



The Qasr el Nil bridge, flanked by two bronze lions, which some ex-American officers crossed to meet the Khedive in his Gezira Palace

## *Three Confederate Navy Officers in the Egyptian Army*

*By Charles Priestley*

The standard answer to the question of what was the last shot fired in the American Civil War is that it was the shot which the CSS *Shenandoah* fired across the bows of a Yankee whaler in the Bering Sea on June 28, 1865. On the other hand, it could plausibly be argued that the last shot of the Civil War was actually the one which killed a certain former Confederate guerrilla calling himself Mr. Howard as he was dusting a picture in his house in St Joseph, Missouri, on April 3, 1882. One candidate for the title, though, must definitely be the shot which the secretary to Benjamin Butler's nephew fired in the best hotel in Alexandria on July 11, 1872, at a former Confederate Navy lieutenant named William Campbell, hitting him in the leg. The Alexandria in question, however, was not Alexandria, Virginia, but Alexandria, Egypt, known to the locals as *Al-Iskandariyyah*.

So what were Campbell and some 44 other Civil War veterans, North and South, doing in Egypt in Egyptian Army uniform? To answer that, it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or rather slightly before, to Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. The French occupation of Egypt lasted for only three years, but it had an enormous impact on both Western Europe and Egypt. Its impact on Europe, of course, is reasonably well known. Travelling with Napoleon's invading army were 150 *savants* - scientists, archaeologists, historians - and these men opened the eyes of Europe to the glories of ancient Egyptian civilisation; in fact, the science of Egyptology really starts here. But the invasion also had a huge impact on Egypt, because it opened the Egyptians' eyes to the immense technical and military superiority of the West; and no one learned this lesson better than a wily old Albanian *Bashi-Bazouk* named Mehmet Ali.

Mehmet Ali arrived in Egypt in 1801 as the commander of an Albanian unit in the Turkish army sent by the Sultan to co-operate with the British in driving the French out of Egypt, Egypt being then a province of the Ottoman Empire. He was uneducated and illiterate and the only language he really spoke fluently was Albanian, although he was competent in Turkish, but he was a natural soldier and a natural leader and had enormous natural intelligence. The French withdrawal created a vacuum in Egypt, and in the struggle for power that resulted Mehmet Ali came out on top, largely by sitting on the sidelines and letting the others fight it out among themselves until they were exhausted. By 1805, he was the main power in Egypt and, at the request of a number of prominent Egyptians, the Sultan recognised this by appointing him officially *Wali*, or Governor, of Egypt.

Like a number of other famous people, Mehmet Ali had a dream, and his dream was to found a dynasty in Egypt and to make Egypt into a powerful, modern, independent country, freed from what he considered the dead hand of the Ottoman Empire. He succeeded in the first objective, and he came very near to succeeding in the second. He nationalised the land in order to raise funds to pay for what he wanted to do, made agriculture a state monopoly and created an industrial base, the main aim here being to make Egypt self-sufficient in weaponry. As a result, arms factories and powder mills sprang up in the country. Like Jefferson Davis, he made an army and a navy, and unlike Jefferson Davis he also made an empire. In 1815, he formed what he called *Al-Nizam al-Jadid*, which translates roughly into something like our New Model Army. This army was to be formed, trained, drilled, uniformed and armed along European lines, and Mehmet Ali now set about finding Europeans to help him do this. In 1815, the obvious place to look for these was France. Napoleon's defeat had left France with a vast pool of disbanded veterans, so that was where Mehmet Ali mainly looked for his foreigners. He said at the time that, out of every 50 foreigners he employed, 49 would be what he called "false stones", but the 50<sup>th</sup> would be a genuine diamond. Fortunately, he did find several diamonds, probably the best example of these being a hard-bitten veteran of Napoleon's armies called Joseph-Anthelme Sève.

Sève had served Napoleon on land and sea, and there was not very much that he could not handle. Shortly after his arrival in Egypt, he was attempting to instil the rudiments of French drill into a reluctant group of officer cadets when they took exception to his methods and fired a volley of musket-balls at him. This was a mistake. They missed, and Sève drew his sabre, unleashed a volley of French curses, rushed at them and threatened to kill them all, one by one. After that, he had no more trouble. He converted to Islam, changed his name to Suleyman Pasha and by 1847 he was the sixth highest paid officer in the Egyptian army. His descendants married into the Egyptian Royal Family, and certainly until recently they still had a palace in Cairo.

With the help of men like Sève, then, and under the inspired leadership on the ground of Mehmet Ali's son Ibrahim, who was a younger version of his father, Mehmet Ali's armies expanded south into the Sudan, overran the Hejaz (the whole western part of modern Saudi Arabia) and Syria and threatened Constantinople itself. Alarmed at this, the European powers rallied round, and by the Convention of London of 1840, Mehmet Ali was forced to retire from Syria and the Hejaz. In return, however, the office of Wali of Egypt was made hereditary in his family.

