



The Month in World Affairs

By *LOTHROP STODDARD*



The Egyptian Dilemma—The Electrification of Italy—"Green" Bulgaria—Home Rule Hits Formosa—Things Worth Watching

IN considering Old-World affairs we are apt to fix our attention upon that part of the Old World which lies nearest to us in every sense—Europe. We must not forget, however, that Europe is intimately connected with those contiguous regions of Asia and northern Africa collectively known as the East. What happens in the East profoundly affects Europe, just as what happens in Europe vitally affects the East.

The East, like Europe, is to-day in full transition. It fairly bristles from end to end with "problems" all more or less interlaced. The East is a vast whispering-gallery, and a tumult in India may reverberate in Morocco, while a voice crying in central Asia may arouse strange echoes in the Egyptian Sudan.

Despite this general interconnection, three Eastern regions to-day stand out with special importance, Turkey, Egypt, and India. Of the three, Egypt possesses in many ways the most immediate significance, for there a problem has arisen whose solution affects not only adjacent Asiatic and African lands, but the whole British Empire, and in lesser degree the whole world, including America.

The reason for this is that Egypt is the world's chief connecting-link. Geographically, it binds together Asia and Africa; historically, it is the meet-

ing-ground of three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe; while since the digging of the Suez Canal half a century ago, Australia and the Americas have appeared upon the variegated Egyptian scene.

Egypt's prosperity rests upon the River Nile and the Suez Canal. To the Nile Egypt owes her very life. Without this current of life-giving water pouring down from distant African highlands and traversing hundreds of miles of waterless country until it finally empties into the Mediterranean, there would be nothing to distinguish the Nile Valley from the vast deserts which stretch away on each hand to east and west. Thus "Egypt" really means the narrow ribbon of fertile land along the Nile's banks and its delta, where virtually the whole life of the country is concentrated. This cultivated, settled Egypt covers only about 12,000 square miles, or less than the combined areas of Massachusetts and Connecticut; whereas the Egypt of the map covers fully 350,000 square miles, or an area as large as our three Pacific coast States, with the long Mexican peninsula of Lower California thrown in for good measure.

Despite its relatively small area, settled Egypt is a land of marvelous fertility. The richness of Nile silt is proverbial, and the fields of Egypt

have for ages borne heavy crops, in many parts three a year. All sorts of crops are raised, the most famous being cotton, which is unsurpassed for quality and brings Egypt perennial wealth.

This fertile land supports a dense population of nearly 13,000,000. The mass of the Egyptian people to-day is, as in Pharaoh's time, of the old Nilotic stock. A slow, self-contained peasant folk, the Egyptian fellaheen have submitted passively to a long series of conquerors. Most of them are Mohammedans, but nearly 900,000 are Christians, known as Copts; above the masses, however, lie layer after layer of alien racial elements, both Asiatic and European, deposited by successive waves of conquest precisely as layers of silt are deposited by successive Nile floods. The Asiatic elements, mostly Arabs and Turks, ruled Egypt until the English occupation. The European elements, mainly Italians, Greeks, English, and French, form separate colonies, with extraterritorial rights. Egypt is thus a medley of races, creeds, and cultures.

The founder of modern Egypt was Mehemet Ali. This able Albanian adventurer wrested Egypt from Turkish control a century ago, and founded a dynasty which still sits upon the Egyptian throne. Mehemet Ali opened Egypt to European influences, and this process of Westernization was continued by his successors, known as "khedives." One of these, Khedive Ismail, was a reckless spendthrift, who contracted huge European loans, plunged Egypt into confusion and bankruptcy, and at last precipitated foreign intervention. In 1879 England and France established a dual control over Egyptian finances, but in 1882 a revolutionary movement broke out,

seeking to drive all Europeans from the country. France refused to take action, but England sent in an army, crushed the revolt, and began that occupation of Egypt which has lasted to this day.

