old city, spending the night in one of its hotels. In the morning we made for Strasbourg, little realising that by stopping in Nuremberg we had escaped certain death. The train we had got off in Nuremberg had collided with an oncoming train, killing all the first and second class passengers.

A Voice from the Window

In 1919 I had agreed to attend the confinement of the wife of the American First Secretary who was also Chargé d'Affaires and who had employed for the occasion a nurse by the name of Mrs. Lendrum. Labour came on suddenly and I was called at once. This happened to be the first day of the 1919 Egyptian Revolution and demonstrators had tried to get into the British Embassy and destroy it. Instructions went out to the British Army to impose a curfew, of which I was completely unaware, on the whole district of Garden City. I drove my car, a De Dion Bouton Torpedo, to the Embassy official's house in Garden City and as I drove came under fire from the British soldiers. Two bullets went through the windscreen of my car and whistled past my ear, one of them almost hitting me. Had it not been for Mrs. Lendrum, who was at that moment standing at the window and screaming at the top of her voice for the soldiers to stop firing, I would undoubtedly have been unable to write these lines.

The Burnt-out Aeroplane

I was spending my holidays in Lucerne with my family and brother-in-law, Kamel Azmi, Attorney General, when I received a letter from Professor James Young asking me to give a series of lectures at the Hammersmith Hospital and Postgraduate School in London. I considered it a great honour for me and my country to accept the invitation and I was not wrong for, at the end of my last lecture, Professor Young came up to the platform and spoke flatteringly of my lectures, referring to the great revival of science in Egypt.

The strange thing is that after I accepted the invitation I received

a cable from Professor Young three days before my first lecture was due informing me that he had booked a ticket on a plane leaving Zürich at a certain time on a certain day and that the tickets were being sent express mail. My wife heard of this and absolutely refused to allow me to take that particular plane. I jokingly referred our quarrel to my brother-in-law, the Attorney General, who supported his sister and in the end I had to acquiesce and take the train instead. She insisted that her brother accompany me to the railway station to make sure that I got on the Paris train. At 10 p.m. I went to the railway station, accompanied by Kamel, who carried out his sister's instructions.

I arrived in Paris at 8 a.m. and had hardly got off the train when I heard the newspaper boys shouting, "Fatal Crash of English Plane". I bought a paper and read the headlines. One of the biggest British planes, flown by a skilful English pilot, had hit an electric cable five minutes after taking off from Zürich and was completely destroyed. I thanked God who inspired my wife to prevent me from taking the plane. I went straight to the phone to thank her for saving my life. I also got in touch with Professor Young and told him I had not been on the crashed plane.

Chapter 28

EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

Many extraordinary happenings have taken place in my presence and I am unable to offer a reasonable explanation. Scientists have not yet discovered the secrets of the brain and the extent of its potentialities. They are at a loss to explain mysterious phenomena such as mind-reading, telepathy and ventriloquism, as well as child prodigies. We have an example in Mozart whose brilliant compositions started at the age of four and who conducted the Opera Symphony Orchestra in Vienna at the age of eleven. Many years ago I met a boy of eight who was almost an imbecile but who could multiply ten digits by another ten digits in less than a minute. He was taken to the Ministry of Public Works to test his ability, comparing his results with those of a computing machine. Only on one occasion did he differ from the machine and it was found later on that there had been something wrong with the computer.

Science has helped solve many of the mysteries and miracles of nature. There are the telephone, wireless, radio, television; the splitting of the atom with its peaceful and military potentialities; invasion of space and the attempt to reach the planets; the electronic brain which performs many intellectual feats such as translation from one language to another, and many others. But they do not explain the mysteries of the brain or the soul which remain so far obscure. Here are some of the outstanding phenomena and events I have encountered.

Was it a True Vision?

When my father died one of my sisters was living in a village near Damanhour which was quite some distance from Mansoura. She had a dream in which she saw my father lying dead. She saw me enter his bedroom, raise the mosquito net and try to wake him up, but to no avail.

When she awoke she was certain that her father had died. She dressed and hastened to Mansoura. I had cabled my brother the news of my father's death but I was unable to contact her. However she came on the same train as my brother although they did not meet and when I arrived at the station to meet my brother I saw my sister come out of the next compartment. She was in deep mourning. She told us the story of her dream which coincided with the facts in every detail.

The Telephone Rings for Two Seconds and Stops

A lady of the Egyptian aristocracy was pregnant for the fifth time and we all hoped that the newborn would be a boy so that he would inherit the family estate. Unfortunately for the mother she had a placenta praevia and we were afraid that the patient might have a haemorrhage at any moment which would endanger her life and that of the baby. I recommended that she should be admitted to hospital one month before the baby was due but owing to certain circumstances she was not able to do so. I was, therefore, expecting a call from her at any time.