Mehmet Ali died in 1849, having in fact been senile for his last few years. His son Ibrahim had predeceased him, so he was succeeded by his nephew Abbas. Abbas, however, was not totally convinced of the benefits of aping the Europeans. He was much more concerned about balancing the books, and he instituted cuts in the armed forces which even the current British government would have considered a little severe.

Abbas was succeeded in turn, in 1854, by his uncle Said, who was in fact younger than him, as can sometimes happen in families. Unlike Abbas, Said was very much in favour of the army, but not as an instrument of empire. To him, as to Tsar Paul of Russia earlier, it was a toy, a plaything. Accordingly, he designed ever more exotic, expensive, impractical and uncomfortable uniforms for his soldiers and he liked to call the regiments out at all hours of the day or night to parade in front of his palace.

Said died in 1863 and was succeeded by his nephew, Ibrahim's son, Ismail. Here the story of the Egyptians in Egypt really begins, because Ismail was the man who invited them in.

Ismail's father, Ibrahim, and his grandfather, Mehmet Ali, had been tough old Albanian warriors, not exactly civilised but highly effective. Ismail, however, was very different. He was not a soldier. He was a cultivated and cosmopolitan figure, who had been educated partly in France, spoke French fluently and was a great friend and admirer of Napoleon III. Indeed, in many ways he was rather like Napoleon III, with Mehmet Ali playing the part of Napoleon I. He was a highly intelligent man, with a strange habit of closing his right eye and looking at you with his left when he talked to you. In fact the Egyptians said that he saw with his left eye and heard with his right, and when a British visitor reported this to him Ismail laughed and replied: *Yes, and I think with both!* In one way Ismail, however, did resemble his grandfather, because he too had a dream, and his dream was, if anything, bigger than Mehmet Ali's. Ismail visited Paris for the International Exposition of 1867 and came back convinced that this was the blueprint for Egypt. Indeed, he summed up his vision for his country a dozen years later, at the end of his reign, when he said: *My country is no longer in Africa. We are part of Europe now.*

Thus he imported French and Italian architects to build a new, European city on the east bank of the Nile, just north of the old city. He increased the production of cotton, introduced new crops, imported agricultural machinery, built roads, railways and bridges, dug canals and irrigation channels, established a telegraph system and nationalised the post office. It was in his reign, in 1869, that the Suez Canal was inaugurated, with weeks of festivities and the presence of the beautiful Empress Eugénie of France. All of this work, too, was under his direct supervision; he oversaw everything. Finally, in return for a substantial annual payment, he persuaded the Sultan to confer on him the title of Khedive, or Viceroy, and to make it hereditary from father to son.

Nevertheless, even with all of this work, he did not neglect the army. Indeed, he saw himself as continuing the work begun by his father and his grandfather. At this time, there was still a core of French advisers in the army. In 1869, however, Ismail had something of a disagreement with his old friend Napoleon III. He had rather unwisely asked Napoleon to adjudicate in his dispute with De Lesseps over who was to pay for the cost of labour on the Suez Canal, and inevitably Napoleon had ruled against him and in favour of the French company. In addition, the French officers in his army were constantly badgering him to give weapons contracts to French companies and were, he knew, reporting secretly to Paris. *They are not my officers,* he complained, *but under the orders of the French Ministry of War. I want officers who answer only to me.* He therefore determined to dismiss them, and to look elsewhere for foreign military expertise.

Where could he look? Several thousand miles away, across the Atlantic, there was a country which, unlike Britain and France, had no territorial interests whatsoever in Africa and where there was, once again, a huge pool of recently demobilised or disbanded officers with experience of fighting a four-year modern war with modern

weapons. Ismail therefore talked to a man he had met at the Sultan's court, a former battery commander in the Union Army named Thaddeus Mott.

Mott's father had been the personal physician to Sultan Mehmet II, his sister was married to the Turkish Minister to Washington and Mott spoke fluent Turkish, which was the language of the Egyptian court and the Egyptian officer corps - indeed, commands in the Egyptian Army were given in Turkish right up to 1920. He also had very good connections in U.S. military circles. Accordingly, Ismail made Mott a *Ferik*, a full general, in the Egyptian Army and appointed him his personal military adviser, and Mott contacted an old acquaintance who happened to be the Commander of the US Armies at that time, a certain William Tecumseh Sherman, and together they started looking for potential recruits.

The contract they were authorised to offer was a reasonably generous one. The pay level was roughly the same as in the US Army, with an additional 20% for serving in any of the distant provinces. If a man died in service, his heirs would receive a full year's pay, and if he was killed in battle his widow would receive benefits until her youngest child came of age. Finally, transport costs between the United States and Egypt were covered by the Khedive.

For most of the Union veterans who answered the call, the main motives were probably lack of opportunity in the now very much contracted US Army, love of adventure or, in the case of the one or two serving soldiers who were given permission to go, a wish to gain some military experience elsewhere. For the Confederates, forbidden in any case to serve in the US Army, the motive was often financial. As Samuel Lockett, the Confederate engineer who had designed the defences of Vicksburg put it: *It is awful to be poor*. Lockett could not even afford the cost of a 10-cent boat trip to see the Brooklyn Bridge, then under construction. Others may well have agreed with Henry Derrick, a former captain in the Confederate Army from Virginia, who joined the Egyptian service in order to escape what he called "the cursed tyranny of the United States".

