CHARLES GEORGE GORDON

A SKETCH

REGINALD H. BARNES
VICAR OF HEAVITREE

CHARLES E. BROWN
MAJOR R.A.

WITH FACSIMILE LETTER

"Be not thou greatly moved"

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Dedicated, by Permission,

TO HER MAJESTY

THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

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I.

REMINISCENCES.

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.

I.

Early in 1880, before the cold had left the mountains around the Lake of Geneva, I was residing with my family in the Hotel du Faucon at Lausanne. The party consisted of eight persons, including five children; and the reader may easily picture them seated near one of the sunnier windows of the *salle à manger*. The children's attention was soon attracted by a lad and an English gentleman, who occupied a corner of the room near the entrance door. They seemed to know no one in the hotel, but to be wholly wrapped up in each other. The gentleman was of the middle height, very strongly built; his face was

furrowed with deep lines; and his fine broad brow and most determined mouth and chin indicated a remarkable power of grave and practical thought. He appeared to be as gentle as he was strong, for there was a certain tenderness in the tones of his rich, unworn voice and in the glance of his delicately expressive blue eyes. By-and-by he spoke to me, and, because I was not in good health, offered to take such a walk as might suit my strength. We talked of the most serious subjects, and I was greatly impressed by the directness, simplicity, and earnestness with which he discussed them.

For some days I did not know his name, and even after I knew it, it did not occur to me that he might be the famous "Chinese Gordon," who had been for years ruling the Soudan. The manner in which I learned the truth about him was rather striking. One day, after the midday *table d'hôte*, while he was smoking a cigarette, he invited me to accompany him to his room.

I did so, and at once noticed some strange documents on the table. "You have been in Palestine and know Arabic," he said; "look at those papers." I took several of them in my hand and glanced at them, but soon laid them down, remarking that I knew very little Arabic. "They are Death Warrants," he said. I was so startled that I exclaimed, "Death Warrants! why, who are you?" "Don't you know me?" he answered; "I have been Governor-General of the Soudan, and still nominally retain the position; but nothing now remains for me but to sign these papers—that will end it."

Gordon had then just completed his forty-sixth year. To all appearance he had for ever relinquished his work in the Soudan; and he was occupied chiefly in displaying most tender care for his nephews, the children of his brother, Enderby Gordon, who had lately died, and during his illness had passed part of his time at Lausanne. One of these

children, Charles Gordon (who is now at his own work in Canada), was the lad whom we had observed as Gordon's companion in the hotel.

During the remainder of the time when we were together at Lausanne, we saw one another constantly, and our friendship soon became so close that I had some difficulty in realising that I had only lately made his acquaintance. I have never known any one who had the same faculty of winning the confidence, love, and reverence of those who happened to be brought into relation with him. He had a kind of spiritual power, which exercised a singular fascination when one talked with him about the subjects on which he most frequently and most deeply meditated.

Our conversation related chiefly to religion, and it was impossible not to be struck by the vividness of his apprehension of spiritual truth. It was evident that he was incapable of regarding the doctrines of Christianity as merely a set of propositions

to which the intellect ought to yield assent; they dominated his whole nature, and appeared to him to represent the supreme realities of existence. He was especially emphatic in the utterance of his belief as to the intimacy of the relation which ought to subsist between God and man. On this subject his modes of expression often had a close resemblance to those of the great medieval Mystics. As we have need of God, he would say, so God has need of us, and He created mankind in order that He might have a dwelling-place in the body—in the heart and conscience. All spiritual insight, everything good, great, and truly beautiful in human life he attributed directly to this "indwelling;" and hence, as he was never tired of reminding himself, the necessity for complete self-abnegation, since God can find in us a fit home only in proportion as our will makes way for the Divine Will. Gordon was a man of strict—in some respects of austere—morality; but he never spoke in a

cold or harsh tone about the lawful pleasures of the world. To such pleasures, however, he himself was absolutely indifferent. To him the only real joys seemed to be those of the spiritual life; and he had an eager desire for the time when he would possess them in their full splendour in another state of being. He told me that he could not remember a period when, thinking of these things, he had not longed for death.