One day at 3 a.m. the telephone rang for a very short time and stopped. I woke up, lifted the receiver but there was no reply. I felt apprehensive and thought of the lady, imagining her to be in danger and, although I was attending many other ladies in similar situations, I could not help thinking of that particular one. I dressed immediately, wakened the chauffeur, took my bag and went to her house. When we arrived, we saw a light in a room on the first floor. We were about to knock when, to our amazement, we found the door was open. I rang and rang but no one came so I entered the house and went upstairs to the illuminated room where I found the lady in great pain. She was in a pool of blood. I quickly took the necessary steps and delivered her safely of a boy. Half an hour later the porter walked in, saying that he had tried to telephone me at home but could get no reply and had decided to go to my house but, of course, did not find me there. And so the mysterious ringing had called me to perform my duty at the right moment. The interpretation of this mystery might be found in telepathy or perhaps it was sheer coincidence.

The Secrets of Memory

During the First World War I admitted the wife of a French Diplomat in Cairo to hospital for an operation. While she was being anaesthetised she began suddenly to sing in Arabic, with a Tunisian accent. The song went,

"Oh you white girl, you made me go mad,
You gave me the white wine and got me drunk."

I went to see the patient after she had come round from the anaesthesia and said in Arabic "Mabrouk", which means "congratulations", but she did not seem to understand. I then told her husband about the Arabic song and he replied, "Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that twenty years ago, when she was a child, her father had been appointed to the French Embassy in Tunisia and my wife had a Tunisian nanny. They remained in Tunisia for four years and then left for France but never returned. My wife must have learned some of the Tunisian songs from her nanny during that period."

The following day one of our nurses told the patient about the song but she did not believe it as she could not remember a single word of Arabic. Memory, psychologists state, consists of electrons stored in the grey matter of the cerebrum, remaining there till the conscious mind is dormant, then manifesting themselves. This may be an explanation.

Mind-Reading and Ventriloquism

In the winter of 1918 a conjuror by the name of Nicholls came to Cairo. He was known in Egypt as the European Conjuror. He displayed his tricks at the Abbas Theatre in Imad El Din Street, his speciality being mind-reading. I was present one evening with my family when he asked if a member of the audience wanted to have his mind read. I volunteered and he asked me to think of something. I thought of an item of news I had read in the evening paper *Al Mokattam*. He repeated it correctly but with a foreign accent as he could speak only a little Arabic. He also asked me to memorise the number of my watch. I went into a separate room in the theatre, locked the door and memorised the number.

When I returned he gave the number correctly. I was then convinced that the man was definitely gifted with the ability of mind-reading.

Following this the conjuror, accompanied by a young lady whom he said he was going to hypnotise, asked members of the audience to write some figures on pieces of paper which he stated she would read out and then write on the blackboard. I wrote a number consisting of six figures. He took the paper and asked the lady to read out the number and write it on the blackboard. Each time, after reading out the figures and writing them down correctly, the applause from the audience was thunderous. I asked the conjuror if the lady could write the figures first and then read them out but he said that this was not possible. I then realised that the conjuror himself was a ventriloquist and that it was he who read out the numbers without moving his lips and in such a way as to give the impression that the sound was coming from the direction of the lady; all the lady had to do was to write down the numbers.

What made me aware of the conjuror's trick was the fact that once, when I was operating at the Coptic Hospital on a peasant woman to whom we had administered a spinal anaesthetic so that she remained completely conscious, the silence of the theatre was suddenly broken by a woman's dirge coming from the outside. She seemed to be bewailing the loss of a son who had died before she entered hospital for an operation. I called to the head nurse and asked her to go outside and stop the woman's noise. She soon came back, however, saying that there was no one outside. Then the patient herself said, "It is I, sir, I am bewailing my dead son." I asked her to keep quiet until we had finished the operation. Then the woman told me of her ability to speak "from the stomach", as she called it, and gave me several demonstrations in which I could hear the voice coming from different directions, even from outside.

