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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

OF

MOHAMMED ALI,

PACHA OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND ARABIA.

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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH.

Mohammed Ali Pacha was born in the year of the Hegira, 1182, corresponding, in the Christian era, to the year 1769. It is not unworthy of remark, that this year, also, gave birth to Napoleon Buonaparte. Alike distinguished for military genius, the characters of these chieftains are equally marked by insatiate ambition, and unreposing activity.

Early education, the advantages of science, and a more prominent field of enterprise, have given to the history of one an eclat and brilliancy of success which are denied to the other. Yet, he who would learn to read and write, at the age of forty-five, as did Mohammed Ali, and from the humble calling of *tobacco vender*, rise to the throne of an extensive Empire, can be no ordinary man, and may bear some comparison with the Hero of France.

With a disciplined army of 50,000 men, a navy of nine line-of-battle ships, and a revenue of twenty millions of dollars, he may be supposed to have the means of consolidating his power, of establishing his dynasty, and of maintaining his *de facto* independence. He desires to raise Egypt to the level of European civilization, surpassing that of the augustan age of El-Mamoun and Haroun el-Rashid. The patronage which he gives to arts and science; his encouragement of Europeans of talent; his printing-presses; polytechnic, elementary, and medical schools; his factories and

internal improvements, are evidence of enlightened views in civil administration.

The Pacha is commonly called *Mehemet Ali*, although his name is written *Mohammed Ali*. Supreme veneration for the name of his Prophet, forbids a Mussulman to desecrate the name of Mohammed, by colloquial use; and therefore this distinction is made in the pronunciation of the name. He is also called Hadgi Mohammed, or pilgrim, having performed his pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the five great duties of the acolytes of Islam. Among the numerous ampullated titles, given to him by his courtiers, that of *Hidivi*, or *divine*, is remarkable. Of the Roman Emperors, Augustus was the first whom clambering adulation apotheosised, and associated with divinity.

Mohammed Ali Pacha, was born at Cavalla, a small maritime town of Romelia, in European Turkey. This district is renowned in the East, for its aromatic tobacco, which rivals that of Latakieh, among the dreamy smokers of the oriental *chibouque*. Cavalla is distant ninety miles to the east of Salonica, the ancient Thessalonica, where there is now established a Consul of the United States.

Ibrahim Agha, the father of Mohammed Ali, was the chief of police in the town of Cavalla. At the death of his father, Mohammed Ali being then quite young, the *Tchorbadgi*, or governor of Cavalla, took him into his service.

An opportunity early presented itself, whilst Mohammed was attached to the family of the *Tchorbadgi*, by which he acquired a character for prudence, ingenuity, and bravery. A certain village within the jurisdiction of Cavalla, had refused to pay its usual contributions. The *Tchorbadgi* was undecided as to the most efficient measures to be adopted on the occasion, and Mohammed Ali promptly offered his services; they were accepted, and a body of armed men was appointed to accompany him. He proceeded to the

village, and at the hour of prayer, when announced by the Muezzin from the minaret, he repaired to the Mosque to perform his devotions. After having recited his prayers, he sent to request four of the principal Turks of the village, to wait on him, under the pretext of important business. These persons not suspecting any design upon them, repaired to the Mosque. Mohammed Ali immediately commanded his followers to seize and bind these chief villagers, who were conducted to Cavalla, amidst the threats and pursuit of the inhabitants.

This dashing act of bravery and finesse, resulted in the payment of their contributions by the refractory villagers; and the Tchorbadgi was so well pleased with it, that he promoted the youthful Mohammed to the rank of *Bolouk Bashee*, or captain of a company. He also gave him in marriage one of his relations, a widow, by whom he had three sons, *Ibrahim*, *Toussoun*, and *Ismael*. This marriage of a widow has given rise to the report that Ibrahim Pacha, the conqueror of Acre and Syria, is the step-son of Mohammed Ali.

Of these three elder sons, Tousson and Ismael Pachas, died some years ago. The former conducted a successful expedition against the Wahabies of Arabia. A most faithful and eloquent history of this formidable sect of Islam, is to be found in the popular novel of Anastasius, by the late Thomas Hope. Ismael Pacha was commander-in-chief of the expedition against Sennaar and Kordofan, where he was assassinated by one of the subjugated chiefs. A blow inflicted on this chief by the Pacha, was avenged by his assassination. It was this expedition to Sennaar, which Mr. George Bethune English, of Boston, accompanied, in a military capacity, and an account of which he subsequently published.

