CHAPTER XV

THE PROBLEM OF EGYPT: ACTIONS AND REACTIONS 1919-1922

CONSIDERING his upbringing, his early ambitions, his passionate belief in the Imperial destiny of Great Britain, and the dreams which he had long dreamed of the part which he himself might some day play in guiding her on her way to her predestined goal as the dominant Power of the World, it is remarkable how quickly Lord Curzon adapted himself to the altered circumstances of the time. A quarter of a century earlier it had been Lord Salisbury's complaint that his Under Secretary always wanted him to conduct the Foreign Policy of the country as if he had an army of 500,000 men at his beck and call. Now it was Lord Curzon, the erstwhile Under Secretary, who grasped the limitations imposed upon the liberty of the Foreign Secretary by his inability to back diplomacy with force. "The qualities which a British Foreign Minister should now cultivate," he remarked on one occasion, "seem to be those not of cleverness or astuteness, still less of enterprise or daring, but those of endless patience and of an equanimity that never falters."

The British people had—thoughtlessly, perhaps, but none the less effectually—disabled their Foreign Minister from playing a more heroic part by the precipitancy with which they had insisted on demobilisation. "The world knows only too well," he told the members of the Imperial Conference in October, 1923, "that when the war was over we disbanded our forces with almost undue alacrity." In relation to the extent of our Empire we had now an army of almost insignificant dimensions. In these circumstances "the perpetual shouting of challenges and waving of flags" which—in retrospect at any rate—threw so brilliant a halo over the Foreign Policy of Palmerston and Disraeli, were not for us.

Lord Curzon's appreciation of the need for caution and restraint was heightened by the fact that, with undetonated gun-powder still strewn thickly upon the ground, there were Powers upon the Continent which displayed a deplorable tendency to shout challenges and wave flags and which, having maintained their manhood under arms, were in a position to indulge themselves. There was no gainsaying the fact that, since the conclusion of peace, France had become the most formidable military Power in Europe. Under the guidance of a Minister "of great ability and untiring zeal, but of a stiff and rigid nature," she was pursuing a policy which from her own point of view was perfectly intelligible, but which was certainly little calculated to assist towards the tranquillisation of a world in turmoil. And how grievously distraught the world was! As Lord Curzon looked back over the years immediately following the Declaration of Peace, he saw them packed with incidents, crises, alarms and excursions, even with tragedies. "Although it is now nearly five years since the Armistice was signed in a railway carriage in France," he reminded the members of the Imperial Conference in 1923, "the tramp of armed men is still heard upon the Continent, and you have only to pick up your daily paper to hear the rumble of almost chronic revolution in your ears."

Yet despite his frequent disapproval of French aims and methods, he never departed from his conviction that co-operation with France must remain the sheet-anchor of British Foreign Policy.

> "No one is a more profound believer than myself in the policy of the *Entente*: and I do not rest that belief merely on the memories of the war, or on principles of self-interest; my conviction is based on the widest considerations of world peace and world progress. If France and ourselves permanently fall out, I see no prospect of the recovery of Europe or of the pacification of the world. To maintain that unity we have made innumerable sacrifices. During the last two years I have preached no other doctrine and I have pursued no other practice."[1]

[1] Statement to the members of the Imperial Conference, October the 5th, 1923.

While Lord Curzon had always appreciated the value of ships and guns as an adjunct to diplomacy, his conduct of affairs as Foreign Secretary showed that his real greatness as a force in world politics lay in his instinctive recognition of the power of moral rectitude in the field of international relations. The righteousness and justice of the cause, the honesty and single-mindedness with which the cause itself was pursued—these were the things to which he clung with an almost blind tenacity, derived from his primitive but deep-rooted belief in the Divine control of the universe, to which reference has previously been made. It was upon this fundamental trait in his character that rested the acts of moral courage which marked his administration as Viceroy of India, and upon which was built up the lofty idealism which history will recognise as the real source of his greatness throughout the seven years of a brilliant albeit stormy Viceroyalty. And in these dolorous days, when England with her armour laid aside was called upon to play a pacifying part in the affairs of a maimed and sorely harassed world, it was upon these intangible but trustworthy weapons once more that he relied. Our policy, he explained, when reviewing the five years of troubled peace which had rolled by since the signing of the Armistice, had been one not of sensation but of sobriety.