In the old Royal Archives in the Abdin Palace, there is - or was - a letter in French from Beauregard, offering to take command of the Egyptian Army. There were rumours that Joseph E. Johnston had been asked. That Beauregard, at least, seriously considered going to Egypt is clear from his letters to various former comrades in the Confederate Army suggesting that they join him. Copies of two of these letters, written in English to Beauregard's former A.I.G. the Prince de Polignac, are in the possession of Daniel Frankignoul, President of C.H.A.B. The first of these is particularly interesting. The original approach to Beauregard was apparently made in 1870, and most of his letters on the subject were therefore written then. The second letter to Polignac, however, is dated April 7, 1873; this shows that Beauregard was still hoping to go to Egypt at this late date, even though it appears that the Khedive's invitation had by now been withdrawn.

In the event, however, no fewer than five former Confederate generals took ship for Egypt - William Wing Loring, Henry H. Sibley, Charles W. Field, Raleigh Colston and Alexander Reynolds, whose son, Frank, a former Confederate lieutenant-colonel, joined at the same time.

The only former Union general who joined Ismail was Charles Pomeroy Stone, who had been imprisoned without charge after being made the scapegoat for the Ball's Bluff disaster in October 1861. He was one of the earliest to arrive, and came strongly recommended by Sherman. Egypt gave him a chance to redeem himself, and in this he succeeded triumphantly. Ismail made him Chief of the General Staff, but by the end of 1872 he had supplanted Mott and he continued to serve the Khedive and his successor right up to 1883.

At any rate, whatever their various motives, in 1870 the first American recruits for Ismail's general staff arrived. The men who volunteered for Egyptian service over the next few years started by taking ship from New York. Some decided to bring their families with them, and there would probably be several veterans from either side travelling on the same boat. On arriving at Liverpool, they took the train down to London, then on to the coast, where they would board a ferry for France. They then continued by train through France, hardly stopping even at Paris, and down through Italy to Brindisi, where they took a steamer for Alexandria. The whole journey took about three weeks.

Alexandria was thus their first sight of Egypt. With its forest of masts and gangs of sweating, bare-chested black men loading and unloading the ships, it reminded at least one former Confederate of New Orleans, but to most of the veterans it was strange, exotic and even perhaps slightly alarming. Arriving there, they would, if they were lucky, be met by Loring, who was stationed in Alexandria from 1871 and who would see that they got safely on to the train for Cairo. Here they would be met by a scene of chaos worse even than at Alexandria. Porters climbed over each other in an effort to carry their luggage, hotel touts tried desperately to drag them off to their various hostelries, the streets were jammed with a heaving, swelling mass of humans and animals and everywhere was noise, smells and confusion. The modern visitor's first impressions of Cairo, of course, are not dissimilar, except that today the thousands of donkeys and camels have been replaced by thousands of cars.

Eventually someone would appear and take charge of them and bear them off to the Grand New Hotel overlooking the Ezbekiyah Gardens, where rooms had been reserved for them until they were able to find their own accommodation (although the shell of the hotel is still standing, it looks neither very grand nor very new today). The next morning, an Italian tailor would arrive at the hotel to measure them for their uniform: a plain black tunic, buttoned to the neck, and black trousers for the undress uniform (*an exact reproduction of the dress of a Presbyterian parson*, according to James Morris Morgan), a far more splendid blue tunic (white for summer) and blue trousers with braid down the seam for full dress – both, of course, topped by the red tarbush.

Once suitably attired, then, it was time for their first audience with the Khedive. For the earlier arrivals, this probably took place at the Gezira Palace, so they would cross the Qasr al-Nil bridge (the original iron bridge was replaced in 1933, but the two large bronze lions guarding each end remain today) to the island in the middle of the Nile and then walk through the extensive gardens to the Palace. Later arrivals were escorted to the Khedive's newer Abdin Palace.

The next day, they would travel up to the Citadel to begin work. It is a 45-minute walk from the Ezbekiyah Gardens to the Citadel, uphill, so the Americans quickly learnt to hire a donkey for the journey. Arriving at the Citadel, they passed through the Bab al-Qullah gate into Mehmet Ali's old Harem palace, which now housed the offices of the General Staff. Early arrivals found this very exciting, and some even swore they could smell the perfume of its previous inhabitants, but the gloomy halls where they worked soon put an end to any romantic or erotic dreams of bosomy beauties in veils and wisps of gauze.

Here, they were first issued with an ivory seal, bearing their name and rank in Arabic letters, with which they had to sign any documents for which they were responsible. Their actual duties varied enormously, Stone and the Khedive deciding which tasks each man would best be suited for. Thus a man might be responsible for training Egyptian officers, drilling their men, map-making, piloting steamers, coastal defences, surveying, exploration and a range of other duties. Certainly for those based in Cairo, however, the working day was not particularly onerous; it ran from 9.30 to 12.00, and

then from 1 o'clock until 5.00, after which they were free. Social life, for both Americans and Europeans, revolved around the magnificent Ezbekiyah Gardens, with their lakes and shaded walks, little restaurants and lanterns in the trees at night, and the bars and cafes in the arcades surrounding them (only a small part of the gardens remains today, and the arcades are empty and dilapidated).