England's position in Egypt was highly anomalous. In theory Egypt was a dependency of the Turkish Empire ruled by the khedival dynasty, and England made virtually no change in the outward aspect of things. The only novelty was the presence of a British "financial adviser" to the khedive, and a few thousand British troops. Actually, however, all power was in British hands, and this pleased neither the Egyptian upper classes nor France. In answer to French and other protests, England stated that her occupation of Egypt was temporary and that she would ultimately withdraw. But withdrawal grew ever more difficult, indeed, in British eyes impossible; for England now controlled the Suez Canal, which was the life-line between the two halves of the British Empire. To add to the difficulty, England presently acquired new responsibilities south of Egypt in the vast region known as the Egyptian Sudan. The Sudan, a huge territory covering more than a million square miles, inhabited by warlike Arab and negroid tribes, had been conquered by the ambitious Khedive Ismail; but a great revolt soon broke out, headed by a fanatical dervish known as "the Mahdi," and so formidable were the Mahdist hosts that but for the English they would probably have ravaged Egypt to the Mediterranean. After many years' fighting England destroyed the Mahdists and occupied the Sudan. Meanwhile she had occupied great territories still farther to the

south, until an almost solid band of British territory ran from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, broken only by German East Africa, which England acquired in the late war, thus making possible Cecil Rhodes's dream of a "Cape to Cairo Railway."

Meanwhile England was approaching Egypt across southern Asia, for, starting from the Indian frontier, she annexed Baluchistan and acquired control of southern Persia. Thus only Mesopotamia and Palestine lay between Egypt and Great Britain's Indian possessions. This missing link, like German East Africa, was acquired by the late war, and to-day a railway is being surveyed across southern Asia, and the "Cape to Cairo" scheme has broadened into "Cape-Cairo-Calcutta." Great Britain now owns or controls an uninterrupted band of territory from the southern tip of Africa to China, and Egypt has become in a double sense the "nodal point" of the British Empire—by water through the Suez Canal, by land through the projected Cape-Cairo-Calcutta railway trunk-line.

There was, however, one serious drawback: this nodal point was insecure. Great Britain's hold on Egypt was legally a temporary occupation, challenged both by France and the Egyptians themselves. France's objections ceased with the Anglo-French agreement of 1903, by which France renounced her claims on Egypt in return for England's renunciation of her claims on Morocco; but Egyptian opposition grew ever stronger with time. The material benefits of the British occupation did not reconcile the Egyptians to British rule, though the material benefits were great.

Egypt had been raised from misgovernment and bankruptcy to abounding prosperity; but nationalist feeling sullenly smoldered, and during the decade previous to the Great War burst into fierce flame, that was kept under control by the British authorities, though never put out.

Such being the state of Egyptian feeling in the years previous to 1914, the outbreak of the Great War was bound to produce intensified unrest. Although England exercised complete control, in law Egypt was still a dependency of the Turkish Empire. But when Turkey joined Great Britain's enemies, and Turkish armies were gathering to cut the Suez Canal, England took the decisive plunge, and in November, 1914, deposed Abbas Hilmi, nominated his cousin Hussein Kamel as sultan, and declared Egypt a protectorate of the British Empire.

Egyptian nationalist feeling was intense and caused some sporadic violence; but anything like formal rebellion was impossible, for masses of British and Colonial troops were promptly poured into the country, and Egypt lapsed into sullen silence.

No sooner was the war over, however, than Egyptian nationalism raised its voice once more. Quoting Allied and American pronouncements about "self-determination" and "the rights of small nations," the Egyptian nationalists demanded nothing short of independence, and attempted to lay their claims before the Versailles peace conference. In this, however, they failed. In British eyes control of Egypt had become supremely vital, and Egyptian independence unthinkable. Accordingly, British influence not only kept the Egyptians away from the peace conference, but used the

conference to strengthen and legalize Great Britain's hold on Egypt, the Treaty of Versailles formally recognizing the British protectorate over Egypt as part of the peace settlement.

Trouble that was far more serious than any the British authorities had previously faced began at once. Before the war, nationalist feeling had been confined mainly to the Egyptian upper classes. The fellaheen, who made up the bulk of the population, of course had no love for the British, who were conquerors and infidels, though they had brought justice, security, and unparalleled prosperity; but they also had no love for the Turco-Arab upper classes, who had treated them as slaves. But the war changed the situation. It bore hard on the fellaheen, for military necessity had compelled the British to conscript nearly a million Egyptians for forced labor in various parts of the Near East, while there were also wholesale requisitions of grain, fodder, and other supplies. Accordingly, the nationalists soon had behind them the active support of the hitherto passive fellaheen.

Strong in the knowledge of this new backing, the nationalists proceeded to challenge British rule by holding a plebiscite to determine the attitude of the Egyptian people on independence. The British authorities forbade the plebiscite, but the nationalists started to hold it. This defiant attitude of the nationalists was met by strong official measures. In the spring of 1919 most of the nationalist leaders were seized and deported to Malta.