> "It is not one, I think, of which we have any cause to be ashamed. We have endeavoured to exercise a steadying and moderating influence in the politics of the world, and I think and hope that we have conveyed not merely the impression, but the conviction that, whatever other Governments or countries may do, the British Government is never untrue to its word, is never disloyal to its colleagues or its allies, never does anything underhand or mean; and if this conviction be widespread, as I believe it to be, that is the real basis of the moral authority which the British Empire has long exerted and, I believe, will long continue to exert in the affairs of mankind."[1]

The extent to which the temper of his Imperialism had been cooled by the revolutionary change which the war had brought about in

[1] Statement to the members of the Imperial Conference, October the 5th, 1923.

international relations throughout the world, was well illustrated by his attitude towards the Egyptian question which, within a few weeks of the coming of peace, had risen to the surface of a sea of troubles, washed up like many another thorny problem by the convulsion of the waters.

The problem presented by Egypt was, indeed, by no means the least of the many post-war tangles which the British Government were called upon to unravel. During the war the Egyptians had accepted, willingly enough so far as could be seen, the Declaration of a Protectorate which the British Government had issued. The year 1919 was not many weeks old, however, when the authority of Great Britain was rudely challenged by a violent and wholly unexpected outbreak of nationalism centring round the person of one Zaglul Pasha, whose demands were not merely for self-government under British suzerainty, which had satisfied what had been understood to be Egyptian aspirations before the war, but complete internal and external independence. During the first phase of the conflict which had thus arisen, matters had moved with great rapidity. Zaglul had demanded to be heard in London; his demand had been refused; the Rushdi cabinet in Cairo had thereupon resigned, and since, in face of the intimidation which Zaglul was able to bring to bear, no other Egyptian was found willing to form a Ministry, Zaglul had been deported at the instance of Sir Milne Cheetham, who was acting for Sir Reginald Wingate, then on leave, and interned in Malta.

No one imagined that deportation was going to provide a cure for what was quickly realised to be more than a passing ailment; and on May the 15th, 1919, the appointment of a Mission under the chairmanship of Lord Milner was announced, whose duty it was to be, "to enquire into the causes of the late disorders in Egypt and to report on the existing situation in the country and the form of the Constitution which, under the Protectorate, will be best calculated to promote its peace and prosperity, the progressive development of self-governing institutions, and the protection of foreign interests."

The reception accorded to the Mission in Egypt was anything but encouraging. At the instigation of Zaglul Pasha, who had been

released after a brief period of internment, Lord Milner and his colleagues were subjected to a rigorous boycott. They were not, however, to be deterred from carrying through their investigations; and in spite of the difficulties under which they worked, they returned to England in the spring of 1920 prepared to lay before Lord Curzon certain provisional conclusions at which they had arrived.

It was, of course, realised that if Great Britain and Egypt were to arrive at a settlement by consent, Zaglul Pasha and those associated with him must be parties to the transaction. In June, therefore, at the invitation of Lord Milner, the Nationalist leader accompanied by Adly Pasha, a prominent and respected figure in Egyptian politics, reached London for discussion of the points at issue; and by August agreement on the general principles of a settlement had practically been reached. This was to take the form of a Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Egypt. It went nine-tenths of the way towards meeting the Nationalists' demands; but since Zaglul Pasha hesitated to commit himself irrevocably until he had sounded opinion in Egypt itself, no engagement was entered into, but the heads of the proposed terms of agreement were embodied in a Memorandum for that purpose. The terms set forth in this document, which came to be known as the Milner-Zaglul Agreement of August the 18th, 1920, were subsequently embodied in the Report of the Milner Mission as their recommendations to the Government.