Among the Civil War veterans, military and naval, who answered the Khedive's call were three former officers in the Confederate Navy who had been forced during the Civil War to spend far too many frustrating months in a French harbour: William Campbell, Charles Iverson Graves and James Morris Morgan. The first two had been respectively the captain and the executive officer of the CSS *Rappahannock* as she lay at Calais, waiting for permission from the French to sail. The third had been a midshipman on the CSS *Georgia*, which was temporarily blockaded at Cherbourg, but he had friends among the midshipmen on the *Rappahannock* and took the opportunity of a week's leave to go over to Calais and spend a day with them. Their very different experiences in Egypt provide an example of the varied fortunes there of the American volunteers.

William Campbell was a Tennessean, a graduate of the Naval Academy at Annapolis and a brave and resourceful man. On November 25, 1863, dressed in civilian clothes and aided by a Scotsman called John Ramsay, formerly an officer in the service of the East India Company, he had snatched the *Rappahannock* (formerly HMS *Victor*) out from under the noses of the British authorities and across to Calais. Unfortunately, however, having got her to Calais, he was unable to get her out again. He volunteered for Egypt in 1872, and was put in charge of the steamers running between Alexandria and Constantinople. He was thus based in Alexandria, and it was here that he came into conflict with George Butler.

George Butler, a nephew of General Benjamin Butler, was the US Consul-General. He was a journalist, with no diplomatic or military experience, so those knowing little of the elder Butler might well wonder how his nephew had obtained this post. Those with any knowledge of Benjamin Butler, however, would be less surprised. To adapt the common British expression, it was a case not so much of "Bob's your uncle" as of "*Ben's* your uncle!" Benjamin Butler was a man of some influence in Congress at this time, and he used this influence to wangle consular positions for a number of his relatives.

It is reassuring to learn that George Butler was exactly what one would expect of a nephew of "Spoons" Butler, a credit in every way to his Uncle Ben. He started his diplomatic career by selling vice-consular positions to various Levantine businessmen of doubtful character for large sums of money. It may be wondered why Levantine businessmen of doubtful character would be willing to pay Benjamin Butler's nephew large sums of money for a vice-consular post. The reason is simply that it gave them consular protection and put them out of reach of the Egyptian police; no matter what dubious financial transactions they were involved in, they could only be tried in a consular court, and this consular court was, of course, presided over by Butler. Butler's next step was to team up with Mott in an effort to persuade the Khedive to award a large arms contract not to Remington, as Ismail wished, but to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company and the Unites States Cartridge Company, which latter company just happened to be owned by Benjamin Butler; the motive here, of course, was the large amount of baksheesh which this contract would generate if they obtained it. The Khedive, however, wisely chose the Remington Rolling Block rifle, which had won a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition in 1867.

Butler had a particular dislike for two groups of Americans in Egypt, the ex-Confederates and the missionaries. He referred to the Southerners as "overpaid former

rebels” and suggested that they be deprived of any diplomatic aid and treated as non-citizens. The missionaries he dismissed at as “bilious book-peddlers.” In the case of the missionaries, the dislike was mutual. When one of Butler’s dubious hangers-on, an Italian named Strologo, had a dispute with one of the missionaries’ employees and beat him unconscious with a leaded cane, stories, inspired by the missionaries, of consular “bunga bunga” parties involving naked dancing girls and drunken revels started appearing in the American press. (These stories, incidentally, were all completely true). This alarmed the Grant administration, which started an investigation. In response, Butler threatened to “shoot to death” anyone slandering his reputation.

Things came to a head on July 11, 1872. Three former Confederates, Campbell, Loring and Frank Reynolds were having dinner in the Hôtel d’Europe in Alexandria when Butler came in with two of his entourage, Strologo and a former Union major called Wadleigh. Butler had tried to obtain a commission for Wadleigh in the Egyptian Army, but the Khedive, who was a shrewd judge of character, had vetoed this. Butler had then given Wadleigh a job as his secretary, although according to Stone Wadleigh was really his pimp. The three of them deliberately took a seat near the Southerners, who were preparing to leave. As they passed Butler’s table, the three ex-Confederates, who were all in uniform, reluctantly saluted Butler, but refused to acknowledge Strologo or Wadleigh. Since Campbell had said publicly that Strologo should be horsewhipped for his attack on the missionary employee, he was particularly hated by the Butler clique. Butler shouted sarcastically *Good evening, Major Campbell!*, and when Campbell failed to respond called him a dog. Campbell turned round, raising his cane, Butler picked up a chair, Strologo, showing great presence of mind, jumped hastily under the table and everybody else pulled out revolvers. Wadleigh now shot Campbell in the leg, urged on by Butler’s shouts of *Give it to him, Wadleigh!* Loring and Reynolds then picked Campbell up and carried him to safety, pursued by a volley of shots from Butler and Wadleigh.