Ibrahim Pacha, the remaining son, is now in Syria, with

a numerous army, reposing upon the laurels acquired in his late battles with the Grand Vizier and the Sultan's disciplined troops.

Mohammed Ali, after his marriage, joined to his military profession the trade of a merchant, and became an extensive dealer in tobacco, the richest product of Romelia. In this trade, he acquired his first notions of commercial monopoly, to which he has since more strictly adhered than comports with sound principles of political economy, or the well being of his Egyptian subjects.

He was soon called to enter upon a wider and more important field of enterprise. Napoleon had invaded Egypt, and the battle of the Pyramids had defeated the Mamelouks, opened the gates of Cairo, and secured possession of the country. In 1800, the Sublime Porte, in alliance with Great Britain, and aided by her forces, made preparations to recover Egypt; and among the contingents of troops required by the Porte, was one of three hundred men from the district of Cavalla. They were raised by the Tchorbadgi, and placed under the command of Ali Agha, his son, and Mohammed Ali was appointed to the double office of Ali's mentor, and his second in command. Ali Agha soon became dissatisfied with the fatigue of camp, and returned home, leaving his company under the orders of Mohammed Ali. He thus acquired the rank of *Bin Bashee* in the army of the Grand Vizier.

After the victories of Aboukir, and the camp of Cæsar, gained by the British troops, the Grand Vizier commenced offensive operations. Mohammed Ali, in frequent engagements with the French divisions, signalized himself by great personal bravery, and by military tact, if not by strategic science.

The limits of this sketch, require us to pass over the numerous incidents of the Pacha's eventful carreer, during

which he was alternately applauded and reproved by his superiors, until the important period of his election as Governor of Egypt, by a deputation of *Scheiks*, on the 14th of March, 1805. The country was, at that period, a prey to intestine war, caused by those petty tyrants the Mamelouk Beys. He skillfully evaded or resisted their attacks and machinations, and succeeded in obtaining, two months after the election, his confirmation as Pacha of Egypt, by the Sublime Porte.

The policy of the British Government at that epoch favored the civil dissensions created by the Mamelouk Beys. It openly declared itself against the Pacha, and the British Ambassador near the Sublime Porte, was instructed to demand his recall. This demand was supported by the intrigues of ambitious rivals at Constantinople. The present Seraskier Pacha, Husref, was then, and continues to be, one of the most embittered and untiring enemies of Mohammed Ali, to whom he attributes the revolt of the Albanians at Cairo, and his subsequent expulsion from the command of that capital.

The Sublime Porte yielded to the compound influence of foreign solicitation and domestic intrigue, and Mohammed Ali was ordered by an imperial *firman* to leave Cairo, and repair to Salonica, (Thessalonica,) to assume the administration of that Pachalick. He evaded obedience to the Padischah's firman, until important services, supported by bribes judiciously distributed at Constantinople, induced the Sultan to re-appoint him to the Pachalick of Egypt. He was deemed by the Imperial divan to be the only man capable of governing that country, in the critical posture of affairs at that period.

French influence gained the ascendancy in the Ottoman councils in 1807, and Great Britain declared war against Sultan Selim, and invaded Egypt. Mohammed Ali's troops

met the British forces at Rosetta, and defeated them. They were subsequently compelled to evacuate Alexandria, which had capitulated to General Frazer. It was at this period that the British squadron, commanded by Admiral Sir John Duckworth, passed the tremendous batteries of the Dardanelles, and anchored off the city of Constantinople. The passage of the Dardanelles by an armed force, had never before, and has never since been attempted. It was then that the navy of England could ask, *quæ regio in terris, nostri non plena laboris?* We may not forget that some years before this signal event, our own Captain Bainbridge passed the Dardanelles, in his frigate the Washington, and displayed for the first time, the star spangled banner in the Golden Horn.

The Sublime Porte was sensible of the important services rendered by Mohammed Ali, in the then war with England, and received frequent expressions of his Sultan's satisfaction, in rich and sumptuous presents. He continued to preserve his Government against internal foes and foreign machinations. The Mamelouk Beys remained in arms against him, and carried on a desultory warfare. The Mamelouk Elfi Bey, was supported by British influence.