It must be admitted that only by a very generous interpretation of language could it be said that these recommendations were covered by the terms of reference under which the scope of the Mission's enquiry had been defined. They went a good deal further than the conclusions provisionally arrived at during their stay in Egypt, which had been communicated to the Government in the previous March. They now included the concession to Egypt of the right of diplomatic representation in foreign countries, and they acquiesced in the conversion of the British army of occupation into a local force, to be quartered in a single specified locality on the confines of the country for the sole purpose of guarding Great Britain's Imperial communications—conditions hardly applicable, surely, in the case of a country under the protection of Great Britain. And there is no doubt that, when communicated by Lord

Curzon to his colleagues, they took the Government completely by surprise. The Foreign Secretary himself took advantage of the presence in England in the autumn of Lord Allenby, then High Commissioner, to discuss the matter with him. "I am engaged on a Note to Cabinet about Egypt," he told Lady Curzon on October the 7th, "concerning which Milner, Allenby and I were in conference for nearly four hours yesterday."

In his Note, Lord Curzon did not attempt to minimise the gravity of the decision which the Cabinet would be asked to take. He emphasised the fact that it would be one of the most momentous that would ever have been taken by a British Government, not only in its effect on Egypt itself, but in its reaction upon every country in the East towards which we acted in a governing, or fiduciary, or mandatory capacity. They would have to bear in mind that in coming to a decision they would not be merely solving a difficulty, but creating a precedent. And he did not hesitate either to call the attention of his colleagues to the dangers which seemed to him to lurk among the proposals, or to suggest safeguards where he thought that they might be provided. But he accepted the broad principles upon which Lord Milner's recommendations rested and he commended them to the favourable consideration of the Cabinet.

> "The remarks which I have made in this paper," he wrote, "must not be held to detract from the thanks which we all owe to Lord Milner and his colleagues for their immense and self-sacrificing labours in the solution of the Egyptian problem. They have rendered a great national and Imperial service. Nor do I dissent either from Lord Milner's main proposition, that the solution is to be found in a Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and the Egyptian Government, or from the major premiss on which the principle is founded, namely, that if we are to advance it must be a large advance in the direction not merely of co-operation but of trust."[1]

The Government took the line that they were in no way bound by the recommendations of Lord Milner's Mission. But they realised that these must provide the basis of future discussion; and in

[1] Memorandum dated October the 11th, 1920.

February, 1921, they laid the Report before Parliament, and published an invitation which they had sent to the Sultan to despatch a duly accredited delegation to England to negotiate a settlement. In face of the recommendations made in the Report, they went so far as to concede that the status of Protectorate was not a satisfactory relation in which Egypt should continue to stand to Great Britain.

The Sultan accepted the invitation which had been tendered to him, and during July and August Lord Curzon was engaged on negotiations with the delegation under the leadership of Adly Pasha, who had become Prime Minister. As the negotiations proceeded the difficulties in the way of agreement grew. Before the arrival of the delegation the question of the future relations between Great Britain and Egypt had come before the Imperial Conference, where stress had been laid upon the supreme importance of maintaining intact the position of the country *vis-à-vis* the Suez Canal. Nor were the Cabinet, as a whole, prepared to go as far as Lord Curzon would have done to reach agreement. "We had a very long Cabinet," he wrote on October the 21st, 1921, "and I had to explain my Egyptian negotiations, which are likely to lead to nothing. The Cabinet all much stiffer than I am in the matter, and I am sure we shall have an absolute rupture with another Ireland in Egypt."[1] Lord Curzon was, in fact, in a minority in the Cabinet. In the terms which it was agreed to offer Adly Pasha, the majority had already gone further than they would have been prepared to do, but for the publication of the Milner Report. Lord Curzon would have gone further still, and placed before his colleagues a detailed statement of the further advances which he advised should be made. Discussion showed, however, that the majority having already conceded more than they approved, were not to be persuaded. The negotiations consequently broke down because, as Lord Curzon explained to the Imperial Conference two years afterwards, "Adly Pasha dared not concede anything from fear of the extremist or Zaglul party in Egypt, whereas my instructions rendered it impossible for me to meet him on many of the points on which he was disposed to insist."