The seriousness of Gordon's temper did not prevent him from being a bright and agreeable companion, especially when those with whom he talked could join him in smoking a cigarette. He had a keen sense of humour, and on every matter about which he cared to form an opinion he spoke clearly and decisively. Although he was quick to perceive the passing moods of his friends, and to give them his sympathy in their troubles, there was always a tone of self-restraint in his ordinary conversation. Perhaps his manner may be

most accurately described as that of a professed and accomplished diplomatist, using the word "diplomatist" in its best sense. His education as an engineer; his intercourse in later youth with men of many races, first in the Crimea, afterwards on the Asiatic and European confines of Russia; his study of the weight which might be attached to each of his words in China; his long periods of unbroken silence in the Soudan—all this had helped to make him, not sententious, but habitually impressive towards those whom he addressed.

It may here be noted that in discharging diplomatic duties Gordon always displayed remarkable tact and firmness. On one occasion Ismail Pasha sent him on a mission to the King of Abyssinia; and when Gordon went to have an interview with the King, he found that a chair had been placed for him to the left of the throne and at a great distance off. Before uttering a word he took the chair and

placed it near the King, on the right hand side. Said the King, "You know I may kill you for this?" "I do not fear death," answered Gordon. The interview was completely successful, and afterwards the King accompanied Gordon to the coast.

Gordon was much less at ease in talking to women than in talking to men. While conversing with women he seemed to exercise even more than his usual self-control in the expression of his thought and feeling. His sympathy, geniality, and attractiveness became, as it were, veiled; and he was "himself again" only when the restraint was removed. He was seen at his best in the society of young children, his keen interest in whom had not been dulled either by solitude or by the necessity—which had often been imposed upon him in other relations—for strictly guarded intercourse. With children he was quite at home, and they instinctively felt that in him they had a friend who understood them and whom they could trust and love.

It always seemed to me that the faults the farthest removed from Gordon's character were those which the French express by the words *petit maître*. In all his aims and methods he was simple, sincere, disinterested; and his predominant impulses sprang from an ardent love towards God and man. Of this he gave unmistakable evidence at every stage of his career, and no one who saw him from day to day could doubt that his action was governed by high motives in the small incidents of ordinary life, not less than in those great events which have secured for him a foremost place among the most illustrious of English heroes.

II.

INWARD LIFE.

II.

After Gordon's departure from Lausanne I did not meet him again until shortly before he started on his last journey to Egypt. In the interval he had revisited China, where he had written, as a parting gift, a masterly state-paper; he had acted for England at the Cape and other Colonies; and almost the whole of 1883 he had spent in Palestine. During those years we corresponded as frequently as our respective duties permitted, and while he was in the Holy Land I received from him not less than 2000 pages of manuscript in letters, some extracts from which were included in the little book lately published, his 'Reflections in Palestine in 1883.' This volume was issued at his own request, not because he had the slightest wish for fame as a writer, but because he hoped he might be able to help some of his readers to a better apprecia-

tion of the truths in which alone he himself found strength and consolation.

Gordon's visit to Palestine was due in part to a desire for rest after great exertions, but he would in any case have wished to spend some time among the scenes associated with all that he held most dear and most sacred. He found much to interest him in the study of the topography of the Holy Land, and the highest authorities on the subject have accepted some of the most important conclusions to which he was led by his inquiries. In his letters, however, there were occasional indications that the work did not quite satisfy him. "I have now a sense of very great weariness," he wrote to me from Jerusalem on the 9th of July, 1883, "*not discontent*, but a desire to put off my burden. I believe it is good to be here for myself, else I would not be here, and certainly God gives me comforting thoughts, but one's body is tired of it—and somehow it seems a selfish life, for I

see no one for weeks sometimes. All these researches are interesting. My faith —which is God's gift—prevents me saying it is a useless life. Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, would know more out here than any explorer. He would catch up all these places at once, for he is imbued with the indwelling of God; only one fault—he is hard on the Roman Catholics."