Butler now telegraphed his uncle in Washington saying: *Ask Secretary to telegraph leave immediately. Important. Rebel officers attempted my assassination. One assassin shot.* The Khedive’s investigation, however, found in favour of the ex-Confederates. Butler warned that this could lead to a rupture in Egyptian-American relations, but the Khedive countered by accusing Butler, in a rather curiously-worded translation, of “inebriety, notoriously corrupt practices and a general and openly displayed blackguardism.” At this point, Butler lost his nerve and fled Egypt on a postal steamer. His uncle expressed himself surprised at the accusations against his nephew. *The only reason I ever had to think he lacked refinement, he said, was he was a newspaper man.* He even tried - unsuccessfully - to persuade the Department of State to refund the \$700 which it had cost his nephew to return home.

With Butler gone, Mott had to go too, since he had been too closely associated with him in a number of his schemes, and Stone now took over Mott’s responsibilities and the leadership of the Americans.

Fortunately, Campbell’s wound was not serious, and he was soon back on duty. In 1874, he was selected to accompany Colonel Raleigh Colston, formerly a Confederate brigadier-general, on an expedition south. They were to go up the Nile to Kenneh and strike out across the desert to the old Greek city of Berenice, where they were to link up with another group which had travelled down the Red Sea by steamer, then both parties were to proceed to Berber. The main objective was to look for a possible route for a railway. Colston and Campbell got on well together, Colston describing Campbell as “a genial and sterling gentleman”, and during the journey over the desert to Berenice the two Southerners learned how to handle both their camels and the local Bedouin. They learned the hard way, for example, not to treat a camel like a horse and in particular not

to try to ride a camel like a horse, and also not to expect the Bedouin to dig out the sand clogging an ancient reservoir; no matter what the financial incentive, that sort of work is beneath Bedouin dignity and fit only for the *fellahin*.

After some three and a half weeks, they arrived safely at Berenice, to be met by the leader of the main group, a former Union soldier called Erastus Sparrow Purdy.

Here, however, orders were waiting for Campbell to return immediately to Cairo to join an expedition under the command of the famous British General Gordon - *Chinese Gordon* - who had been in the service of the Emperor of China and was now in the Egyptian service. This time, the plan was to sail down the Red Sea to Suakin, then to strike south-west across the desert to Berber and to carry on up the Nile to Khartoum. Also with the expedition was a former Union officer from Maryland called Charles Chaillé-Long, later famous for his explorations in Central Africa and as the discoverer of Lake Kioga. Both Campbell and Chaillé-Long suffered during the long ride down to Berber, and Gordon, who prided himself on his endurance, made no secret of his contempt - "a couple of weaklings", he called them. By the time they reached Khartoum, Campbell was seriously ill, but Gordon was convinced that he was shamming. *If you put your finger down your throat*, he said, *you will be sick*. Reasoning that Campbell was quite well enough to work, he left him in Khartoum in charge of the stores, while he and Chaillé-Long carried on south.

Campbell, however, had contracted typhus. The nuns at the Catholic Mission in Khartoum did their best, but they could not save him. Although, like most Tennesseans, a Protestant, he was buried in the Catholic cemetery, the only Christian cemetery there, and his grave was destroyed with the rest when the Mahdi and his Dervishes occupied Khartoum in 1885.

Thus the former captain of the CSS *Rappahannock* died in the Khedive's service in October 1874, and the following year, 1875, his old executive officer on the ship, Charles Iverson Graves, arrived in Egypt. Graves was a Georgian, and he had attended Annapolis as one of Alexander Stephens's appointees. After the war, he had tried farming, but a flash flood in 1874 finally wiped out his hopes just as cotton prices were beginning to rise. His farm was heavily mortgaged, he had a wife and five children, he had no income and no prospects - and then he heard of the Khedive's offer. He therefore set out for Egypt, promising to send for his wife and children as soon as he could.

Like many Americans, especially Southerners, even today, Graves was steeped in the language of the Authorized Version, the King James Bible. He was like Abraham and Lot, he said, who *sojourned in Egypt when the famine was grievous in their own country*, and he had gone to Egypt *for the same reason Joseph's brothers went - to get corn for my family*. So he lived as frugally as possible. He found the cheapest lodgings he could, ate in what he called "the cheapest respectable restaurant in Cairo", breakfasted on hardboiled eggs and bread (*Eggs are small in Egypt*, he reported gloomily), and had his dinner in the open air so that he could listen to the band. Everything he could, he saved, and he sent money home every month in order to reduce his mortgage.

Graves was an Episcopalian, and he was distinctly more tolerant of the religion of the majority of Egyptians than his compatriots were. *They worship the Living God*, he said of the Moslems, *and regard our Saviour a great prophet, and in this respect are superior to the Jews and the Unitarians*. With the local Egyptians, he rushed up to the Citadel to visit the Mosque of Mehmet Ali, which he considered "the finest in Cairo", on the one night of the year when the great man's tomb was opened. There were limits to his tolerance, however; like others among the Americans, he loathed the black eunuchs who had so much power and who he felt were holding Egypt back.