Resurrection

It was a Friday, the weekly holiday, and work at the hospital had stopped except for casualty cases. A woman, who had been in labour for three days, was admitted and the houseman in charge got in touch with

me stating that a Caesarean operation seemed imperative. I hastened to the hospital and had the patient moved to the theatre at once. While she was being anaesthetised with Stovaine, as was then the practice, and while I was getting on my theatre clothes, the anaesthetist came to me looking perturbed and said that the lady had died. I went to see her and found that she had actually died. I then made an incision in the abdomen to get the baby out and found that it was in a state of suffocation. I administered the necessary treatment for resuscitation and left the assistants to take what measures they thought fit with the mother, but to no avail. I had no alternative then but to sew up the abdomen. The lady had been dead for forty minutes when it suddenly occurred to me to inject her heart with alcohol. At that time we had not yet realised the value of adrenalin in such cases. When the needle reached the heart, and before I had emptied the alcohol from the syringe, the heart began to contract. I immediately administered artificial respiration, which lasted for two hours, until the patient regained her natural respiration. When she regained consciousness I asked her, "Do you remember any of the things that happened to you while you were asleep?" She answered that she had been completely unconscious since she had been anaesthetised. Her condition was quite fair for the following two days, except for some fits which happened intermittently, but the intervals between the fits became shorter and shorter.

On the seventh day, while on my round with students in the obstetric ward, I found the patient dead. I ordered her body to be removed immediately to the post-mortem room and informed the professor of pathology. We found that the superficial layer of the grey matter in the brain, to the depth of one millimetre, was necrosed. The professor removed the brain and put it in formalin, except for a piece which he immediately froze and examined. Five days later, when the brain sections were ready, we examined them microscopically. After a thorough and minute examination it was found that the superficial layer of the grey matter had necrosed. The professor's opinion was that this necrosis had occurred when the patient had died the first time and that the nervous fits were due to the necrosis. He added that this was the first incident of its kind which he had met. I wondered how it was possible for life to come back to the body after death.

It is thirty years now since this incident occurred and I still vividly remember it. It was the first and only experience of its kind in which I had witnessed the return of life to the body after death. That was a prodigious happening at the time. Similar incidents have since been reported.

I can never forget what wild thoughts rushed into my mind when I left the post-mortem room that day. I asked myself: "What is the nature of the material that left the body? What is life? What is the soul? How is it that when the heart had started to function again the organs revived? What is the material, if one can call it so, that initiates the chemical process essential for causing tissues, which were considered dead, to come back to life? Was it hiding somewhere in the body, waiting for the opportunity to emerge?" That was a problem the solution of which is still beyond man's comprehension.

Dream or Revelation?

When, in 1933, I was struck by the sudden and tragic death of my only son, I was so overwhelmed with grief that I despaired of life and decided to give up my practice for the rest of my days and so remained in my house for some time.

Among my patients was a Princess of the Royal Family whom I had attended in her former confinements. Her husband came to see me and told me that she was suffering from a severe attack of typhoid and was in her last month of pregnancy. In fact, he said, labour had started and he requested me to attend her during her confinement as it was feared that dangerous shock might follow delivery. Before I gave an answer I consulted my wife and pointed out to her that the Princess was in great danger and that I would blame myself if things went wrong. She urged me to accept and to put my faith in God.

I therefore went to the patient's house where I examined her and found that delivery would not take place for some hours. I went to an adjoining room, put on my sterilised gown and gloves, and sat down on a chair to wait. I cannot say for sure whether I dozed for a moment, or whether I was wide awake, when I saw my son coming towards me, smiling. After shaking hands with me, he said, "Daddy, I am

now in perfect bliss. Nothing spoils my happiness except your desperate grief. Do not give in to despair, Daddy, but set yourself as an example to my mother and sisters. Do not give up your work as you intend to do, but go ahead in your struggle and God will be with you. The patient is now ready and the delivery will end safely."

My son had hardly spoken these words when I heard a knock at the door. It was the nurse who said that the head was on the perineum. I went in and effected the delivery of the child and all went well.

When I returned home I learned from my wife that my daughter Samira had overheard our conversation before I left the house and, after my departure, had gone up to her brother's room which since his death was cleaned, tidied and prepared exactly as if he were still alive. She had knelt at his bed, praying fervently, and appealed to God to heal our deep wound and to bring peace to our broken hearts. She then called on her brother in her prayer, asking him to intercede and ask God to console the stricken father and help him in the work he was now undertaking. She wept bitterly and, laying her head on the edge of the bed, fell asleep until her mother who had been looking for her came into the room and woke her up.

As for me, I felt great relief when the delivery ended safely and returned home in a peaceful state of mind, quite different from that in which I had left the house in the morning. My wife asked me about the patient. I told her that she was safely delivered and then told her of our son's apparition to me while I was waiting in the room adjoining that of the patient and related what he had said to me. My wife marvelled at the coincidence of Samira's prayers and our son's apparition.

