

# What Savage Critics Say of Civilization

**H**IS just a poor, unenlightened savage," says the civilized man when he reads in his paper that the Akound of Swart, or some black monarch of Africa, has been making history again by opposing European arms or customs. Then he launches into a stream of criticism of savage and barbaric races that, to say the least, is not flattering.

There is another side to the story—the savage's opinion of his critic. On the whole he disapproves of his critic as much as the latter disapproves of him.

It is a mistake to suppose that the average barbarian who visits a big city like New York or London is overwhelmed by what he sees. As a rule, he is disgusted. He goes back to his skin tent in the desert or his hut in the forest fully convinced that his way of living is the best, and that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

One of the most acute critics of civilization who ever visited in London was a Bedouin sheikh named Nicola Eyoub Tama.

He was born and brought up in the Sahara, and the fierce, free life of the desert was bred in his bones. But as a youth he was taken to Cairo and educated at a Mohammedan college there, afterwards spending five years at the universities of Heidelberg and Oxford. He spoke Arabic, Turkish, Greek, German, French, English, Spanish and Persian fluently, and nowhere could a cleverer or more versatile man be found. Knowing civilization and barbarism thoroughly, he chose the latter and returned to his tribe to spend his life in the Sahara in preference to European cities.

At dinner in London one evening, just before he returned to Africa, he was asked: "What do you think of European civilization?"

"I would rather not say," he replied. "I am eating your salt and dwelling in your tents. It would be discourteous to criticize you."

But he was urged to speak.

"Oh, go ahead, old fellow," said his hosts. "Tell us of our faults. Don't mind being candid."

"Well, then," he began, "I came to Europe with an open mind, expecting to see much to admire. I have been bitterly disappointed. Your system of life is all wrong, in my eyes."

"How's that?" he was asked, and he answered:

"Once, according to the legends of my tribe, there was a wealthy sheikh who said: 'I will not live in a tent like my fathers. I will build me a mighty palace that all men shall see and admire.' So he spent his life gathering marble and stone with vast toil and cost, and built his palace in the middle of the desert. It was the work of his whole life, and, in order to finish it, he had to sell his slaves and his camels and waste all his treasure.

"At last it was finished, and he, a decrepit old man, said: 'Now I will dwell therein, and all men shall do me honor.' But Allah caused the sirocco to blow, and in the twinkling of an eye the man and his palace were buried forever beneath the sands of the desert.

"That is your civilization," proceeded the sheikh, after a pause. "You toil and strive and worry and struggle and lose all the joy and beauty of life dwelling in smoky cities—for what? That you may become wealthy or famous. Usually you fail. If you succeed, you find your success worth nothing. You are too old to enjoy; you have wasted all your power of enjoyment.

"Your civilization is a marvel of ingenuity, I admit, but it is also a monument of wasted effort. You do not make a machine, because it will be a wonderful piece of mechanism; you make it to do something. It is made to fulfil a purpose, and its mechanical ingenuity is merely incidental.

"But your greatest machine—civilization—is different. Its processes are wonderful, no doubt, but it serves no useful purpose. It is a colossal waste of effort and cleverness—as if I were to build a steamship in the middle of the Sahara.

"The only justification of civilization would be that it made mankind happier. It does not. So far as I can judge, the Bedouin is a far happier man than the Londoner. What can a man know of happiness when he lives in a tiny garret, toils all day in a stuffy office or a filthy workshop, and is afraid to strike a bullying foreman lest he should lose his job?

"Civilization has made you all slaves to one another, and therefore civilization is a failure. If you are not slaves to an employer, you are chained to a telephone or a telegraph wire or a stock exchange ticker.

"Yesterday I was asked to speak at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery society, called to protest against slavery in Africa! The meanest slave there is freer than your business man in London. If you want to see slavery, don't go to barbarian lands. Look around you in your own cities. All the institutions of civilization are nothing but chains and fetters.

"Do you remember the Frenchman who said: 'Il faut savior garder l'indépendance du coeur?' A civilized man can't do that. I am going back to my people. I am going

to become what you call a barbarian again, simply because I want to be free."

Much the same views were expressed by King Khama, the famous Christian chieftain of South Africa, when he visited England.

"It is very wonderful," he said. "I gaze with awe on your steamships and railways, your cities and your machines. But what is the use of them? Do they make you any happier or any better? I think not. They seem to me to give you no time to think

or to live. I think our simpler way of living is better. At all events, we are freer than you. We do not have to work and worry as you do."

The moral, social and legal features of civilization do not meet with barbarian approval, and the relations that are maintained between the sexes are regarded as ridiculous.

An English doctor named James Alfred Gray, who served for several years in Afghanistan as court surgeon to the late Ameer, had an Afghan nobleman named Amin Ullah, when discussing English customs with him one day, say:

"I don't think it is right for Englishmen to sell their wives."

"But they don't," exclaimed Dr. Gray, in surprise.

"Pardon me, my friend," said the Afghan, reproachfully, "but you know they do, and, moreover, it is published in the newspapers when they do so."

"What on earth do you mean?" asked the doctor.

"I mean this. An English woman becomes tired of her husband and prefers another to him. The man who is preferred is called the co-respondent. Straightway the three of them go before the kazi (magistrate) and after much discussion it is decided at what price the co-respondent shall buy the woman. The money is then paid to the husband, and the shameful story is told in the newspapers. Is that not true?"

