



# **An Egyptian Childhood: The Autobiography of Taha Hussien**

*Taha Hussein*

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## **An Egyptian Childhood: The Autobiography of Taha Hussien** Taha Hussein

An Egyptian Childhood, the first volume of Taha Hussein's autobiography, is full of the sounds and smells of rural Egypt. It documents Hussein's childhood and early education in a small village in Upper Egypt, as he learns not only to come to terms with his blindness but to excel in spite of it and win a place at the prestigious university of al-Azhar in Cairo. Taha Hussein (1889-1973) had qualities of mind and character that enabled him to overcome the handicaps of blindness and humble birth and to pursue a distinguished career in Egyptian public life. He was at one time Minister of Education and - before all titles were abolished under the Republic - had been made a Bey and then a Pasha. He was the most influential, however, through his voluminous, varied, and controversial writings, which earned him the unofficial title of "Dean of Arabic Letters". His autobiography, published in three volumes beginning in 1926, was quickly recognized as a masterpiece. It was the first modern Arabic literary work to gain international acclaim, and it has been translated into most of the major languages of the world.

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