What happened that day has nothing whatsoever to do with spiritualism. I attribute my son's apparition and the words he said to me to be proof that God Almighty accepted my daughter's appeal when, in her fervent prayer, she asked Him to fill my heart with confidence and peace.

Chapter 29

THE MYSTERY OF CREATION

When I began my studies at the School of Medicine, perplexing problems concerning doctrines I was taught in my childhood began to creep into my mind and shake my belief in the truth of what I had been taught. Chief among the problems was the mystery of creation and its relation to divinity. In the turmoil of these doubts I suffered much from spiritual torment. In the course of time I began to find solutions that eased my mind but this was a very gradual process.

I believe it may be helpful to some of my readers who feel the same if I describe how I arrived at overcoming these doubts.

My first doubts arose after a lecture given by Dr. Bitter, Professor of Hygiene, on *The Indestructibility of Matter.* "If a man dies," he said, "his body disintegrates and mixes with the earth and is used up in giving nourishment to plants. From the food thus formed, bodies are built. The structure of the earth is the same as when it got detached from the sun. Except for meteors which occasionally fall on it, nothing has been added to its substance." I wondered at this and began to ask myself how it would be possible for human bodies to re-form on their resurrection if their elements had intermingled with those of other bodies through millions of years and how it would be possible to punish or to reward them on the day of judgement. For a long time I could not find an explanation to what seemed to me a paradox. Fortunately for me, I had inherited from my father the habit of reading a chapter of the Bible every night. It happened that a few days later I read what St. Paul had written in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen:

> "But you may ask, how are the dead raised? In what kind of body . . . it is raised as spiritual body . . . flesh and blood can never inherit the kingdom of God, and the perishable cannot possess immortality."

This relieved my mind and I felt more reassured.

During further studies I met with facts regarding the law of preserva-

tion of species in men, animals and plants, which convinced me that such laws cannot be the result of mere chance but are carefully designed and planned. All living creatures are endowed with the power to devise intricate means to preserve their own species. Take for example the microbes, some of which are injurious to man and some useful. A variety of the latter is responsible for causing disintegration of matter, so as to be absorbed by the roots of plants. The means microbes resort to in order to preserve their own species are really marvellous. When they are in danger of extinction by antiseptics or excessive heat they begin to secrete poisonous matter to counteract the effects of the antiseptics used. If this fails they shield themselves with a capsule that resists both heat and antiseptics and they form spores. They remain as such until the invading enemy has ceased to act. They then secrete a material that dissolves the capsule and return to their original form and start their mission anew.

As an example I will mention what happened when Ehrlich discovered the drug 606 which, he claimed, would kill the spirochaeta pallida of syphilis in twenty-four hours. Ehrlich tells us that when he injected syphilitic patients with the drug the spirochaetae disappeared from the blood. A fortnight later, however, they reappeared anew in the blood of these patients. The explanation he gave was that some of the spirochaetae left the blood of the patient immediately after the injection was made and entered the bone marrow where the drug could not penetrate and went through a process which rendered them immune to the drug.

The same thing happens with other drugs that are used to kill injurious organisms. Take for example DDT. When first introduced to combat flies, etc., the effect was marvellous and we thought that at last we had found a means of exterminating these insects. But the flies were not slow to find some material that made them immune.

It is amazing to see what happens in infection with bilharziasis, how the parasite behaves in order to be discharged from the body of the patient in the very medium that is suitable for it to propagate, the haematobium species going to the bladder and the Mansonella to the intestines in order to be voided in water channels, the only place in which the necessary hosts for completing their cycles exist.

In one of Patrick Manson's books I read of the guinea worm which

infects men who carry water in skins on their shoulders. He tells us that this worm lives under the skin of the infested patient. In order to propagate its species it travels towards the skin of the legs and feet and forms a bleb through which, when it bursts, the worm expels its ova into the stream where the carrier fills the skins. Patrick Manson tried to deprive the worm from this way of propagation by painting the water carriers' legs up to the knees with tar. He was astonished to find that the worm sought another site where it could gain access to water, the backs of the carriers where the water skins were carried.

Here is a further example which illustrates the extent to which creatures resort in order to ensure the propagation of their species. The salmon has, by instinct, found that the best places for laying its eggs are the shallow waters of the tributaries of the Firth of Forth on the Eastern Coast of Scotland, while the ideal place for existence is the St. Lawrence River on the Eastern shores of Canada. When a couple of salmon living in the St. Lawrence wish to propagate, they cross the Atlantic Ocean together and travel to the Firth of Forth in Scotland. There they choose a shallow marsh connected with the river where the female lays the eggs to be fertilised by the male and goes back home. The male remains until the fish grow and takes them back with him to the St. Lawrence River. This voyage entails a lot of hardship, their backs being wounded by the sharp-edged rocks while coming from or going to the St. Lawrence River.