"A traveller," Gordon wrote, "should first know Holy Scripture and then visit Palestine." This condition he had himself fulfilled. Few men can ever have surpassed his wonderful heart-apprehension of the Bible. St. Paul wrote to Timothy: "from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy iii. 15). And we know the names of those through whose care St. Paul's disciple and friend had been enabled, "from a babe," to know the Old Testament. In early childhood

Gordon had obtained similar deep instruction from some who survive him, and in later life he continued to "search the Scriptures" with constantly growing ardour. Everywhere in this great volume of law, of poetry, of history, of correspondence, he listened with humble and contrite spirit, but with the full exercise of his reason, for the voice of God. He never attempted, as some Mystics have done, to read into the books of the Sacred Canon a forced interpretation, such as a calm and diligent student would not find there. Nevertheless, he often appropriated particular passages as messages from One who guided him and as definite answers to prayer. In his last letter to me, dated Khartoum, the 6th of March, 1884, he wrote :—

"Two passages, 2 Chron. xiv. 11, and 2 Chron. xx. 12 are helpful to me this day under my present difficulties."

These passages are (1), "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said,

Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God: let not mortal man prevail against Thee."

(2) "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee."

As another example, take that which was known among his more intimate friends as his watchword: "Be not moved," or "Be not thou greatly moved."

Gordon did not, however, content himself with the inspiration he derived from individual passages of the Bible. He sought to penetrate to its meaning as a whole, and to read all its parts in the light of the central truth, that "God dwells in us." To Gordon this seemed the deepest and most far-reaching of Christian doc-

trines; and he attached vast importance to the effect which, as he believed, it produced on the minds of intelligent Mahometans. "They have nothing in their religion," he wrote, "which in the least answers to this great truth." He regarded it as the master-key for unlocking the inspired writings, and while he was in Palestine he applied it in a way peculiarly his own to the earlier chapters of Genesis. It was especially prominent in his thoughts when he contrasted the Divine command to Adam and Eve: "Thou shalt not eat," with the words of the Lord Jesus, "Take, eat." What can be more tender to the ignorant, more attractive to any person who sincerely desires to obey Christ's word, than the manner in which Gordon discloses the significance of this contrast? "Man," he says, "ate in utter ignorance of the sequel, in the case of the forbidden fruit, for death was not then known; so man may eat in utter ignorance of the sequel, in the case of

sacramental bread. In the first case he ate in trust in self, distrust in God, and communion with Satan. In the second case he eats in trust in God, distrust in self, and communion with God. To the world both eatings are foolishness, yet they are the wisdom of God."

In this quotation from his 'Reflections in Palestine' we have a specimen of Gordon's practical application of the Bible, and of his abrupt style. The 'Reflections' consist of passages from his correspondence with his brother, with his sister, and with myself. The proof-sheets were sent to him at Khartoum, and he expressed full approval of the selections which had been made; but the book had not the advantage of his own revision, and in his absence it was impossible to add a single note or explanation. It is fair, therefore, to plead for him that much which now seems rugged, and hardly capable of defence, if pressed by the strictest rules of grammar or logic, as for instance the final sentence

in the above quotation, is yet quite true in the homely and direct manner in which he employed the words.

The 'Reflections in Palestine' evidently took many critics by surprise. They were not prepared for a work of so purely spiritual a character, and some of them expressed the belief that Gordon knew little of any book except his Bible. This is a serious error. He may not have read a very large number of books—the circumstances of his life made it almost impossible that he should have done so—but those which he attempted to master he mastered thoroughly, and they were by no means all of one kind. Of the devotional books which he knew almost by heart, the English Book of Common Prayer and the 'Imitation of Christ' by Thomas à Kempis (Hutching's translation), may stand as specimens. He made constant use, too, of 'Daily Prayer,' by E. N. Dumbleton, and of Dr. Samuel Clarke's 'Scripture Promises,' a work of which, before

leaving England for Khartoum, he presented a copy to each member of the Cabinet.* Among books of a different class, well known to him in 1883, and before that year, were the works of Josephus, Bishop Pearson on the Creed, and Bishop Harold Browne on the Thirty-nine Articles, of which latter treatise he wrote expressly that it was of much use to him. All of the voluminous researches in Palestine, both those of older date and the treatises written by his comrades and friends, Sir Charles Warren, Sir Charles Wilson, and Captain Conder, with the works of Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln, and some papers by the Rev. W. F. Birch of Manchester, had been exhaustively examined; and he did not fail to take with him to Palestine such recent books as Bagster's translation of the Septuagint. He had acquired a considerable amount of knowledge in Patristic Literature, but I