It was not long before Lord Curzon had the melancholy satisfaction of seeing the pessimistic forecast contained in his letter to

[1] Letter to Lady Curzon.

Lady Curzon fulfilled. For on his return to Egypt at the end of November, Adly Pasha resigned; the extremists roused popular feeling to such a pitch that no one was found willing to form a Ministry; and in the case of Zaglul and his chief associates, whose incendiary speeches were responsible for rioting and bloodshed, it was found necessary to resort for a second time to deportation. With no Government in office the administration of the country was carried on precariously under Martial Law with the assistance of the British Under Secretaries in the various Departments.

It was obvious to everyone that such a state of affairs could not be permitted to continue indefinitely. And in January, 1922, the High Commissioner, who had viewed with grave concern the rupture in November, and who had since been striving by private negotiation to set on foot an Egyptian Government in succession to the Adly Ministry, telegraphed conditions on which an ex-Minister, Sarwat Pasha, would be prepared to take office. The crucial condition was the abolition of the Protectorate as a preliminary to, and not as a provision of, a Treaty to be concluded between Great Britain and Egypt. Lord Allenby was convinced that on no other condition was a settlement possible, and he asked that he might be authorised by telegram to negotiate on these lines. What advice was Lord Curzon to give the Cabinet in face of this situation? He found himself in no little difficulty, for his recommendation to the Cabinet in November, as to the form which the Treaty to be offered to Adly Pasha should take, had been rejected. His colleagues, as he did not fail to remind them, had preferred to take a course which had been attended with the very consequences which he had then predicted. On the whole he thought the risk involved in acceptance of the proposals of the High Commissioner was less than the danger of refusing to be guided by his advice, though he urged that much more specific undertakings should be demanded of the Egyptian Ministers in regard to the matters to which Great Britain attached vital importance, than Lord Allenby himself appeared to be willing to accept.

Herein lay the difference between the High Commissioner and the Cabinet. Lord Allenby had always held that since Lord Milner had been regarded in Egypt as being invested with plenipotentiary

powers, it was not open to the Government to recede from the terms contained in the Milner-Zaglul Agreement and embodied subsequently in the Milner Report. And since, in these circumstances, he was unwilling to communicate to the Egyptians proposals which seemed to him to amount to a repudiation of promises already made, he now tendered his resignation. A deadlock had thus been reached which called for immediate action.

Lord Allenby was summoned to London; and it was only after prolonged consultation between him and his advisers on the one side and Lord Curzon and the Prime Minister on the other, that a solution was at last discovered. In a Manifesto addressed to the Egyptian people, the British Government declared the Protectorate at an end and Egypt to be an independent Sovereign State. But they also declared in the same document that, pending the conclusion of Agreements concerning them, the security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt; the defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect; the protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities; and the status of the Sudan, were "absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government." And, to make assurance doubly sure, they added at the conclusion of their Manifesto that until Agreements had been arrived at, the *status quo* in all these matters would remain intact.

Sarwat Pasha was satisfied by the unconditional recognition of Egypt as an independent Sovereign State; the High Commissioner was satisfied by the contents of the Declaration which carried out the undertakings by which he held the Government to be bound, and the Cabinet by its form, which secured to them in the matter of the vital interests of Great Britain in Egypt the juridical position which they had been unwilling to forego. On March the 14th, 1922, Parliament declared itself satisfied by approving by 202 votes to 77 the policy of the Government; and on March the 15th, the Sultan assumed the title of His Majesty King Fuad and proclaimed Egypt a Monarchy.