Egypt's answer was an explosion. From one end of the country to the other Egypt flamed into rebellion, the danger being rendered more acute by the irruption out of the desert of swarms

of Bedouin Arabs bent on plunder. For a few days Egypt trembled on the verge of anarchy. The British Government admitted in Parliament that Egypt was in a state of insurrection.

The insurrection was soon quelled, the British authorities showing great ability and determination. However, though Egypt was again under control, the outlook was ominous. Only the presence of massed British troops enabled order to be maintained—order broken by continuous nationalist demonstrations, sometimes ending in riots, fighting, and heavy loss of life.

After a year of this sort of thing, with no signs of real improvement, the British Government sent out a commission of inquiry headed by Lord Milner to investigate thoroughly the Egyptian problem, and to see whether any constructive solution was possible. Lord Milner was a man of broad outlook and long experience in Egyptian affairs. Although the extreme nationalists would have nothing to do with the commission, Lord Milner got in touch with the more moderate leaders, and the two parties finally evolved a compromise agreement which ran about as follows: England was to withdraw her protectorate and was to declare Egypt independent. This independence was qualified to about the same extent as Cuba's or Panama's is toward the United States. Egypt was to have complete self-government, both the British garrison and British civilian officials being withdrawn. Egypt was, however, to make a perpetual treaty of alliance with Great Britain, was to make no treaties with other nations save with Great Britain's consent, and was to grant a military and naval station for the protection of the Suez Canal and of Egypt

itself in case of internal troubles or attacks by foreign enemies.

This draft agreement seemed to offer the basis of a genuine compromise between the conflicting interests of Egyptian nationalism and British imperialism. The agreement, however, did not come into effect. Both in Egypt and in England strong opposition was aroused. The extreme nationalists denounced the Egyptian negotiators as traitors and clamored for real independence. In England, on the other hand, it was widely feared that the concessions proposed threatened the safety of the empire. As a matter of fact, the British Government did not indorse the committee's report in its entirety, and Lord Milner resigned.

In its adverse attitude the British Government seems to have been influenced not merely by imperial considerations, but by foreign pressure. It is an open secret that France and Italy made urgent diplomatic representations to the British Government against the draft agreement, stating that if Egypt obtained qualified independence, they would be faced with intense agitation among their own north African subjects and might be forced to do the same.

Furthermore, several European powers were making anxious inquiries about the future status of their citizens in Egypt itself. As already stated, Europeans in Egypt enjoy a privileged position. This privileged position rests upon a series of treaties made a century or more ago between the various European powers and Turkey, when Egypt was part of the Turkish Empire. America has such a treaty with Turkey, signed in 1830. Collectively known as "the capitulations,"

these treaties grant Europeans and Americans many valuable privileges. Among other things, they are not amenable to Egyptian law, but must be tried according to a special code before their own consular courts, they are exempt from many taxes, and they thus enjoy a sort of extraterritoriality similar to that enjoyed by diplomats in Western lands. Now, the foreigners in Egypt have made good use of their opportunities and have acquired a large stake in the country, most of the business and a considerable proportion of the land being in foreign hands. But the nationalist movement is hostile to Europeans in general as well as to the British in particular. It denounces the Europeans' privileged position and seeks to abolish the capitulations. Furthermore, nationalism is here reinforced by religious fanaticism, the European being hated not merely as a foreigner, but as an infidel as well. The European colonies in Egypt are thus deeply alarmed at the prospect of anything like Egyptian independence, and their governments look to England to protect them, since England, by the protectorate, has assumed full responsibility.

Another obstacle to a compromise settlement of the Egyptian problem is the vexed question of the Sudan. The Egyptians demand that the Sudan be turned over to them. Not only do they claim it because of its former conquest by Khedive Ismail, but they also assert that it is vital to Egypt's very existence. They point out that, with Great Britain in control of the Sudan, she could divert enough of the Nile water to ruin Egypt if she so chose, and would thus possess a strangle-hold on Egypt which would render Egyptian independence a mockery. On the other

hand, the English assert that the Egyptians are wholly unfit to govern the wild tribes of the Sudan, who despise the Egyptians, and that Egyptian rule in the Sudan would probably be followed by another Mahdist rebellion, which, in the present highly inflammable condition of the East, might set all northern Africa, and perhaps the whole Moslem world, on fire. So absolute is the deadlock over the Sudan that no attempt was made to settle it in the Milner negotiations, the subject being left open for subsequent attempts.