* He liked for his own use the edition published by T. Nelson and Sons, 1863, and marked the Promises on pp. 125 to 130.

am unable to say how far he had at any time studied these authors in the languages in which they wrote. For the great ethical writers of Pagan times he had a cordial admiration, and several of them he read frequently. The writings of Epictetus he knew intimately; and any one who looks into his well-worn copy of the 'Thoughts' of Marcus Aurelius (Long's translation) will see how diligently the book must have been studied. There was no secular writer of any period whom he held in higher esteem than Marcus Aurelius, and at different times he gave away many copies of the 'Thoughts' as presents to his friends.

Although, however, it is a mistake to say that Gordon refused "to know any book but one, and that one the Bible," it is true that to the study of the Bible he subordinated all other studies. And in the 'Reflections' were embodied some of the most characteristic results of his investigations. If in that work he passed by many modern controversies as if he had

never heard of them, perhaps he may be justified by the old Roman proverb that "the eagle does not eat flies" (*Aquila non vorat muscas*). His mind had been in contact with the minds of many men in many lands, and the Arab, the Chinaman, the Armenian, the Egyptian were equally well known to him. May we not say that he sought in his Bible and in the deep symmetry of its many books for that which might help or influence men, women, children everywhere, and not merely for doctrines corresponding to the common expressions of his English fellow Christians?

It is said in Holy Scripture that "Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father." (Genesis xxvi. 18.) These wells had been filled in by others, and in Southern Palestine a man can do no greater injury to an enemy than by the destruction of wells, the discovery and excavation of which cost much care and labour; but Isaac patiently renewed his

father's work, and freely forgave the men who had ruined it, so far as they could. There was something in Gordon's use of Holy Scripture which exactly accorded with this diligent labour, and with this patience towards others. Some wells of spiritual truth which seemed to him to have been choked he sought to clear; but he never undertook the task in the spirit of a fault-finder. His aim in the study of the inspired Word was to beckon others forward, that they might come with him. He had no desire to parade something rare and precious because discovered by himself; he wished to address all "whose hearts the Lord had opened" (Acts xvi. 14), to see with him if these things were so.

It has often been said that Gordon was a fatalist, and there is a sense in which he would not have repudiated the name. Of the death of his friend Craigie in the Crimea he wrote: "The shell burst above him, and, by what is called chance, struck him in the back, killing him at once.

"It is a delightful thing to be a fatalist, not as that word is generally employed, but to accept that, when things happen, and not before, God has for some wise reason so ordained them to happen—*all* things, not only the great things, but all the circumstances of life.

"We have nothing further to do, when the scroll of events is unrolled, than to accept them as being for the best. *Before* it is unrolled, it is another matter; and you could not say, 'I sat still and let things happen,' with this belief.

"I cannot separate the existence of a God from His pre-ordination and direction of all things, good and evil; the latter He permits, but still controls."

If this was fatalism, it was a kind of fatalism which gave Gordon both peace and energy, for he continued:—

"All I can say is that, amidst troubles and worries, no one can have peace till he thus stays upon his God. It gives a man superhuman strength. If we could take

all things as ordained and for the best, we should indeed be the conquerors of the world. Everything that happens to-day, good or evil, is settled and fixed, and it is no use fretting over it. The quiet, peaceful life of our Lord was solely due to his submission to God's will."