These are just a few examples to show what creatures do for the preservation of their species.

Another phenomenon is connected with the relation of the number of males to females in all parts of the world. You will find families with one boy and three girls, and others in which the children are boys, and so on, but the ratio for every town or country is found to be one hundred and five males to a hundred females. In great wars, when millions of males are killed, the ratio is corrected within a few years. I myself noted that during the last two wars, when I had under my care hundreds of families belonging to the countries engaged in these wars and hundreds of families from countries which did not participate, the number of boys born during and for some years after the war to those countries participating exceeded the number of girls, while the ratio did not change in

those countries that did not participate. I proved this by carefully prepared statistics.

Another proof of the existence of a supreme power that regulates life on earth is the fact that nature imposes upon its creatures the task of earning their living by the sweat of their brow. This law is devised in order to preserve their species. What would happen to the human race, for example, if life was easy and didn't require hard work? The ultimate result would be a race of weaklings with no power of resistance that would soon perish. I read the following story in an English magazine which helps to explain this.

A medical man in a village on the east coast of Scotland fell in love with the daughter of a poor fisherman and married her. Once when the girl's father was at sea he almost perished in a storm. When the doctor heard of the dangers his father-in-law sometimes had to face he tried to find a solution. Near the village was an area, the base of which was much below the level of the surrounding country, separated from the sea by only a few metres of elevated land. He bought the low-lying area and had it connected to the sea. A small lake was formed where he bred fish of good quality. These propagated and the fisherman prospered but after a few years the fish from the lake could not be sold on the market. The medical man discovered the cause. The fish were leading an idle life and their flesh had become flabby. To remedy this he placed some ferocious fish in the lake. Struggle ensued and the fish regained their muscles.

When I consider all these things I come to the conclusion that there is a great power that creates and directs everything in the universe in a manner that the human mind cannot understand.

Chapter 30

DESTINY

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."—*Hamlet.*

The question of destiny is a very intricate one. How far is fatalism true? Or is it true at all?

Certain calamities like earthquakes, floods, typhoons, etc., are acts of nature, totally beyond our control, for which man cannot be held responsible. Other tragic events such as accidents or epidemics, etc.—except for what can be avoided by taking preventive measures—are equally beyond man's responsibility.

But for good deeds or bad, which are man's own doing, he must be held responsible. If we admit that fate forces a man's actions, how can we blame him for a bad deed or give him credit for a good action if he was predestined to do it? God endowed man with a mind and a free will and made known to him right from wrong. He sent His Word to teach him Truth and enlighten his path. He gave him judgement and liberty of choice between good and evil. If he follows the right path, it is to his credit; if not, the fault is his.

God's scales never fail. His judgement is given in proportion to what he has allotted to the person in gifts, heredity, environment or in chances and opportunities afforded.

"To those to whom much has been given, from them much will be required, and to whom much has been entrusted, of him more will be demanded." I find that belief in fatalism is no more than a pretext for people who chose the wrong path to lull themselves into the belief that what they do is an act of destiny forced upon them.

When I was a medical student I was once interrogating a patient about the way she had contracted the disease from which she was suffering. She said, "I contracted this disease while working under compulsion." I was astounded at her reply and asked her from where this compulsion

came. She replied, "It was my destiny to live in vice for seven years, at the end of which God lifted this sentence and I became an honest woman." This woman had convinced herself that the fault was not hers. She shifted the responsibility off her shoulders and put the blame on destiny. It is illogical and revolting to the human mind to think that God, who ordered man to lead a clean life, could in His infinite justice contradict His own commandment and impose upon this woman a life of vice.

I may here add that belief in fatalism, which was common in some communities, was instrumental in creating a sense of passiveness and apathy which killed all initiative. This is expressed in a popular proverb, "No matter how ferociously you may struggle, you will never get more than what was destined for you."

Views of this kind are bound to sow the seeds of apathy and kill energy and the spirit of enterprise. Life is a struggle; and success is the fruit of hard work. No progress is attained without effort. Discoveries are the result of perseverance and hard work. Civilisation is the result of human effort, generation after generation. The rule of nature is that he who sows, reaps. Man was born to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. An ancient Arabic proverb says, "Work hard, says the Lord, and I will carry the load with you."

To those who ask for His help with faith, He extends His hand. I personally felt the hand of Providence in directing me in the career I chose for myself. In fact, many of the apparent obstacles in my way became instrumental in helping me to attain the aim I was working for. I shall now recount some of the events which deeply influenced my career.