Of course the failure of the Milner negotiations left the whole Egyptian problem once more in the air. The result was a fresh access of nationalist agitation, fresh riots, and fresh government repression, culminating in the sternest sort of martial law. At the same time Great Britain realized that martial law was no lasting solution, and negotiations were therefore resumed with the nationalists, the object being to evolve a compromise which would satisfy at least the moderate nationalists by a grant of some sort of qualified independence, while at the same time protecting British and other foreign interests. These negotiations resulted in an announcement by the British Government at the end of last February, declaring specifically that the British protectorate over Egypt is terminated and that Egypt is declared to be an independent sovereign state, subject to such reservations as will protect British imperial communications, the defense of Egypt against foreign aggression, the protection of foreign interests in Egypt, and the safeguarding of British interests in the Sudan.

This official announcement has been

widely hailed as a settlement of the Egyptian problem. A moment's reflection, however, will show that it is nothing of the kind. Taken by itself, it is merely a move in the game. Things really are just about where they were at the time of the Milner negotiations two years ago. The question is, Have those intervening two years of conflict brought the parties concerned to a more conciliatory mood, or have they not? Time alone can decide. The important thing to remember is that the Egyptian problem is of immense importance to the world at large as well as to Egypt and the British Empire.

The Electrification of Italy

Probably the greatest handicap to Italy's industrial life is lack of coal. Virtually, no good coal is found in Italy, that country's sole domestic supplies of mineral fuel being low-grade coals and lignites. This has meant heavy charges for fuel imports, especially since 1914, when Italy had to pay enormous prices for coal, and also had to pay in a depreciated currency. The drain upon Italian finance and industry was thus very severe.

All this, however, has had one good effect: it has forced Italy to utilize her latent resources of "white coal," the water-power of her innumerable mountain-streams. Italy being a mountainous country, "white coal" is nearly everywhere available, not merely from the Alps, but also from the Apennines and even from the hills of Sicily and Sardinia. Its extraction has been hindered mainly by the great expense of conduiting streams, building dams for containing-reservoirs, and installing hydro-electric stations.

The hardships of the last few years,

when Italy's railroads were in confusion and factories had to shut down for sheer lack of fuel, have convinced Italian public opinion that electrification on a vast scale is absolutely necessary. Accordingly, both the Government and private capital have busied themselves to that end. The Italian Parliament has recently voted an ambitious electrification plan for the Italian railroads, which will electrify most of the main railroad lines within the next ten years at a cost estimated at 800,000,000 lire (\$160,000,000 at pre-war exchange rates).

Railroad electrification is, however, only one phase of a far-reaching program. It is planned to run most of Italy's factories by electric power, not merely the great factories of the industrial centers, but also many small mills and workshops that, it is hoped, will spring up broadcast over the country as soon as electric power is generally available. Incidentally, this projected decentralization of industry is expected to have very beneficent social effects by checking the growth of congested cities and slums. Furthermore, electric power is expected to transform work on the farms and to increase greatly certain "agricultural industries," like creameries and cheese factories. Incidentally, the widespread use of electric power for lighting and possibly even for cooking on the farms will add notably to the attractiveness of country life.

Electrification has already attained considerable proportions in northern Italy along the line of the Alps and in some parts of the central Apennines. This process is now going on in the mountains of the south and even in Sicily and Sardinia. In these latter regions it is interesting to note that the

control of water-power has two ends in view, electrification and irrigation. Many parts of southern Italy and Sicily suffer from drought. The mountain reservoirs which are now planned will thus serve a double purpose: they will first yield their power, and will then be used over again for irrigating the thirsty plains below. In fact, the double profits which will thus be extracted make it possible to undertake the building of dams and reservoirs whose cost would otherwise be prohibitive. Italy has here profited by the experience of California, where precisely this combination has been employed with the most successful results.

"Green" Bulgaria

Bulgaria is evidently becoming more and more the leader in the "Green" movement—the movement of the organized peasantry, which has developed rapidly since the war and is to-day an important factor in European affairs. The war, which disorganized Europe's industrial life and thus injured the towns, conversely benefited the country. Last month, for instance, I called attention to the decay of the Russian cities as revealed by the recent soviet census; and this is merely the most striking example of a process which is going on all over Europe—a shifting of the balance against the town and in favor of the country.