Gordon had not only a clear perception of the evil in the world, but strong convictions as to the source from which it originally sprang. Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil he says in the 'Reflections':—

"By eating of this tree man became as God, for God said, 'Behold man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' This would imply that though man was made in the likeness and image of God, the faculty of the knowledge of evil, though it must have been present was not developed in him before eating. Satan works in the children of disobedience, and he began to work in man, when man disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit.

"Had Eve never eaten what was forbidden, she never could have been worked in by the Spirit of disobedience."

As to the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit, he does not show very distinctly in the 'Reflections' whether he believed the ruin of man to have been complete or only partial. He held that in Eve were all mankind, and that when she ate the fruit not only her own body but those of all her children were poisoned. Of the soul, however, he says that it "was breathed into man, and was therefore divine." This leaves us in some uncertainty, as the body is generally spoken of in the Scriptures as simply the "tabernacle" of the soul. His views are more plainly set forth in a private unpublished letter, written in Jerusalem :—

"I do not care for the praise of the world. If one truly has been given the sense of God's indwelling in us, and of our *natural depravity*, it is quite impossible to relish even the slightest taste of man's

praise. For if analyzed, man's praise of another is the denial of God. For this is implied, that man can be good separate from God."

I have already quoted from the 'Reflections' a passage in which Gordon contrasts the eating of the forbidden fruit with the eating of sacramental bread. He recognised a deep significance in the use of the same outward means for the trial in which our first parents fell, and for the sacrament in which Christ gives Himself to all who will by faith receive Him. Gordon, however, exhibited extreme simplicity of faith when he came to the practical part of this doctrine. "Do not," he says, "let us fence the Tree of Life. God gives us the way to it in Christ. All that is needed is, 'I am ill; I wish I were well; *I hate and abhor myself;* I have faint hopes of deriving any benefit: but I will trust Him, and *do, in remembrance of Him, what he bade me do.*'" There is nothing superstitious about this.

Here he ceases to reason; he receives the Scripture as a little child.

His conception of the remedy for man's spiritual maladies he expressed in unmistakable terms in an unpublished letter, dated from Jafa :—

"God the Son took man's nature and is *Man*. What God the Son did is not derogatory to God the Holy Ghost to do; and we have the Scripture to say that He lives in our bodies. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?' Christ's sufferings are expiatory, our sufferings are sequences of our sins and for our discipline. Christ's sufferings are the full, perfect, sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world, once and for ever on the Cross."

In other unpublished letters he wrote :—

"Christ as man felt all the sorrow and grief as if He had really committed the sins for which He suffered the exact full punishment. Our Lord would remember each sin from the suffering it caused. It is this transcendent love which would

break our hearts in the end, were we not then to know that our offences were committed in ignorance, and that when enlightened we no longer took pleasure in them." "It is very wonderful that we should be so imbued with Himself that our breath is drawn without that realization. We subsist by virtue of His life in us; whether we are pagans or not, it is His life."

Gordon had a full and happy sense of Assurance, and he thus stated the grounds on which it was based: "You believe in your *heart* that Jesus is the Son of God, then God dwells in your body, and if you ask Him, 'O Lord! I believe that Jesus is the Son of God; show me for His sake that Thou livest in us,' He will make you feel His presence in your heart. Many believe sincerely that Jesus is the Son of God, but they are not happy, because they do not believe that which God tells them."

He did not profess to be a theologian in the ordinary sense of the term; but in its deeper meaning it may be fairly applied

to him, since it includes every one who tries to think and speak rightly about God. In the words of the Bishop of Derry (Dr. Alexander): "The General is not a professional theologian; but he is something far higher and better; and I dare not criticize one so immeasurably above me, even if I were not intellectually convinced by all his arguments. He is an example of faith in the living God." When Gordon was in Palestine, Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln wrote to me of him: "I should be greatly obliged to you, if you could express to him my deep interest in his investigations and thoughts. I am glad to know that the very interesting subject [Biblical investigation] has the benefit of an enquirer like General Gordon, who sees Divine things, and places, not with the natural organ only, but with the eye of faith. I wish I could now give the time to such Biblical studies as those which General Gordon is pursuing with so much ardour and success."

