



Tug of War Team, Quebec City Police, winners of silver cup donated by Ladies of St. Bridget's Bazaar, October, 1907. In the third row, from the left, are Constables Charland, Stapleton, Wellman, Trudel and Sergeant Auclair; in the second, Constables Hunter, Laine, Power, Thibault, Pogner, E. Power; in the third, Detective Defoy, Chief Trudel, Constable Copeman (captain of the team), Deputy Walsh and Accountant Ferland.

Photograph by Livernois

## LORD CROMER ON GORDON

Further Light on the History of British Occupation

By H. LINTON ECCLES

AN event of considerable political and literary interest has been the recent publication of the Earl of Cromer's two-volume work on "Modern Egypt." The world has long been familiar with General Gordon's estimate of Lord Cromer—or Sir Evelyn Baring, as he then was—for Gordon's "Journals," although submitted to strict and judicious sub-editing before they were made public, still contained a mass of outspoken criticism.

Lord Cromer, who was of course for a score of years Pro-Consul of Egypt, is the very soul and ideal of the cautious statesman. His book is a fascinating and an admirably told narrative, but it is remarkable for its statesmanlike discretion. The most notable omissions from it are his judgments on the Fashoda and Denshawi affairs, which, we take it, are left for a future book. But "Modern Egypt" claims a big interest because of the new light which it sheds on the relations between Lord Cromer and General Gordon. Here is what Cromer has to say of Gordon's character:

"Impulsive flightiness was, in fact, the main defect of General Gordon's character, and it was one which, in my opinion, rendered him unfit to carry out a work which pre-eminently required a cool and steady head. I used to receive some twenty or thirty telegrams from General Gordon in the course of the day when he was in Khartoum, those in the evening often giving opinions which it was impossible to reconcile with others dispatched the same morning. . . . I remember that it crossed my mind that I had better not interfere, but leave General Gordon to work out his plans in his own way. It was, however, clear that, in going to Suakin, General Gordon would foredoom his mission to failure, and that he would never have made any such proposal had he been well acquainted with the state of affairs then existing in the Eastern Sudan. I had, therefore, excellent reasons for interfering, but, looking back upon events as they subsequently occurred, I regret that I did so."

This was Lord Cromer's method of dealing with the stream of telegrams that came from the General:

"I generally found a batch of them waiting for me when I began my work in the morning. My practice was to put them on one side and wait till the afternoon, by which time more had generally arrived. I used then to compare the different telegrams, to try to extract from them what it was that General Gordon really wanted, and then to

decide what could be done towards carrying out his wishes."

It would have been difficult indeed to find a more complete contrast than was presented by the characters of the two men, the sane, level-headed, almost passionless superior at Cairo and the hot-headed, impulsive man of moods serving under him at Khartoum. Lord Cromer could hardly fail to give Gordon the credit that was due for his personal bravery and his great military talents, but that the two should agree in their methods was about the last thing to be expected of them. Says Lord Cromer:

"He was extremely pugnacious. He was hot-headed, impulsive, and swayed by his emotions. It is a true saying that 'he that would govern others, first should be the master of himself.' One of the leading features of General Gordon's strange character was his total absence of self-control. He was liable to fits of ungovernable and often of most unreasonable passion. He formed rapid opinions without deliberation, and rarely held to one opinion for long. His Journal, in which his thoughts from day to day are recorded, is, even in the expurgated form in which it was published, a mass of inconsistencies. He knew nothing of English public life, or, generally, of the springs of action which move governing bodies. He appears to have been devoid of the talent, so valuable to a public servant in a distant country, of transporting himself in spirit elsewhere. His imagination, indeed, ran riot, but whenever he endeavoured to picture to himself what was passing in Cairo or London, he arrived at conclusions which were not only unworthy of himself, but grotesque, as, for instance, when he likened himself to Uriah the Hittite, and insinuated that the British Government hoped that he and his companions would be killed or taken prisoners by the Mahdi. In fact, except personal courage, great fertility in military resource, a lively though sometimes ill-directed repugnance to injustice, oppression and meanness of every description, and a considerable power of acquiring influence over those, necessarily limited in numbers, with whom he was brought in personal contact, General Gordon does not appear to have possessed any of the qualities which would have fitted him to undertake the difficult task he had in hand."