Now the country has awakened to the fact that things are going its way, and thus we see the appearance of peasant political parties in the various European countries, these parties in turn getting in touch with one another and forming what is known as the "Green International."

This "Green" movement is strongly class-conscious and is frankly hostile to the towns. It opposes not only the old bourgeois political parties, the parties made up of the upper and middle class townsfolk, but it is even more hostile to the Red parties, like socialists and Bolsheviks, the parties of the town working classes.

In Bulgaria, as already stated, the Green movement has gone furthest and has had the greatest success. This is natural, because Bulgaria is a nation of small land-owning peasants, with few towns. Bulgaria's only real city is its capital, Sofia, and Sofia has only a trifle over a hundred thousand inhabitants. The Bulgarian Peasants' party absolutely dominates the political situation to-day, and has developed a strong leader, Mr. Stamboliski, who is Bulgaria's prime minister. A short time ago the Peasants' party held a monster meeting at which Mr. Stamboliski explained his policies. He frankly stated that the village, and not the town, was to rule Bulgaria and was to determine the character of the nation's life.

Home Rule Hits Formosa

Imperial Japan seems to be having her troubles. We have all heard of Korea's continued complaints against Japanese rule, and now another Japanese dependency utters its protest. This is Formosa, the large island off the middle Chinese coast, obtained by Japan from China as the result of their war in 1895. Formosa is a large island, with an area of about fourteen thousand square miles (equal to the combined areas of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut), with

a population of about 3,700,000. Formosa is noted as the world's source of camphor, and also for its fine grades of tea. Japanese rule has brought increased prosperity, but it has been autocratic and tactless, and the population, very few of whom are Japanese, now demand a local assembly and a considerable measure of home rule. These demands are apparently frowned upon by the Japanese Government, which has stated that it does not believe the Formosans have reached the stage of political development when a popular assembly and local self-government would be feasible.

Things Worth Watching

European politics continue to center about the Anglo-French situation described in these columns last month. The situation is complicated by an internal political crisis in Great Britain and by cabinet shifts in Italy.

All immediate prospects of peace between Greece and Turkey are apparently off, despite the best efforts of British diplomacy. More fighting in Asia Minor would have a disturbing influence throughout the Near East.

India continues profoundly troubled. The Moplah Rebellion has been quelled, but the Prince of Wales's tour has admittedly been a failure so far as evoking a general outburst of loyalty is concerned.

The dispute between Chile and Peru continues to simmer and to threaten South American harmony. In Central America the much-heralded union of its five turbulent republics, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Salvador, has blown up on account of mutual jealousies.





An American Looks at His World

Comment on the Times

By GLENN FRANK



ON DISCONTENT WITH DEMOCRACY

LAST month in these columns I suggested that democracy in America is about to enter a new phase; that we have completed the quantitative extension of democracy, and are about to undertake its qualitative development, and that the first thing we need in this adventure is a fresh and fearless examination of democracy itself.

I want now to deal further with this transition period which democracy is entering not only in America, but throughout the world. There has, perhaps, never been such wide-spread discontent with government as there is to-day. In many quarters it is said that this discontent marks the beginning of the world's disillusionment regarding democracy, and there is a large element of truth in this statement, though its dogmatism calls for a little closer analysis.

The phrase "discontent with democracy" to-day covers a medley of passions, philosophies, and programs. Much of the present discontent is a result of the reaction people feel against excessive governmental interference with their lives and interests during the war. Whether conservative or radical, the average human being resents every encroachment of government upon his personal freedom of thought and action. During the war

we were caught in a network of conscription, taxation, regulation, inspection, censorship, and espionage more inclusive and irritating than we had ever known. We endured all this excess of government during the war because we were in a state of hyperstimulation. We were dedicated to a sort of political knighthood. We were crusaders for our own democratic Utopia, and we were willing to take all the vows and endure all the restrictions involved in that dedication. With equal resignation we gave up sugar and thought for the duration of the war, but the gray dawn of the morning after was bound to come. The exhilaration of war-time was succeeded by exhaustion and boredom of the whole drab business of settling up. Drama was more or less ironed out of the world after the war, and the willingness to resign one's freedom of thought and action to government became less and less. As I have already said, much of the "discontent with democracy" can be accounted for by this emotional tiredness of the world.

There is a considerable body of men and women throughout the world who hold to the aristocratic philosophy of government. They have never paid allegiance to democracy even in its