Careful study of the long-drawn negotiations which ended in the abolition of the Protectorate over Egypt throws an interesting light upon Lord Curzon as Foreign Secretary. It shows that his power

of lucid exposition was undiminished; that he marshalled facts, figures and arguments in orderly procession with all his former skill; that he was quick to grasp the essentials of any problem with which he was confronted and that his judgment of situations—if not always of persons—was, therefore, ordinarily sound. But it shows also that for all his confidence in his own judgment, he displayed a surprising diffidence in pressing his views against opposition in the Cabinet. The Egyptian question was essentially a Foreign Office question on which it was to be expected that the Foreign Secretary should give the Cabinet a definite lead. Lord Curzon was convinced that unless the concessions which he advocated were sanctioned by the Government, no settlement would be reached and Great Britain would be saddled with another Ireland in Africa. He had behind him the weight of authority provided by the unanimous Report of the Milner Commission; and he was supported by the High Commissioner and his advisers on the spot. Yet he accepted instructions from his colleagues which tied his hands and brought about the rupture which he predicted. To those who recalled the vigour with which as Viceroy of India he had invariably pressed his views upon the Government in London; his intolerance of opposition and his uncompromising rejection of anything that fell short of what he himself deemed necessary, this new-found pliancy was a perplexing development in Lord Curzon's character. It became a factor of increasing importance in his administration of the Foreign Office having repercussions in many directions, and it will necessarily become a subject of increasing comment as the story of his tenure of the Foreign Office is unfolded.

In the meantime a clue to this unexpected malleability may be found in the subtle change which his attitude towards men and matters had for some time past been undergoing—a change which it is now easy to perceive had its roots as far back as the year 1905 and had been creeping over him from that time onwards, not at any uniform pace, sometimes advancing, sometimes receding, but making headway none the less and now plainly apparent to all who knew him well. No one, who after a lapse of years was suddenly brought into contact with him at this time, and who carried in his mind the picture drawn from earlier association with him of a man

of exuberant animal spirits, stimulating, forceful, confident in himself and inspiring confidence in others, the dominant personality in any gathering of his fellow men, could fail to miss in the make-up of the Foreign Minister the assurance and the hilarious optimism of those earlier days. There is no need to remind the reader of these volumes that Lord Curzon had always been subject to periods of depression. But these had been of the nature of parentheses which had emphasised by contrast the high tension of the key-note on which his life symphony was habitually played. There were still flashes of the old vitality; at the telling of some tale of humour the eyes would still light up with the roguish twinkle of former days, the broad shoulders shake with spasms of what Mr. Harold Nicolson has well described as rich, eighteenth century amusement. Neither were indications lacking that the old readiness of wit was still there. A printer's error in a Consular report on the condition of the people in a district of the Near East was capable of bringing it into play.

> "The condition of the inhabitants of these districts is deplorable," he read. "Education is practically non-existent, and religious observances have all but disappeared. So much is this the case that I am credibly informed that even the monks of Mount Athos are violating their . . . ."

here an unfortunate printer's error occurred, for the *v* of vows had been supplanted by a *c*. Lord Curzon's swiftly moving eye came suddenly to rest, and then—"Better send them a Papal Bull," he noted in the margin. But these had now become but episodes in a solemn fugue written and played in a minor key. And from this plane of lowered vitality he slipped all too easily into sombre moods of melancholy. Discovery one day in a drawer at Kedleston of the faded reports on his work and conduct at his private school was sufficient to set in motion a gloomy train of thought. High praise had been bestowed upon him and a great future had been predicted for him. Had these early forecasts proved correct? He sometimes wondered, he wrote after perusal of them, whether he was not going down hill in reputation:

"I never seem to get any credit for anything nowadays. No one accuses me of any definite errors or blunders of statesmanship. But there seems to be a general tendency to run me down, or completely to ignore what I am doing or have done. If one looks at the record of this in any book of reference it is very substantial, as varied, and in a way as successful, as that of any Englishman of my age living. And yet it does not seem to count for much, and I am treated as though I were rather a back number."