Graves was put immediately into the Third Section of the General Staff, which was responsible for handling the more technical tasks of mapmaking and surveying. On December 14, 1875, however, a large Egyptian force landed at Massawa, on the Red Sea, and prepared to advance into Abyssinia and take Emperor John's capital of Adowa. Towards the end of the month, Graves was sent down from Cairo as Port Officer, responsible for unloading stores and sending on supplies to the army. His personal shopping list for his new posting provides an interesting example of an American officer's priorities. It reads: "1 Pair White Shoes; 1 Helmet Hat; Mattress; Tin Wash Bowl; Sponge & Bag; Looking-glass; Scissors; Soap; Toothbrush; Writing paper; Blank Book; Envelopes; Ink; PO Stamps; Tape; needles, pins; pens; buttons; thread; Burning glass; Tinder-Box; Matches; Candles; Tobacco; 2 Bots. Brandy; Box Mustard; Quinine; Diarrhoea medicine; Dysentery ditto; Sugar; Tea; Coffee; Curl paper; Umbrella; Almanac 1876; Camphor; fishing Tackle; Gum Camphor; Alcohol; pepper."

An earlier Egyptian expedition under an inexperienced former artillery lieutenant from Denmark named Søren Arrendrup had been wiped out at Gundet in November, but Graves, who had not been long in Egypt, was confident that this time there would be an easy victory for the Egyptians - *It would be like a body of regulars firing into a street mob*, he said. It was thus something of a shock for him some two months later when the shell-shocked, panic-stricken survivors of the disastrous battle of Gura stumbled into Massawa and poured on to the transports, amid scenes which reminded former Union officers of Washington after First Bull Run.

The Americans naturally imagined that after this reverse the Khedive would react as Lincoln had, reinforce and reorganise the army and send it South again. Indeed, for a time it looked as if he would. In May, Graves was sent back down to Massawa to improve the landing facilities there. But nothing further happened, and Graves was soon back in the Citadel in Cairo again, only now with very little work to do. It was therefore something of a relief when the following year, 1877, he was given a job surveying the Land of Goshen and running telegraph lines between villages. It gave him a break from his duties in the Citadel, he had no expenses, of course, while in the field, and the extra allowance for work in the field was always welcome.

Back in Cairo at the end of the year, however, Graves found himself saddled with an unexpected additional responsibility. Robert E. Lee's daughter Mary arrived in the city in late 1877 with her widowed friend Mrs Porter, and Graves had somehow been unanimously elected her escort during her stay (Mrs Porter was said to be looking for a husband, and some attempt was made to fix her up with Loring, but the General was having none of it; he liked the company of women, but he had been a bachelor for too long to be caught now). Miss Mary was an extremely strong character, with an excellent sense of humour (*Isn't she ugly*, said one of the other Americans to Graves, *and isn't she smart?*) and pretty well tireless, and Graves found himself expected to take her shopping, to carry her various purchases back to her hotel, to show her the Pyramids, to walk with her in the Ezbekiyah Gardens in the evening long after they were closed and generally to be at her disposal 24 hours a day. Miss Mary was also responsible for the only display of Blue-Grey animosity during the whole of the American presence in Egypt.

There were of course a number of disagreements and arguments, some of them quite bitter, among the Americans, but these were always the result of clashes of personality rather than based on what uniform a man had worn. After all, as Graves said, *we are all Americans*. In January 1878, President and Mrs Grant arrived in Egypt as part of their two-year world tour, and Stone arranged a big dinner for them to which all the Americans, military and civil, were naturally invited. Miss Mary refused. She was tired

after all her sightseeing, she said, and had to pack for her trip up the Nile the next day. To Graves, however, she gave the real reason. *I wouldn't sit down at the same table with General Grant, she said, to save his life!*

Graves was a good officer and a conscientious soldier. He had the full confidence of the Khedive, and it was probably because of this that he received his final assignment, the last one given to any of the Americans.

In the spring of 1878, he was sent down to Cape Guardafui, the easternmost point of the Horn of Africa. His instructions were to survey the area and to decide on a suitable location for a lighthouse. This area today is part of Somalia, and it is directly on the route from the Red Sea out into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Not unnaturally, all of this shipping provided a temptation, then as now, for some of the more impoverished and criminally-inclined locals. Today, of course, they are rather more proactive. The locals in 1878, however, lacked the resources that today's Somali pirates have. In 1878, they simply waited for vessels to wreck themselves on the rocks of the Cape, which happened fairly regularly. The last thing they wanted was thus for an Egyptian unit commanded by an American to come down and start putting an end to this very profitable source of income. Things could have become a little difficult, but Graves solved the problem by kidnapping the local prince, forcing him to serve as a guide and holding him hostage until he had finished his surveys.