On the 1st of March, 1811, Mohammed Ali succeeded in destroying the greater part of these refractory Beys, by a sanguinary and treacherous act, which has no parallel in any annals but those of Eastern empires: it would be so judged by the rule of abstract morals; yet, political necessity would sanction it in the East. The Pacha had not then studied Machiavelli, which he has in part since read. He had succeeded in conciliating those Beys to a certain degree, and had disarmed their fears and suspicions. About this period, the expedition against the Wahabies, the enemies of Islam, was preparing to leave Cairo. The departure of this expedition was made the occasion of calling together the

civil and military authorities, under ceremonies becoming the occasion. The Mamelouk Beys were also invited to join the ceremonies and the procession which was to signalize the event. They obeyed the invitation, and were received with every demonstration of friendship, and with distinction suitable to their rank. Here, then, the Pacha had artfully succeeded in assembling, at the citadel of Cairo, the chief Mamelouks, to the number of four hundred, those early and formidable enemies, both to his personal aggrandizement and to the tranquillity of Egypt.

The citadel of Cairo, within which, is the Pacha's palace, and the dilapidated, but once gorgeous serai of Selah-eddin, (Saladin,) rests on a projecting shoulder of Mount Mokattam. From its frowning ramparts are seen, to the west, and beyond the Nile, the towering pyramids of Gizeh, and the lesser ones of Sakhara and Dashour; the allegoric Sphinx lies couchant before you, as in centuries gone by, and the renowned Memphis is faintly distinguished by the few remains of her ancient glory, now concealed by clustering groves of the graceful palm. Immediately below the ramparts reposes Cairo, *the mother of the world*, as she is called in the figurative language of Arabia, with her populous avenues, her tongues of Babel, sumptuous palaces, and more splendid mosques and minarets. The silver stream of the "*blessed*" Nile flows by the walls of Cairo, bringing fertility to the earth, and joy to its people.

From this citadel, the military procession, lead by Toussoun Pacha, who had been appointed to command the expedition against the Wahabies, moved, and in descending to the city passed through a narrow passage or defile. On either side was the solid rock, surmounted by high walls. When the Mamelouk Beys had entered this defile, the gates at both ends were suddenly closed, and soldiers previously stationed for that object, commenced firing upon these un-

suspecting victims of treacherous design. One Bey alone escaped from the horrible ambuscade.

The Pacha, a few years afterwards, replied to an allusion made to this dreadful massacre, that it would appear in history along with the execution of the Duke d'Enghein, by the great chieftain who had then filled the world, with the military glory of France.

An anecdote somewhat ludicrous, connected with this tragic scene, may convey some idea of the indifference with which human life is regarded in the East, and the apathy of the Orientals to human blood. An European Consul asked an officer of the Pacha, who was witness to the massacre, if his feelings were not shocked. "Yes," he replied, "it was a pity to see so many rich embroidered dresses, and expensive lahores and cashmeres, rolling in the dirt." Another anecdote is told at Constantinople, of a Reis Effendi, who had lost his favorite Circassian by the plague. The Dragoman of the Austrian internuncio, during an official visit to his Excellency, expressed himself in terms of condolence for the painful event. "Yes, it was a great loss," said the Effendi, "my *khanum* cost me *one hundred purses*."

The successful expedition of the Pacha against the Wahabies, of Arabia, the formidable enemies of the Moslem faith, established his reputation as a warrior, his claims to the consideration of the Sublime Porte, and of the whole modern world, and secured his uninterrupted possession of Egypt. The war was concluded in 1813, by the capture of Deraieh, the Wahaby capital, and of their Chief *Abdallah-ebn-Souhoud*. The conduct of the war, which had been committed to Toussoun Pacha, was subsequently entrusted to Ibrahim Pacha, Mohammed Ali's eldest son. By him the war was brought to a close, and Abdallah-ebn-Souhoud was sent to the Sultan, under the charge of Ismael Pacha, together with the few remaining objects of value

which were recovered from among those which Souhoud's father had plundered from the sacred shrines of Mecca and Medina. Of these, the most remarkable was a copy of the Koran, so small as to have rivalled the Iliiad of Homer, which Alexander carried about his person. There were also pearls and precious stones of unknown value, which pious veneration had bestowed as votive offerings at the tomb of the Prophet. Abdallah-ebn-Souhoud was presented in chains at the feet of his Sovereign, and Mohammed Ali had interceded in his favor, for imperial clemency. Sultan Mohmoud was relentless towards the Chief of an heretical sect, which had for so many years defied his authority, desecrated the holy places of the Prophet, and interrupted the annual pilgrimages of the Moslem world, to the venerable *Caaba*, the waters of Zemzem, and the sacred sepulchre at Medina. Souhoud was publicly decapitated at Constantinople, in the open square, which may now be seen by the traveller, between the Porte of Sublimity and the Mosque of Santa Sophia.