And, as one watches him musing sadly upon these things, he stands out suddenly before one a poignantly pathetic figure. "Well, perhaps I am," he murmurs. "I suppose one gets what one deserves and I daresay the fault lies somewhere in me. And yet, how I have worked and toiled and never spared myself, while I see others treating work as a jest and life as a holiday."[1]

So great a change in his general outlook necessarily affected his attitude towards his work. His absorption was as great as ever; but the daily task had become more of a labour and less of an interest than it had formerly been. There were days when it was with almost Sisyphian hopelessness that he contemplated the never ending stream of tabbed and docketed boxes that flowed in upon him from the Foreign Office. "I suppose I must now tackle the great pile of boxes stacked at my left hand," he wrote one day in October, 1921. "How I hate the sight of them."[2] Subjects from outside his own Department were no longer welcomed as adding variety to his daily fare; and the necessity imposed upon him by his position as Leader of the House of Lords, of familiarising himself with a number of extraneous questions, became increasingly irksome. "I have to take the House of Lords debate on Irish reprisals to-morrow," he complained in a letter to Lady Curzon on October the 19th, 1920. "What I am to say, I have no idea, since I have not attended a single one of the Committees on Ireland." And on another occasion: "Lloyd George has gone and fixed a Cabinet meeting at Inverness next Wednesday morning to discuss de Valera's reply, which seems

[1] Letter to Lady Curzon dated September the 10th, 1921.
[2] Letter to Lady Curzon.

to be very insolent. I have been looking out the trains from here (Kedleston), and I really cannot go. It would mean two whole days and two whole nights in the train and this would simply knock me to pieces."[1] Indeed, his letters during these years tell a story the meaning of which it is impossible to misunderstand—"Back to all the worries," he wrote on November the 1st, 1920. "It is just past lunch; A.J.B. is coming in to discuss Egypt in ten minutes. Then I have to go down to F.O. to see Imperiali. Then Cabinet with a Persian crisis; a French ditto; the Egyptian question. I have to master all the papers on all these points. Then a Committee on November 11th ceremony. Then a solitary dinner. Then to compose a speech on Ireland. It is breaking me."[2]

Yet he could not bring himself seriously to contemplate the possibility of giving up. Now and then he would appear to listen to the promptings of his overtaxed system. "I absolutely hate being back here," he wrote on his return to London from France, in February, 1921. "Everything has dropped back into the old rut.... What a happy man I should be if I could escape it all."[3] And on May the 29th of the same year he wrote in a similar strain to Sir George Cunningham, who had recently retired after serving him upwards of four years as his private secretary—"I envy you the peace and freedom of retirement and I suspect that you are much happier at a distance from Whitehall. So should I be, and I suppose that in due course I shall attain it." But he knew quite well that the spell under which he lay was one that he could not and would not break, however attractive the prospect which awaited him were he to do so. Often he talked of resignation; but always when he reached the brink of the precipice and looked over he turned back. Once at a critical moment in his career he had resigned, and the incident, with its aftermath, had shaken him to the foundations of his being and had left an ineffaceable mark upon him. Always in the background of his mind when he toyed with the idea of resignation, there loomed the spectre of that earlier disaster. Sometimes he spoke of it; more often he brooded upon it in silence. But always it was there. It became a sombre background against which he viewed

[1] Letter to Lady Curzon, dated September the 3rd, 1921.
[2] Letter to Lady Curzon. *Ibid.*

each fresh political difficulty as it arose. When attacked in January, 1918, for his action in connection with the passing of the Woman Suffrage Clause in the House of Lords, he wished to continue the controversy in the columns of the press. He was dissuaded from doing so by Sir George Cunningham, though he insisted that always when he had refrained from publicly defending himself against charges of the kind now brought against him he had subsequently regretted it. He could have thrown a flood of light upon the controversy which had led to his resignation of the Indian Viceroyalty, he declared, but had been persuaded not to pursue the matter, with the result that his whole subsequent career had been gravely prejudiced. Sir George Cunningham pointed out that he must look to history for his vindication, to which Lord Curzon assented.

