

turns from north and south to west and east. The battle front in France may be compared roughly with the two sides of a square, and the contained right angle—although it is not quite a right angle—lies just to the south of the present fighting. If the British and French are able to advance here they would find themselves to the east of the German line that runs north and south, and to the north of the line that runs east and west. That is to say, they would be endangering the communications of very large areas that are now held by the Germans. The Germans would find that their enemies were behind them on both lines and they would have to fall back to avoid being cut off. Now, as a matter of fact, the British are already behind, or to the east of the German line that stretches northward to Arras, and the French are also behind, or to the east, of the German line that stretches southward to Noyon at the angle. But the French advance has not yet been quite sufficient or decisive enough to compel that angle to cave in. Nor has the British advance been quite sufficient or decisive enough to compel the German line to the north to fall back as far as Arras or further. And here we see the reason why the French and British are not proceeding on parallel lines. Their general strategy is the same, but their paths diverge. Their lines are somewhat in the shape of a fan with the handle pointed westward and they are opening the fan wider as they advance. The French are advancing southeast in order to cut across the corner marked by Noyon. The British are advancing northeast in order to get well to the east of Arras and so endanger the whole German line to the north. So long as they are encountering closely parallel lines of trenches their advance is very slow, and the danger to the German communications is not acute. But a very few miles more and the danger will become sharper. For example, if the British take Bapaume, which is only about five miles ahead of them, it is hard to see how the Germans can hold on at Arras, or how they can avoid the evacuation of a large area of French territory. This accounts also for the tenacity of the German resistance. It is not that the possession of a few villages is of any importance one way or the other. But it is of importance that the British shall not reach the critical point, already commanded by their guns, that will compel a German retirement over dozens of miles. Thus we see that the object of the fighting on the Somme is not to push the Germans back yard by yard out of France, but rather to push them back to a point where they will be compelled to fall back in order to save their lines of communication.

It is therefore a mistake to suppose that the only success that the Allies can look for is to push the Germans back to their own frontier, yard by yard, and with desperate fighting all the way. Their success, if they attain to it, will be in reaching certain points that will make large areas of line untenable, and they are already very close to that success. Nor need we suppose that the intervening difficulties will necessarily be so great as those that have been surpassed. Doubtless the Germans have foreseen all eventualities and have fortified the territory to their rear. But it is very unlikely that they have fortified it to the same extent, or to anything like the same extent, as they have done in what we may call the immediate foreground. They may have dug enormous numbers of trenches, but they will not be of

the same kind as those that have been attacked and taken during the last month.

ORIENTAL CUSTOMS

Earl Cromer's Adventures as a British Pro-Consul in the East

WHEN a British pro-consul will talk—which is seldom, it is worth while listening. When he talks frankly, the opportunity is still more important. The Earl of Cromer, in the Quarterly Review, contributes a thoroughly delightful article anent his adventures while representing Great Britain in Egypt. He says:

Every European who has lived for long in the East will, I think, bear me out when I say that in the most trivial acts of life the Eastern somehow or other manages always to do and to say exactly the opposite to what would be done or said by the Western. I was one day looking out of the window of the Viceroy's house at Barrackpore and noticed that a native policeman was walking up and down the terrace. His attention was attracted by a piece of paper which fluttered to his feet. He stopped and eyed it intently. I conceive that under similar circumstances a policeman of any Western nation, even if he had been barefooted and his toes had not, from the constant use of boots, lost their prehensile qualities, would, had he wished to possess himself of that bit of paper, have stooped down to pick it up. The Bengali policeman did nothing of the kind. He kicked off the wooden shoe from his right foot, seized the bit of paper between his two toes, brought up his foot to the level of the knee, and, without stooping, conveyed the paper from his toes to his fingers behind his back. A friend of mine, who was a very acute observer of Eastern ways, told me that on one occasion, in order to test the intelligence of an Egyptian, he asked him to indicate his left ear. The most uneducated member of an European nation, supposing he understood the difference between right and left, would certainly have seized the lobe of his left ear with his left hand. The Egyptian, however, passed his right hand over the top of his head and, with that hand, took hold of the top of his left ear.

Why, in the East, that is to say, in that portion of the real East which is as yet only slightly tainted by connexion with Europe, should the men wear flowing robes and the women trousers? Why should a Western, if he folds up a wet umbrella, always put it against the wall or in a rack with the point downwards, whereas the Eastern, with much greater reason, will always put it point upwards against the wall with the handle on the floor? Why should a Western fasten his dress with buttons and an Eastern with strings? Is it not singular that an Egyptian signalman should think that the best way of being warned when a train was about to pass was to go to sleep with his head on the rail? Yet it has happened that an Egyptian signalman has adopted this course, with the inevitable result that his head was cut off. Why does an Eastern mount his horse on the off side, whereas a European mounts on the near side? Is there any particular reason why a Christian should be summoned to prayer by the sound of a bell and a Moslem by the call of a man's voice? Again, why should an Eastern always sit cross-legged on a divan or on the floor, whereas a Western always sits on a chair? Why should a drover in the Highlands follow his flock of sheep and a herdsman in the Deccan walk in front of them? Why should a European, when he wishes to write, put the paper on which he is writing on the table before him, whereas an Eastern rather prefers to hold the paper in one hand and to write with the other? Why should a European sign his name and an Eastern prefer to use a seal? Why should the Western write from left to right and the Eastern from right to left? Why should one smoke a long pipe and the other a short one? Why should a European, if he wishes to wash his hands, always pour water into a basin first and then wash them, whereas an Oriental will prefer to have the water poured over his hands? Is it not strange that all Moslems shave their heads except one lock in the middle, whereas the only Europeans who shave their heads at all are Roman Catholic priests, and they only shave that particular portion which the Moslem leaves unshaved? Why is it that, if an Oriental wishes anybody to approach him, he will throw his hand away from his body, whereas a European will extend his arm and draw his hand towards his body? How does it come about that, if in reply to a question an Oriental shakes his head, he means an affirmative answer to be inferred, whilst a similar gesture on the part of a European implies a negative? An Oriental, if he wishes to indicate a negative by a

