

combination of all the leading lexicons, and as such, and being compiled with great care and accuracy, is unquestionably the chief and best of native Arabic dictionaries.

During his former residence in Egypt Lane had become aware of the existence of copies, or portions of copies, of this Thesaurus in Cairo; and the thought had come to him that herein lay the opportunity for constructing an Arabic Lexicon of a fullness and accuracy never yet dreamt of. To compose a work in English from the *Táj-el-'Aroos* would be, he saw, to provide the scholars of Europe with an authority once and for ever, from which there could be no appeal. But to attempt such a work would require another residence in Cairo, tedious and expensive transcribing of the *Táj*, long years of toil, and the wearisome labour of proof-sheets. And when done, who could be found to venture to publish so vast a work, involving peculiar printing at ruinous cost?

The days of patronage were over: authors no longer waited in the vestibules of great men with odes and dedications. But the spirit that prompted the finest patronage still existed. There were those among the noblemen of England who were ready to devote their wealth to the cause of culture and learning, and who were emulous of promoting a great work that could not advance without their help. In his first visit to Egypt Lane had met Lord Prudhoe and from that time something closer than mere acquaintance had sprung up between them. Few could know Lane without seeking to be his friend: and his worth was not that of an uncut diamond; the courtesy and grace of his manners were conspicuous. Lord Prudhoe found a delight in his society which did not vanish when they returned to England. He would constantly come to the house in Kensington, bringing some choice tobacco—the only luxury Lane indulged in—and there he would sit in the study, talking over old Eastern scenes they had witnessed together, and discussing the work then going on, “*The Arabian Nights*,” and Lane’s plans of future study and writing. It was during these frequent meetings in London that the idea of the Lexicon was talked over. Lord Prudhoe entered zealously into the project; offered to provide Lane with the means of collecting the materials in Cairo, and eventually took upon himself the main expense of the production of the work. To understand in any degree the generosity and public spirit evinced in this, it must be remembered that it was no ordinary book, costing a few hundred pounds, that was thus to be produced. It involved the employment for thirteen years of a learned scholar in Cairo, to transcribe the manuscript of the *Táj-el-'Aroos*; it required peculiar type to be designed and cast; it demanded skilled compositors of special acquirements; and finally, it was not a work of ordinary size, but one of eight large quarto volumes with three columns in the page, reaching when completed probably to four thousand pages. To give more precise details of the expense of the work would be an impertinence to the princely generosity that took no count of the cost. From first to last the Lexicon was the care of Lord Prudhoe. In 1847 he succeeded his brother as fourth Duke of Northumberland, but the serious addition to his duties caused by this and by his acceptance of a place in the Cabinet brought about no change in his interest in Lane’s work. He would come almost yearly to Worthing to see my Uncle and learn from himself how “the great book” went on. Of the many who regretted His Grace’s death in 1864, few lamented it more deeply than Lane. It was the severing of a long friendship, and a friendship which the generosity of the Duke, instead of destroying, as is the manner with the meaner sort of men, had cemented. But the bright example of the Duke created its own reflection. That support which for nearly a quarter of a century, “with a kindness and delicacy not to be surpassed,” he had accorded to Lane’s great undertaking was at once and at her own express wish* continued by his widow, Eleanor, Dowager Duchess of Northumberland; and to Her Grace’s munificence it still owes its further publication.

* On the death of Duke Algernon, his successor, formerly Lord Beverley, expressed a strong wish to continue the support of the work; and his son, the present Duke, has shown an equal interest in it.