The Wahabies, as a religious sect, have the same reference to the Mohammedan religion, which Socinianism has to Christianity. The founder, Abd-ul-Wahab, was born in the early part of the last century, and after having studied divinity at Medina, and in the *Medressehs*, or theologic schools of Bagdad, Bassorah, and Ispahan, he began to preach the novel doctrine that the Prophet Mohammed was but a mere man, and that to invoke him with other saints, was idolatry, and was not authorized by the Koran. He adhered religiously to the text of the sacred book, but rejected all traditions, *Hadith*, and the commentaries of the Imams, or Doctors. He contended that Mussulmans must be brought back to the original spirit of the Koran, to the exclusive worship of God, in his undivided unity.

In this spirit he forbade the pilgrimage to Mecca, the invocation of the Prophet, the use of luxuries, tobacco, opium, silk, and jewels. Following the example of the Prophet, he propagated his doctrines with the sword, and the armies of his successors marched upon Mecca and Medina, destroyed those venerable shrines, and robbed them of the unnumbered votive offerings with which they had been enriched, by piety and devotion.

Such were the doctrines of this warlike sect, which had for a long while contemned the spiritual, and defied the temporal authority of the Sultan.

Relieved from this formidable enemy, Mohammed Ali was now at liberty to subjugate the southern provinces of Nubia, Sennaar, and Kordofan. These countries had for a long time been in a state of anarchy and rebellion to the Government of Egypt. He accordingly, in 1820, sent an expedition of four thousand men to those countries, under the command of his second son, Ismael Pacha, which resulted in the entire conquest of those extensive provinces, with which Egypt has always had an important commerce. It was this expedition, which our countrymen, *English*, accompanied. *Khalil Agha*, of New-York, was also attached to the army. We have another instance of the adventurous spirit of Americans, in one, who is at this moment Governor of a District, within the territories of the Indian Prince, Runjeet Sing.

The Greek revolution commenced about this time, and Mohammed Ali prepared to obey the Sultan's *firmans*, and to furnish aid in troops, ships, and money. Whilst he opposed the movement of the Greeks, and contributed his efforts towards the suppression of their rebellion, it must be said in honor of his humanity, and in praise of his enlightened policy, that he did not imitate the massacre of these

unfortunate subjects who were residing at Constantinople. No Greek subject in Egypt was molested, and those who fled to that country were protected.

The friends of Greece in Europe did not so much fear the hostilities of the Sultan, as of the Pacha, in its struggle for independence. It is believed that this sentiment induced some of the greater cabinets, to hold out to the Pacha the possibility of his independence, to withdraw him from combined operations with the Porte. Whether he distrusted Christian diplomacy, or was content to enjoy his *de facto* independence, he yet continued to furnish the principal means of operation against the Morea. The policy of European cabinets was for once imperfectly understood, and pertinacity caused the loss of the Egyptian squadron at Navarino, and the retirement of Ibrahim Pacha's legions from the Peninsula.

The declaration of war against Russia, in 1828, by the Sultan, was made contrary to the counsel of Mohammed Ali, and its result confirmed the wisdom of that advice. Causes of jealousy and dissatisfaction towards his Pacha, continued to multiply in the mind of the Sultan, which found ostensible motives in the attack which Mohammed Ali made upon Abdallah Pacha, of St. Jean d'Acre, in 1831. The immediate origin of this war, was the protection which the Pacha of Acre gave to the fugitive subjects of Egypt. Mohammed Ali asked not the intervention of the Porte, although he was equally its vassal with Abdallah Pacha. On the refusal of the Pacha to obey the mandate of the Porte, and to withdraw his troops from Syria, he was officially denounced by the Sultan as a rebel and outlaw. This sentence of excommunication from the Caliph or head of Islam, has as much force now, as had that of the Pope in the feudal ages.