If Graves was one of the American success stories, James Morris Morgan was a disaster for American-Egyptian relations. After serving as a midshipman on the *Georgia*, Morgan had been sent to the training ship *Patrick Henry* and had then served in a naval battery on the James River. The war over, he had tried studying law, then growing first cotton and later potatoes, none of it with much success, so he jumped at the chance of volunteering for Egypt.

He arrived in Egypt in 1870 on the same boat which brought Stone over. There was no one to meet them at Alexandria, but they finally received a message asking them to go to the house of an official called Ali Bey. Here they were kept waiting for some time. Finally, the Bey appeared and told them testily in French that there were too many of them and that some of them would have to go home. Turning to Morgan, he asked him what rank he thought he was getting. When Morgan replied that he had been promised a captaincy, the Bey laughed in his face. Morgan was a 24-year-old Southern gentleman with all a young man's sense of his own importance. Furious, he shouted in English that he would take the next train to Cairo, find the man who had brought him 7000 miles in order to be insulted and horsewhip him! At this the Bey turned white. Speaking now in perfect English, he assured them that it was all a misunderstanding. It turned out later that he was simply a minor official whose instructions were to speed them on their way, which he now hastened to do.

On arrival in Cairo, Morgan was assigned to Loring's staff. One morning, he was sent off to inspect a regiment in the suburbs of Cairo. Hardly had he arrived, when a number of the soldiers fell out and started praying. As good Moslems, they were theoretically perfectly entitled to do this, but Morgan had a suspicion that they were really doing it because their rifles would not have passed inspection. He reported his suspicions to Loring, who took it up with the regimental commander, Orabi Bey<sup>1</sup>, an extremely religious man, known for his piety, who was indignant at this presumed attack on his faith. Loring therefore sent Morgan off again the next day to inspect the same regiment, and exactly the same thing happened. This time, Morgan simply snatched up half a dozen of the men's rifles and bore them off to the Citadel, where he

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<sup>1</sup> Arabi or Orabi or Urabi

examined them and found them, as he had suspected, absolutely filthy. When Loring reported this to Orabi, Orabi was furious, not with his men but with Morgan, and the Minister of War, to whom they took the case, was equally shocked. There is an interesting postscript to this story. Orabi Bey, later Orabi Pasha, was the man who led the nativist revolt in 1882 which resulted in the British occupation of Egypt. Could it be, then, that Orabi's revolt was born here, and that perhaps Morgan was ultimately responsible for the 70-year British presence in Egypt?

Next, Morgan accompanied Loring to the Cairo opera house. Waiting in the foyer, he was asked by the Prefect of Police, yet another Ali Bey, to fetch him a glass of water. Morgan objected to his tone, so he went off, got a glass of water, threw it in the Prefect's face, grabbed Loring's cane with one hand and the Prefect with the other and started belabouring him until he was finally pulled away. The Khedive, who had seen the whole thing, laughed and laughed, and told the Prefect that he would have been disappointed if Morgan had not reacted as he had. "*I brought him here to serve Egypt,*" he said, "*not to serve you!*"

Loring was then put in charge of coastal defences, based in Alexandria. He and Morgan were one evening invited to a banquet given by a local Pasha. Loring was seated on his host's right, but there was no place laid for Morgan. At Morgan's insistence, Loring explained to the Pasha that he needed Morgan beside him, first to interpret for him, since Morgan, having grown up in Louisiana, spoke fluent French and had by now picked up a smattering of Arabic, but also to cut up his food, since Loring had lost an arm in the Mexican War during the assault on the Belén Gate in Mexico City. The pasha replied that he did not see why Morgan could not carry out both functions if he simply stood behind his superior's chair. Morgan was speechless with rage, and a chair was eventually placed for him beside Loring.

The next morning, Morgan took the first train down to Cairo, saw Stone and offered his resignation. Stone, who, in Morgan's words, handled the Americans "as though they were so many naughty children", calmed Morgan down and temporarily solved the problem by promoting him to *qaimaqam*, lieutenant-colonel, and assigning him to the staff of Ratib Pasha, the Commander-in-Chief.

Morgan had inherited from Loring a horse called Napoleon. Napoleon was one of the many presents which the Khedive had given the Empress Eugénie when she came to Egypt for the inauguration of the Suez Canal. The Empress did not want to take him back to France with her, so he ended up with Loring.

Napoleon was a bay, and he was a kind of equine Harrier Jump-Jet - he could do a vertical take-off. Thus he would take off vertically, land again, take off again and so on. The problem was that one never quite knew when he was going to do this. As Loring had only one arm, the only way that he could control Napoleon when Napoleon started to do this was by pulling on the reins with his teeth, and since he found this rather tough on the teeth, he passed the horse on to Morgan.