And then Lord Cromer, throwing aside for a moment his mantle of official reticence, gives us this fine summing-up of Gordon, as he intimately knew him:

"When all this has been said, how grandly the

mentary, entirely distinct from those of the Ottawa City force, already referred to, are of military stringency and include several special duties, naturally belonging to a Capital. It is required, for instance, that constables whether on duty or not shall salute the Governor-General and suite, the Premier and His Majesty's other Ministers of State, the Chief Justice and the Judges of the Supreme Court, and Exchequer Court of Canada, the Speakers of the Senate and House of Commons, the Major-General commanding the militia of Canada, the Adjutant-General, Deputy Heads of Departments, and the Commissioner and Superintendent of Police. It is no wonder that Ottawa has a reputation for being the most polite community in the Dominion, when one considers the excellent effect of such salutation of those in authority. This force, according to the enactments of 1900, is not to exceed 125 men. The constables receive for their services during the first six months \$1.50 a day and afterwards \$1.80; but, after ten years of satisfactory service, a constable is given \$2.15 a day, hardly a magnificent reward.

In all cities the constables on night duty have to keep a constant watch for the outbreak of flames. The Montreal chief points out that constables lose much time when on night duty, for they must see that all the doors of stores, in certain sections of the city are securely closed; at least an hour and a half is required in certain districts to make such inspection. It thus sometimes happens that the constable on duty notices the commencement of fire too late to give the alarm and prevent, by his notification, an extensive conflagration.

The Toronto and Winnipeg forces, the County constabulary and considerations regarding promotion and payment may be treated in a second article on the men who help the wheels of executive government to revolve.

character of the man comes out in the final scene of the Sudan tragedy. History has recorded few incidents more calculated to strike the imagination than that presented by this brave man, who, strong in the faith which sustained him, stood undismayed amidst dangers which might well have appalled the stoutest heart. Hordes of savage fanatics surged around him. Shot and shell poured into the town which he was defending against fearful odds. Starvation stared him in the face. . . . Many a man before General Gordon has laid down his life at the call of duty. Many a man, too, has striven to regard death as a glad relief from pain, sorrow, and suffering. But no soldier about to lead a forlorn hope, no Christian martyr tied to the stake or thrown to the wild beasts of Ancient Rome, ever faced death with more unconcern than General Gordon."

Lord Cromer is at one with Lord Kitchener in blaming the Gladstone Government for having sent out the Relief Expedition too late:

"I maintain that of all the mistakes committed at this period in connection with Egyptian and Sudanese affairs, the delay in sending an expedition to the relief of Khartoum was the least excusable. The House of Commons practically condemned the conduct of the Government. In a full House, the Government only escaped censure by a majority of 14. 'If,' General Gordon wrote on November 8, 'it is right to send up an expedition now, why was it not right to send it up before?' The fact that General Gordon's pathetic question admits of no satisfactory answer must for ever stand as a blot on Mr. Gladstone's political escutcheon. . . . But the situation was one of inordinate difficulty, and those who have had most experience in the conduct of political affairs, and who know how difficult it is to be right and how easy it is to make mistakes, will be least of all inclined to criticise severely the principal actors on the scene."

Though Lord Cromer does that justice to the immense difficulty of the position, he omits to state that Mr. Gladstone, all through this trying time, was absent from duty through illness. Even had he been well and at his post, how could he have foreseen that Gordon, when ordered to evacuate Khartoum, would refuse to obey that order? Gordon admitted that he disobeyed his instructions, and in so far as his doing so affected after events, culminating in the fall of Khartoum, it certainly seems that a grave injustice is done to Mr. Gladstone in blaming him.