The Sultan sent his forces into Syria, under command of

Hussein Pacha, Beglerbeg of Anatolia, to oppose the advance of Ibrahim Pacha. Hussein was beaten in pitched battle, and driven from Damascus to Homs, thence to Aleppo, and across the Taurus to Koniah. At this place the Grand Vizier, Reshid Mehemet Pacha, was made prisoner in a sanguinary action, and the whole army of the Sultan became demoralized. Ibrahim Pacha might have marched upon Constantinople, but for the intervention of an armed Russian force, to protect the capital, and for the interference of European diplomacy.

In the city of Kutahieh, of Asia Minor, in the spring of 1833, the commissioners, envoys of England, France, and Russia, concluded an armistice and convention, for the evacuation of Anatolia. By this convention, with the consent of the Porte, Mohammed Ali received his confirmation to the whole of Syria, comprising the four pachalicks of Aleppo, Tripoli, Damascus, and Saida, together with the province of Adana, which is of primary importance to Egypt, on account of its timber. The news of peace was received at Alexandria with demonstrations of public joy, and were attended with every species of festivity. The Pacha was compared to the "*Alexander of two horns.*"

The negotiations that took place, and diplomatic notes that passed between Mohammed Ali and Admiral the Baron de Roussin, ambassador of France at the Porte, exhibit the true character of the former. He replied, in answer to the requisition of the Baron to withdraw his troops from Anatolia, "is not this pronouncing against me a sentence of "political death? But I feel confident that France and "England will not deny me justice. They will acknowledge "my rights. Their honor is opposed to this step. But "if I am unhappily deceived in this expectation, I will "submit myself, under such circumstances, to the will of

"God; and *preferring an honorable death to ignominy*, "joyfully devote myself to the cause of my nation, happy "to consecrate to it the last breath of my life. Upon this "I am determined, *and history offers more than one exam-* "*ple of a similar immolation.*"

Mohammed Ali is now in the undisputed possession of Syria, Egypt, the Hedjaz of Arabia, Nubia, Sennaar, Kordofan, and the important Island of Candia. That he will transmit his power and empire, unimpaired, to his successor in the dynasty, his past history justifies the belief. When he was invited to take supreme command in Egypt, thirty years ago, he said, "*I have now conquered this country* "*with the sword, and by the sword will I preserve it!*"

Mohammed Ali is in person of middling, or rather low stature. He is now in his sixty-seventh year, and possesses a constitution sound and vigorous. His features are not those of the Osmanli, of Constantinople, where one may frequently find the *beau ideal* of manly beauty. The Tartar face, with its high cheek-bones, small eyes, and general flatness, which are peculiarly his, have been lost among the Ottomans of the capital, by their marriages with the Greeks of Ionia, or the more languishing beauties of Circassia and Georgia. His dark grey eyes beam brightly with genius and intelligence, and his manners would be marked with more dignity had they more repose. It would be difficult not to feel the presence of a superior man when one is addressing Mohammed Ali. His dress, unlike that of Sultan Mahmoud, is not of the *nizam*, or reform. He still wears the turban, which the Sultan has abandoned, and this use of a most graceful head-dress, will be approved by all persons of good taste. This remark applies only to the East. His dress is of plain olive colored cloth, without embellishment or decoration. At his side is always suspended a curved scimitar.

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The Pacha is an early riser, and of abstemious habits. At the break of day he performs his orisons, and at sunrise he repairs to his divan, for the transaction of business. After sun-set he dines, and retires to his harem, where he either reads himself, or reclines on an ottoman, whilst one of his favorite Sultanas, the daughter of a Mufti, and an accomplished woman, reads to him, by his instruction. He has lately been engaged in reading Montesquieu's *Esprit des loix*, every successive sheet of which, as prepared in manuscript by the translator, is taken by him to his harem, and becomes the occupation or relaxation of his evenings. Macchiavelli he read some years ago, and the *Code Napoleon* is now the object of his deepest study and reflection.

This short sketch of the eventful life of Mohammed Ali, is not intended to exhibit the wonderful improvements which he has introduced into Egypt, nor the more wonderful personal superintendence which he exercises over every department of the arts, and every branch of industry. It is hoped, that the impetus which he has given to civilization, will not be checked, and that if his *de jure* independence should, in any manner, contribute to this desirable object, the conflicting interests of European and the Turkish cabinets, may be conciliated, and be directed to concur in such an acknowledgment.

Washington, March 10, 1837.