Morgan was an excellent horseman, and he soon had Napoleon under control. He adopted the habit of taking the horse out along the busy Shubra road, which led to the Khedive's summer palace, and putting him through his paces for the benefit of the fashionable passers-by. One day there was a tremendous commotion, and the Khedive's carriage and its various outriders appeared from the direction of the palace. All those in the street immediately dropped to their knees and salaamed, except for Morgan. Just as the coach was about to pass him, Morgan made Napoleon rear up and then remain motionless, while he himself executed a smart military salute. Delighted by this, Ismail clapped furiously, and called Morgan to the coach to congratulate him personally. Shortly after this, there was a military exercise involving a mock battle. Morgan had been planning to ride a more docile horse, but the Khedive announced that he would be

particularly interested to see how Napoleon behaved under fire. Early in the battle, Morgan was sent with a message to the commander of the artillery, so he rode up and delivered his message, whereupon the guns opened up. To his horror and embarrassment, Napoleon immediately dropped to the ground and lay on his belly, quivering with fear, until the barrage stopped and Morgan was able to ride him away.

It was impossible to keep Morgan down for long, however, and he and Napoleon were soon back on the Shubra road again. One day, a carriage bearing two ladies from the harem, with an escort of eunuchs, approached. All the other men hastily turned their backs, but Morgan and Napoleon carried on showing off. Impressed, one of the ladies tossed a rose out of the carriage. Riding up at a gallop, Morgan leant down from the horse and picked up the flower in one fluid movement. Flower after flower followed. Finally, the unseen lady handed Morgan a flower wrapped in a handkerchief. This was too much for the eunuchs, who spurred their horses after this rash infidel. Napoleon was too fast for them, however, and Morgan was soon back at home with his trophy. Here he was visited by the Foreign Minister, Nubar Pasha. The handkerchief belonged to the Khedive's 19-year-old daughter, Princess Fatma, and the Khedive had demanded its return. In response, Morgan disposed of the evidence by throwing the handkerchief in the fire. He was now in serious trouble, and for some days no one dared speak to him, but eventually the affair blew over.

However, Morgan had now definitely had enough of Egypt, and he went to the Khedive to offer his resignation. The Khedive, rather to his surprise, begged him to reconsider, and finally told him to take six months' furlough and go back to America for a rest. On arriving in New York, Morgan went to visit a friend. Waiting for the friend to return, he picked up a Bible lying on the table and opened it at random. His eye fell on the first verse of the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter of Isaiah. *Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help*, he read. Hastily he shut the Bible, fearful of what he might see next, and sent in his resignation by post.

*Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help.* A few years later, a number of other Americans must have agreed with Isaiah. Since his accession in 1863, Ismail had been spending enormous quantities of money. He received a substantial income from his vast estates, but this was nothing like enough to cover his expenses. The festivities for the opening of the Suez Canal alone must have cost him millions. He had inherited a significant foreign debt, and his solution was simply to extend this. While times were good, the European moneylenders, the Rothschilds and others, were happy to oblige. Egypt appeared to be a good investment. As time went on, however, they started to become rather nervous about their money. In 1875, pressure from his creditors forced Ismail to put up for sale his shares in the Suez Canal, which were snapped up by Disraeli on behalf of Britain. After the disastrous, and very costly, failure of his invasion of Abyssinia, the foreign bondholders and their governments had had enough. Two commissions in 1876 forced Ismail dramatically to reorganise his finances and to accept a representative each from Britain and France into his Ministry of Finance. A third commission, in 1878, was more specific. Ismail must now drastically reduce the size of his army and dismiss the American officers. "Dismissal Day", as it was called, was fixed for June 30, 1878. Each American was then to receive full pay due, six months extra pay for early termination of the contract, plus an additional £75 towards the cost of the fare home.

When Graves returned to Cairo from his final assignment at the end of July, then, he found most of his friends and colleagues already gone. One or two had taken civilian employment, Stone was still in his office in the Citadel, but most were now back in their own country. Thus Graves went alone to draw his final pay. Having learned, as a Southerner, the lesson of the Civil War, he insisted on taking it in gold, and waited

patiently while the Coptic clerks carefully counted out the money. In the end, it weighed 24 pounds, and slinging it over his shoulder he marched triumphantly off. He came back to Georgia with over \$5,000, enough to pay off the mortgage on his farm, renovate his house and dig the necessary drainage ditches around his fields to protect him against any future flash floods or freshets.

Few of the other Americans, however, can have felt about their Egyptian service as positively as Graves did. More of them must have agreed with Samuel Lockett, who summed up his experience thus: *It was my fortune, good or bad – it is hard to say which – to have been an officer in the Egyptian Army*. Furthermore, they left behind them half a dozen of their comrades, their bodies lying in Egyptian or Sudanese soil.

However, that is not quite the end of the story. In 1886, perhaps in belated recompense for his mistreatment 25 years before, Charles Pomeroy Stone was asked to design and construct the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, which was to be set up in New York Harbour just across from the two forts where he had been unjustly imprisoned. To help him, Stone brought in two of his old comrades from Egypt, two former Confederates who once again had fallen upon hard times - the former Confederate Army engineer Samuel Lockett and the former Confederate Navy midshipman James Morris Morgan. Thus the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty stands today as perhaps the only memorial, however unlikely, to the nearly 50 Civil War veterans, North and South, who served the Egyptian Khedive some 135-140 years ago.

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