To this message General Gordon answered: "I shall probably never see your Lordship, so I may say how blessed you have been in your Commentary. You held the key that CHRIST and His members are one and indivisible; if ever spiritual men arise who will look on our redemption like this, what treasures we will have in the Scriptures."

In another letter to me, the venerable Bishop of Lincoln wrote: "Anything that can be done, ought to be done to strengthen and comfort a man who has the faults of a saint and the courage of a hero."

On the 14th May, 1884, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote from Lambeth:—

MY DEAR PREBENDARY,—

Accept my best thanks for your kindness in sending me General Gordon's 'Reflections in Palestine,' and for your most kind letter. The former is a wonderful expression of a devout soul with deep

resources, and full of faithful life towards God. The deep interest of his position, and painful eager sympathy with the man, are surely drawing out myriads of prayers for him, and intercessions, especially in the Communions which are so dear to himself. As to the latter point,—you ask about prayers for General Gordon in our public service. It is quite natural that some clergy should do what, I believe, many are now doing, viz. using the provided way for praying for all in danger or anxiety, with mention of his name personally before the Prayer for all conditions of men, or before the Litany. Those who consider him to be already in danger, or likely soon to be so, as well as those who take the darkest view of his peril, are all enabled by our very rubrics to pray for him in Church. Doubtless he is sure that hearts are thus being poured out for him.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD CANTUAR.

But to return to the position assumed by Gordon himself in his researches. Some extracts from his correspondence will show that he regarded himself rather as a student than as a teacher of Divine Truths. On the 24th of October, 1883, he wrote to me from Jafa:

"I have not heard from my family at Heavitree for two mails. I have asked my sister to send you what I wrote with no delay, and not to hurry you. I do not want you to read in dribblets, for some things I write need frequent modification. I am sending another paper this mail. Have not the words, 'my Name shall rest there,' reference to the title on the cross?"

On the 27th of the same month he wrote: "Thanks for your letter, just received. I have sent many papers to you. They are crude, but they give me much pleasure to write them. I am all right, thank God. I do not know when I come home. I shall not stay long in England.

I go first to Brussels. I am glad to hear of your lambs, dear little souls, but they have a kind shepherd. Good-bye. In the papers you read my thoughts, nothing more. I am not bound to those views, so when I say this is this and that is that, I do it only because I want to join one thought to another."

On the 20th of November, 1883, he wrote again from Jafa: "I am glad you are going to Sir Samuel Baker's; he, for eight or ten years, was constantly in my prayers. *Do not prevent my writing to you* [in the original underlined], for it is a pleasure to do so—what is untrue *reject*, what you accept, *tell me*."

On the 6th of December, 1883, he wrote from Jerusalem: "I hope to leave Jafa on the 15th instant. I assure you your kind letters refresh me. One word about fasting: I think after the spirit it is most beneficial, but I do not practise it. D.V. I will do so. D.V. I will give you three days while in England. I have put

Harding's name down on the list.* I hope ere this you will get all the papers. I have been in the Abyss all November; it is a bad month with me always. Kindest regards to you all. Mrs. Barnes will give me £1,000,000,000,000,000, a thousand million millions, if she would pray I may be emptied of self. Good-bye."

On the 16th of December, 1883, he wrote from Mt. Carmel: "I left Jafa on the 12th in a sailing vessel for Port Said. We got just south of Gaza, and then got into a storm, which drove us north, and after two nights and days of cold, wet and misery, put in here, where I found a steamer going to Marseilles, which I shall, D.V., take. During the voyage I realized that the praise of the Lord is quite independent of the sorrow of body, which was a gain. Baker liked your visit."

On the 2nd of January, 1884, he wrote from Brussels: "I was with you that night

* Mr. Harding is the clergyman in charge of one of the Church Missionary stations on the Lower Congo.