As a child I was fond of reading a review called *Al Muktataf*. My attention was attracted by two articles it contained. The first was the discovery by Koch of the tubercle bacillus and the serum that he developed for the cure of tuberculosis. The second was on the origin and evolution of species by Darwin, and the discussions for and against it. It is true that I only grasped a little of what I read but it was sufficient to kindle in me the love of research. It then became the ultimate aim of my life to enter the School of Medicine in order to satisfy this urge.

Many obstacles stood in my way. The first of these was that the school chosen for me as a child did not prepare its pupils to sit for government

certificates. Had I continued my studies there I would never have succeeded in entering the School of Medicine. An injustice by one of the teachers made me ask my father to transfer me to a government school. No one believed that my father would accept but he did. I got my primary certificate and thus was able to enter the Tewfikieh Secondary School in Cairo where I obtained the Baccalaureat.

Hardly had I entered the Tewfikieh School, where the course extended to five years, when I discovered that our financial situation had greatly deteriorated and our means had become very meagre following upon my father's death. This was a very serious obstacle and in order to overcome it I decided to shorten the years of study to three instead of five, which although against regulations I managed to achieve.

I then entered the School of Medicine but before the final examination an epidemic of cholera broke out in the village of Mousha near Assiut. My work during this epidemic proved to be the cornerstone of my career. There I was able to find the polluted well which, in spite of great efforts, had remained undiscovered up till then. This led to me being transferred to Alexandria to help combat cholera there. In Alexandria occurred the incident which changed my career and made me specialise in obstetrics instead of working in the Public Health Department. I was asked to give anaesthesia to a woman in difficult labour and the operation ended in the tragic death of the mother after decapitation of the foetus. The sight of the headless baby, thrown on the floor, and of the mother with its head still in her womb, lying stretched on the operating table, haunted me and caused me three sleepless nights. I vowed there and then to dedicate my life to help women in difficult labour.

Another obstacle that turned to my benefit was that, having been obliged to go to Mansoura to sign the act of sale of the few acres of land that still remained in my family's possession, I failed to present myself to the Public Health Department authorities for nomination to one of the vacant posts. When I returned to Cairo all the good posts had already been filled and I had to accept one at the Suez Hospital, which was considered most undesirable as no one who had occupied it before had been able to leave without receiving a black mark on his file. It was through the influence of Dr. Creswell, Head of the Suez Hospital, that I

was able to get a post in the School of Medicine and in due course realise my aspirations.

From experiences in life, some of which I have related in this chapter, I have come to the conclusion that everyone should attempt with all his might to reach his goal. Providence will not then fail him but will lead him to the best way of attaining it.

> "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Chapter 31

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

When I was a pupil in the final year of the Tewfikieh Secondary School our teacher of the English language, Mr. Foster Smith one of the most able teachers I have come across, asked us to write an essay on the following theme: *Is Life Worth Living?* None of us could, at that age, write a suitable essay. We had not yet faced life and were unfit to give an opinion on such a subject.

As I advanced in years this question often came to my mind. I was very discouraged when I read King Solomon's view in Ecclesiastes. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." The greatest of all Arab philosopher poets, Abou-el-Ela El Maari, unfortunately held the same views. "Life is all trouble and toil," he says. "It surprises me that there is a man who wishes to live longer."

But when I look back on my past life, which was not devoid of miseries and grief, and on the successes and pleasures I attained I hold a view which is far from being pessimistic. I consider life a grace granted to us by God.

Love in its pure form and the company of sincere friends are, by themselves, a source of great happiness. Nature with all its beauties cannot fail to make man happy. Struggle is a pleasure in itself. The discovery of something unknown and the attainment of efficiency in one's work are a source of great happiness in life. The search for truth is a pleasure. To overcome all unhealthy instincts is a victory which is a real source of happiness in life. Above all, we have the supreme promise of enjoying after death pleasures that no eyes have seen nor ears heard of. If we meet with drawbacks and disappointment in life we should never lose heart but should face them with patience and perseverance.

Chapter 32

LECTURES I DELIVERED ABROAD

In 1956 the Executive Council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in England invited me to give the Fletcher Shaw Memorial Lecture. The requisite qualification of the lecturer is that he should be a Fellow of the College and that his research and published material should have contributed to noticeable progress in obstetrics and gynaecology. The College Council decides on the topic of research and refers it to the chosen lecturer. It is customary to announce the date of the Memorial Lecture six months before the appointed time to enable the maximum number of doctors and research workers from all English-speaking countries to attend.