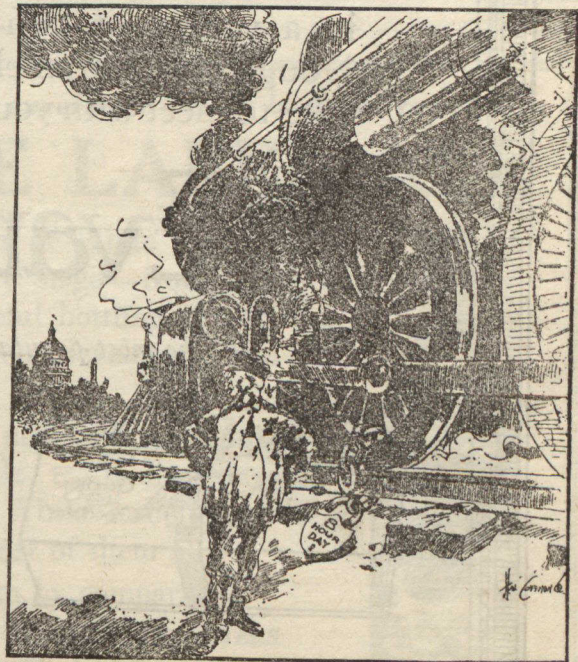
gesture, will throw up his chin.

The first impulse of a European, if he feels cold, is to cover his feet and throat; the Oriental, on the other hand, will, in the first instance, cover his ears. Is it not strange to our ideas that an Eastern will occasionally sow first and then plough his field afterwards? If two barges on the Thames quarrel, they will at times curse each other vigorously. A Nile boatman will never do this. But he will thunder across the river the most uncomplimentary expressions as regards the relatives, particularly those of the female sex, of any other boatman with whom he happens to have a difference of opinion. Why should a dead Mahomedan be wrapped up in a shroud and buried in a sitting posture, whereas Europeans are always placed in the coffin in a recumbent posture? Again, it is singular that an Oriental will amuse himself by seeing others dance, whereas a European will join in the dance himself. Moreover, Oriental dress is loose, except for infants, who are wrapped in swaddling clothes, whereas European dress is tight, except for infants, who are dressed in loose, flowing robes. Why, again, should an Oriental, if he wears a sword, which is generally curved, place it at his right side, whereas a European, whose sword will generally be straight or very nearly so, always puts it at his left side? So, also, as regards the use of metaphor, why should an Englishman say "from top to bottom," whereas a Turk will always say "from bottom to top" (*altindan ustuna kadar*)? Why should a Turk or a Persian speak of beginning his affairs "from a new head," whereas an Englishman would talk of placing them "on a new footing"?

It has very often happened to a European that, when he has imagined that he has found a common ground for discussion on some subject with an intelligent Eastern, the latter will suddenly advance some theory or make some remark which, to the amazement of the European, will reveal to him that their minds are, in reality, as the poles asunder, and that arguments which appear to carry conviction to the Western mind exercise no influence whatever on that of the Oriental. On one occasion I was discussing with an intelligent and educated Egyptian official the question of the levy of a tax on the professional classes. I pointed out that in a country where the main revenue was derived from the land it was perfectly right and just that some special taxation should be imposed on the professional classes, such as doctors, engineers, etc. But in Ismail Pasha's time, when this discussion took place, the professional tax had been allowed to become a poll tax and was levied on every one indiscriminately. I asked the Egyptian official whether he did not think it rather anomalous and unjust that a man should pay a tax for the exercise of a profession which he did not follow. The Egyptian expressed the greatest surprise that I should advance any such plea. He pointed out that the Government did not impose any veto upon a man exercising any profession in which he wished to engage, but that it would be extremely unfair on those who were engaged in professional work that those who were not similarly employed should escape from taxation merely because, although they were at liberty to exercise some profession, they failed to do so. An argument of this sort completely disconcerts the Western mind. A European cannot put himself in the position of one who will advance what to him appears such an absolutely untenable theory.



Congress: "Can't nobody sleep with bugles blowin'!"
—Sykes, in Philadelphia Evening Ledger.



Waiting to Snap the Lock.

—In N. Y. Evening Journal.