It was not only memories of the past that militated against his voluntary withdrawal from the Government. He was morbidly sensitive to the effect which his resignation might have upon the estimation in which the public held him. The respect and recognition of his countrymen—these were the things which above all else he craved. To retain them he was willing to brave the pangs of bodily suffering which the strain of office entailed and to endure that which for him was harder still to bear—personal humiliation. During these years a strange form of dual control—of which indications have been given already and of which more will have to be said hereafter—came to be exercised over the Foreign Policy of the country. And control shared by two men, both emotional and highly strung but differing profoundly not in method only but in outlook, was bound to lead to violent collision. On these occasions the Foreign Secretary suffered grievously. Often he protested verbally, sometimes in writing, against what he regarded as the ill-judged excursions of the Prime Minister, made sometimes without the knowledge of the Foreign Office, into the domain of Foreign Policy; but always he refrained from pressing his protests to their logical conclusion. On one notable occasion, to which reference will be made hereafter, he had the assurance of more than one of the more prominent of his colleagues in the Cabinet that they were prepared to associate themselves with him in his protest, to accompany him to the Prime Minister and, failing an outcome of the interview which

1922. "Not a single one of the people whom I used to entertain year after year at Hackwood has written one line, or even left a card. Well, such is the world. It does not wait even till you are dead to forget you; but if you are laid temporarily on the shelf it shuts and locks the door of the cupboard so as not to be reminded."[1]

It does not seem to have occurred to him that it was his own withdrawal from the society of his old friends and acquaintances that was responsible for his increasing loneliness; and, when remonstrated with, he protested innocence. "I am quite unaware of any drift apart," he wrote in reply to a letter from Lord Lamington, "still less of any cause for it. My overwhelming work which leaves me no leisure explains why I rarely see anybody, even my old friends; and why my life, in Dickens' phrase, is only 'one dem'd long horrid grind.'"

This frame of mind tended to foster a trait in his character which it had always required a conscious effort on his part to check. A recent historian has said of the Emperor William II of Germany that he was driven to "an ostentatious display of his authority by the wish .... to betray no sign of physical weakness."[2] Something of the same sort might with truth be said of Lord Curzon. Like the German Emperor he suffered from early youth from a grievous physical disability. With heroic will and with amazing success he forced himself to rise superior to it. In face of what he had himself constantly to battle with and overcome in the discharge of his daily duties, the petty inconveniences to which he put those who served under him were brushed aside as things too trivial to require consideration. Recognition of what was due to his subordinates floated idly on the surface of his mind and sometimes attracted his passing notice, as we have seen from his casual admission to Mr. Clement Jones.[3] But it was an affectation rather than a conviction, for except when his attention was called specifically to it by outside agency, he acted in complete oblivion of it. From the highest official to the humblest messenger there was scarcely a man in the Foreign

[1] Letter to Lady Curzon, dated May the 22nd, 1922.
[2] "Kaiser Wilhelm II," by Emil Ludwig, English Translation, page 64.
[3] See back, page 206.

Office staff who at some time or another during Lord Curzon's tenure of the post of Foreign Minister did not nurse a grievance against his Chief for some unconscious act lacking in consideration. Yet he had only to be told that he was giving cause for umbrage, to make amends.

> "Many thanks for your kind remembrance, which has pleased me greatly," he wrote to Sir George Cunningham, who had sent him his good wishes on his birthday. "Lady Curzon being away and the whole of the family absent, I have just returned—8 p.m.—from being photographed, church-warden pipe in hand, with the Foreign Office Messengers' staff at a hostelry called the Cheshire Cheese, in the Strand, where, being unable to celebrate my own birthday, I invited them to celebrate it for me."

It was the story of his Balliol servant and the broken teapot over again—the inconsiderate treatment of the former followed years later by an impulsive and delightful *amende honorable*.