The summer of 1956 found me prepared with my coloured films of the various operations and other material connected with the subject that was chosen for me. While I was booking my passage to London I received two invitations, one from Professor Kellar of Edinburgh University and the other from Professor Nixon of London University, both requesting me to deliver lectures at their respective universities. I received two further invitations from Switzerland, from Professor de Watteville, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Geneva University, and Professor Rochat, Professor of Obstetrics at Lausanne University, both asking me to give lectures.

I went first to Switzerland where my lectures were well attended. Professor de Watteville approached me in his capacity of President of the International Conference of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, expressing the desire to obtain copies of my films at any price. I gave them to him as a gift in the name of the Egyptian Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to the University of Geneva. My grand-daughter, Nadia, daughter of the engineer Youssef Simaika, helped in preparing a French version of my lectures.

On my arrival in London I found a letter from Sir Charles Read,

President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, waiting for me. He informed me that I was to give my lecture at the Royal Society of Medicine instead of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. I arrived at the appointed time and was introduced to the audience by Sir Charles. He began by saying that the lecture was originally planned to be given at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists but three months after the announcement was made a great number of applications to attend were received. As the College lecture-hall at that time could not accommodate this number, it was decided to give the lecture in the hall of the Royal Society of Medicine. I was pleased to meet many of my colleagues who had come from different countries one of whom was Professor Rubin whom I had not seen for many years.

After the lecture a reception was given in my honour at the Royal Society of Medicine where Sir William Gilliatt, President of the British Royal Society of Medicine, and Lady Gilliatt acted as hosts. Among those invited were the leading members of the medical profession as well as many distinguished personalities. My daughter Samira and her husband, engineer Youssef Simaika, were also invited as well as my grand-children Nadia and Fayka Simaika and Dr. Samir Simaika, who at present acts as my assistant at the Coptic Hospital, together with my other grandson, Dr. Amin Makram. This reception was followed by a dinner given by Sir William and Lady Gilliatt which was attended by the leading physicians and surgeons in England.

Two days later Sir Charles Read and the members of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology gave another dinner, in the beautiful setting of Hurlingham, to which two hundred and fifty guests were invited. My daughter, son-in-law and my two grand-children and I were guests of honour. I was deeply touched by the after dinner speeches made by Sir Charles Read, Professor Nixon and Professor Green-Armytage.

Having delivered my lectures at the University of London, I travelled with my family to Edinburgh to lecture there. Professor Kellar and his wife were most hospitable and we spent a whole week in the city visiting places of interest, particularly the Scottish moors we had read about in Sir Walter Scott's novels, and we were fortunate enough in

having a whole week of dry weather though the city is famous for its rain.

We left Edinburgh for London where we stayed at an hotel in the suburbs. Professor Chassar Moir visited me at the hotel and asked if I would give a lecture at Oxford University which I agreed to do but was later forced to withdraw owing to the Suez incident. Relations between Egypt and Britain were severed and our funds were frozen by the British government. As soon as friends in England learned of my predicament they all expressed a desire to help but I thanked them for I still had just enough money to cover our expenses. Naturally we had some difficulties. I went to the Bank of England and requested that my hotel bill be paid from my frozen account, which was granted, but I was not allowed to touch the rest of the money until diplomatic relations between our country and Britain were resumed.

A year later I was asked once more by Professor Chassar Moir to give a lecture at Oxford. I must record here the great hospitality and generosity extended to us there. I must also record the great hospitality shown to us by Professor Chassar Moir and, in London, by Professor Green-Armytage who gave a reception at the Hyde Park Hotel for over a hundred guests in my honour to which my two daughters Isis and Shahira, who were with me in London, were invited.

Professor Nixon again invited me to give lectures at the University College Hospital and introduced me to a large number of colleagues who came from many different countries and who were interested in hearing the lectures and seeing the films on urinary and faecal fistulae, a disease prevalent in the countries where they practised. Professor Nixon always showed me great kindness during my stays in London.

In the summer of 1962 I was asked by the College of Postgraduate Studies at Hammersmith Hospital to deliver a lecture, the news of which appeared repeatedly in the medical journals. This was given in the spacious hall recently built and I was happy to see a large number of Egyptians among the international audience.

The following day Professor McClure Browne gave a cocktail party to which he invited 150 prominent doctors. Also invited were a large number of Egyptian students, as well as the staff of the Egyptian Embassy and Consulate. I found this an excellent opportunity to

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introduce the Egyptian mission members to a number of professors who were supervising them in their respective colleges.