This way of looking at civilized divorce gave Dr. Gray a shock. He tried to explain that it was true, but not quite the whole truth. But the Afghan thought the payment of money for alienation of affections very improper.

"What!" he cried. "Take money as the price of your wife's dishonor, and let her go to the other man! It is abominable! People of my race act differently. If a wife prefers another man, the husband kills both of them and washes his honor clean. That's the proper way."

When the Shahzada Nasrullah Khan, the late ameer's second son, visited England some years ago, King Edward—then prince of Wales—took immense pains to impress him with the wonders of English civilization. Naturally he wanted Nasrullah to go back to his father and tell him what a marvelous country England was, and how necessary it was for Afghanistan to remain friendly with it.

The prince failed utterly. Nasrullah was disgusted with the way things are managed in England. According to an Englishman, who was in Kabul when he returned, he told the ameer in open durbar:

"Behold, it is a country of fools! We can learn little from England save what to avoid. The queen and the princes have less power than the eunuchs of your harem. They do not govern the empire. Scorning the decrees of Allah, the rulers of the land are chosen by hordes of the low-born—the peasants, the pariahs, the weavers and the smiths—as if a horse should say, 'I will have this rider and no other.'"

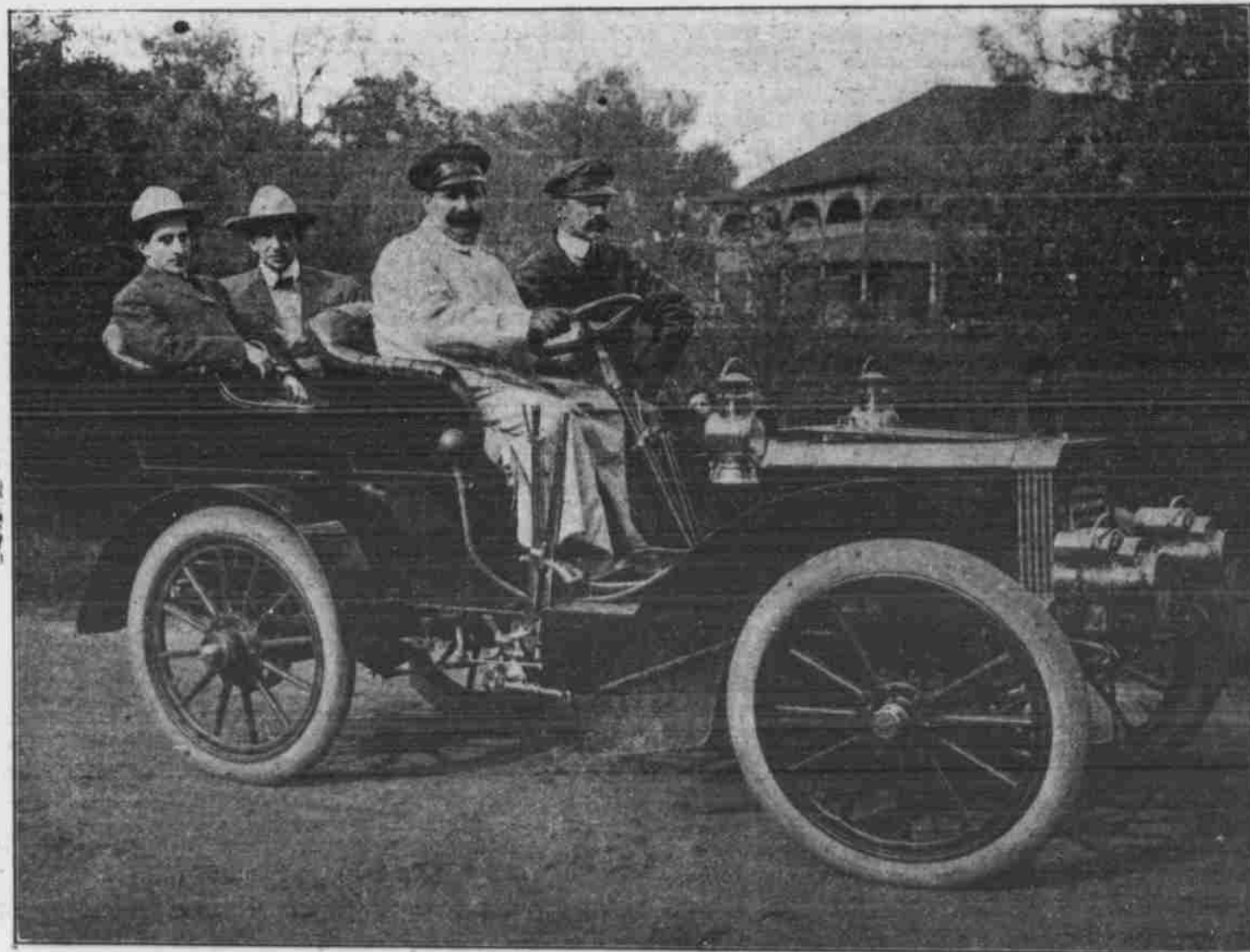
"But," said the ameer, "they have wonderful inventions—steamships, telegraphs, railways, guns."

"Aye," said Nasrullah, "but they only

(Continued on Page Fifteen.)



SOLDIERS' MONUMENT SOON TO BE UNVEILED AT TECUMSEH BY THE VETERANS OF JOHNSON COUNTY.



MR. EMIL BRANDEIS HAS MESSRS. WEBBER AND FIELD AS GUESTS FOR A SWIFT RUN IN HIS NEW AUTOMOBILE.