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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

Brief von Norman de Garis Davies an Unbekannt

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The Egyptian Gazette, Friday, December 22. 1916.

An Egyptologist's Case.

"Squandering Exceptional Powers."

To the Editor, "Egyptian Gazette."

Sir,—The "Egyptian Gazette" has recently given prominence to an account of the discussion of Dr. Alan Gardiner's case by the Exemptions Tribunal in London. The notice does my friend injustice in two respects. His age is at least five years greater than that mentioned, and besides he has for several months past been devoting a considerable part of his time to the duties of a special constable by arrangement with the authorities.

When war broke out, Dr. Gardiner felt, rightly or wrongly, that he could best serve his country by giving himself still more assiduously to his own very special form of work. It ~~will~~ may well be that duty now wears a different aspect. But a people that, through mental and moral indolence, is fond of leaving everything to the individual conscience has no right to sit in judgment when it finds that every man's conscience is not moulded on vulgar lines. And I have a lingering suspicion that if our Government had that appreciation of pure learning which it so conspicuously lacks, it would have given stringent orders to Alan H. Gardiner, Arthur S. Hunt, Pierre Lacau, and many more in other fields of research, that they were not to think of squandering their exceptional powers in other forms of service until further orders. There are thousands of members of Parliament, lawyers, clergymen and others who could hold the danger line for these men, and who at the worst would be very little missed by the State, to say nothing of

Yours, etc.

N. de G. Davies.

Luxor. Dec. 17.

N. de G. Davies

REPORT OF THE GRAPHIC BRANCH. 1923-4

The ancient history of Egypt is largely made up of short eras of high ^a civilisation and prosperity, separated by periods in which rude hordes swept away what had been painfully built up. We need not strain imagination in picturing the distress which rich and poor alike endured through such years. We have the actual words in which, more than four millennia ago, one who could write, as well as grieved, depicted the sorry conditions; so that, when history tends to repeat itself, we can borrow his eloquent words; for the impact of armed force and ignorance on the delicate organism of a civilised State has much the same results in all ages.

"The Residence...with its excellent officials and numerous laws...fell to pieces suddenly. The officials are driven out throughout the land. See! tidings are no longer brought to the strong man of the land how poor men fare; ruin threatens. No artist works any longer, the enemy robs the land of its crafts. From him who was reaping a harvest all his property is stolen. The ebony caskets are broken up, magnificent woods are chopped up for beds. If the savant says 'Yes', the fool says 'No'; for this seems fine to a block-head. The laws of the courts of Justice are put out into the porch; people walk on them in the streets and the riff-raff tear them up in the alleys. He who knew nothing about his god now offers to him with another man's incense. He who did not know how to make a coffin now possesses a tomb. He who knew nothing about music now possesses a harp. He who looked at his face in the water now possesses a mirror." Broken passages make further mention of ruin, "breaking into tombs" and "burning ~~a~~ statues". If last winter had to be passed in some such mood of depression over events in Egypt, these were themselves (also) a reason for increased activity, and I do not think that our harvest fell behind that of more favorable seasons.

etc.