The Egyptian Ambassador, Muhammad Awad Elkouni, gave a luncheon party at the Egyptian Embassy to which he invited the Presidents and Secretaries of the Medical Colleges in London, Oxford and Edinburgh. It was a very successful party, especially as it enhanced the friendly relations between Egyptians and the leading medical staff in Britain.

I wish here to express how deeply touched I am by the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of my friends and colleagues, past and present, both in England, Scotland and Ireland, who have constantly shown to me such friendship, kindness and hospitality.

FIG. 12

In 1963 with my youngest daughter Shahira and her three children Malak, Naguib and Karim.

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Chapter 33

A LOOK BACKWARDS

At the end of this narrative I would like to stop for a while and look back on the days, good and evil, which I have passed through during my life.

I can discern clearly the happy, sunny, brilliant days overtopping the rainy, stormy and black ones. I do not wonder at that for this is the way of life on earth. When the darkness of night is at its blackest, dawn appears and is followed by bright sunshine.

The lesson I learned from life is that if we meet our failures and misfortunes with a brave heart, and are neither disheartened nor bitter, we are bound to succeed. An honourable struggle will succeed in the long run. In the rare cases in which it does not, the feeling that we have done the right thing creates in us an inner satisfaction which, in itself, is a great reward.

A great boon in my life is that I lived to see my country independent, rising in a comparatively short time from the depths to which it had fallen to become a powerful country with all its resources, social and material, highly developed and to see democratic principles applied with such fairness that all classes of society enjoy a fair share of life.

It is indeed difficult to estimate the benefits Egypt will reap ten years after the High Dam is completed.

Now at the end of my narrative I wish to express my deepest thanks to God for all the boons and gifts he has graciously bestowed upon me which are apparent in the love of my daughters, Samira, Isis and Shahira, and that of their husbands, Youssef, Helmy and Maher, and of their children and grandchildren.

APPENDIX

25th July, 1943
Speech Delivered by Admiral Gordon Gordon-Taylor
Senior Vice-President of the Royal College of Surgeons

This is a memorable and auspicious occasion—the presentation of a high academic honour from Great Britain to a great and distinguished Egyptian Gynaecologist. A tribute from British surgery to one of Egypt's most illustrious surgical sons; a tribute tendered this afternoon by a fortunate and strange chance, in the presence of no less than three members of the Council of the College of Surgeons and in the midst of a large number of its Fellows.

Naguib Mahfouz Pasha: The President and Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England more than three months ago elected you by unanimous vote an Honorary Fellow of this College. This is the highest honour the Royal College can bestow; it is most jealously guarded; it is reserved for the very greatest surgeons, whatever their country or clime; it is only conferred on those whose work has dignified the art of surgery; and the number of Honorary Fellows is ever restricted to fifty names.

The history of Britain herself, far less the story of the Royal College of Surgeons, cannot compete with those millenia, those aeons of time, during which civilisation has flourished in your land; yet the ancestral saga of the College goes back for nearly five centuries and, as the Royal College of Surgeons, the College has existed for one hundred and forty three years. This is the spiritual as well as the nominal head of surgery in England and the prestige of its Fellowship stands higher at this moment than at any time in its history, perhaps higher than any diploma in the world. A chance, though very brief and fleeting, visit of mine to this land suggested to the President that, while still Senior Vice-President, I might be empowered to confer upon you the Honorary Fellowship in Cairo. In awarding you this honour, the Council of our College recognises your great fame as a Gynaecological Surgeon, your international reputa-

tion in your own special branch of surgery; your creation of a wondrous museum relating to the maieutic art. They are also recognisant of your great services to Medicine and to Medical Education in Egypt, and your constant devotion and allegiance to the Allied Cause.

This is not the first time that the Honorary Fellowship has come to Egypt; His Majesty, the late King Fouad, was elected an Honorary Fellow of our College; Sir Aly Ibrahim Pasha, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Director of the University Hospital, deeply respected by all men, the Doyen of Egyptian Surgeons, is a second recipient; it is now my special privilege to hand to you the insignia of our Honorary Fellowship—the third in this great and historic land. It is perhaps not inappropriate, though exceptional, that this Fellowship could be conferred upon you far beyond the precincts of that building in Lincolns Inn Fields, the historic museum of which is almost destroyed. Misfortune, however, often reveals to us our firmest and truest friends, and you in Egypt at once hastened to promise us aid in restoring, reconstructing and reconstituting that temple of anatomy and pathology which bears John Hunter's name.

I say, then, that perhaps it is not inappropriate that this Fellowship should be conferred upon you in your own city, in your own native land, where Midwifery was already a speciality as early in history as the fourth millenium B.C.