1883–1884, hoping for you to have much closer union with the Lord, who rules all things from His throne on the Rock." To Gordon our incarnate Lord seemed ever present, ordering and controlling all things by His good Providence, and as though His unseen Throne on high had still its relation to the Rock on the site of Solomon's Temple. His next words are: "I yearn to talk to you of these great truths. Do not egg on ambition in me, —try and drown it. Our Lord works with flies (Exodus viii. 21). He has no need of man,—one of the hardest things to believe is our own utter insignificance, and any who egg on our self-conceit are enemies of His, and deny His rule. D.V., I will come and see you all. I hope to see Bishop Temple when I come down, especially if he will talk about those things. Kindest regards to you all and to Miss Freeman. I am glad to say that through the model of the Rock given in high places [*i.e.* to persons of high rank], oppor-

tunity is given to speak of the Indwelling of God in man. The union with our God in Christ is our Force,—and only Force or power, thence self must die; and we must never indulge the thought of one's utility. It is only His utility in us. I try to keep my mind as if it were situated at the foot of His Throne. We can keep a continual telegraphic communion with Him; that is our strength. The rush of angelic Hosts to that centre must be immensely great, for He intercedes and rules as man in a definite place,—and there is an ancient belief, from the history of Abraham, that each act needs one angel; that an angel can only do one thing at the time; and with us any thought, or desire for things to be otherwise (*when they have happened*), is a harp out of tune with the Heavenly hosts. Such desires imply that Divine Wisdom does not rule. Thus for Egypt He is working out His wonderful embroidery of events; those events are nothing; but the actions in men's hearts

are everything. That which cometh forth out of a man, that defileth the man. Alexander, Titus, the Government, &c., what signifies what they did, what they thought; their motives, these are eternal!"

These extracts show how Gordon quieted all earthly anxiety by "making every request known unto God." In his endeavours after the Christian life he looked far beyond that which has become in England a usual but dangerous limit. He never let himself rest short of the hope of complete union with Christ. He did not suppose that all that is required for a man's salvation is a conviction that he is unable to save himself, and an assured consciousness that he has been saved by Christ. No doubt this is a great part of saving truth. All who acknowledge it believe in the Sovereignty of God the Father; the Righteousness of Christ; the satisfaction made by Him for sin; and the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. But these statements do not form the whole of

Christianity,—they must not be allowed to displace all other truths. Gordon desired progress, and found our sanctification through union with God in CHRIST. Hence he approached and understood the Sacraments as a part of that which has been ordained from the first, even before the world began. He did not, indeed, regard Holy Baptism, or Holy Communion, as channels within which God's Free Grace can be restrained; but he ardently proclaimed their value as vital elements of the economy of faith. The priesthood of every Christian man, woman, and child, was equally present to him with the ministry of holy orders; and in one of his letters he spoke of the members of every congregation as being marked before angelic hosts by the living symbol of the Holy GHOST'S indwelling, the flame over each head and heart burning more or less brightly.

The depth and fervour of Gordon's religious convictions are brought out with

extraordinary distinctness in a passage quoted by Mr. William Hurrell Mallock in the 'Fortnightly Review' for July 1, 1884: "I like the following sort of prayer: Thou hast moulded me out of dust, every fibre; therefore thou knowest every fibre. Thou gavest me Thy own life. Thou didst mould me in Thine exact Image and Likeness (for none but Thou couldest make me) by Thyself. Thou gavest me free will to be altogether like Thyself. I have abased and defiled Thy sacred image. Though I was Thy chief work, yet so low have I debased Thy image, that all creatures turn with horror from me, and I am a horror to myself. Though I had Thy Life in me, though by Thy Life I exist; though Thou couldest have made myriads with no trouble, yet didst Thou so love *me*, that Thou camest in my form, and did so suffer every conceivable injury that I could commit against Thee. Yet I hindered Thee by every possible cruelty and contempt. Thou didst set Thy face as a

flint, and bore the imputation and the punishment of every sin I ever committed —sins which, even in my fellow-creatures, I abhor and hate. Thou wast so pure as to cause angels to veil their faces before Thee. Yet Thou bore the guilt as entirely Thine —as if Thou hadst done those sins. Surely now Thou hast routed Thy enemies, Thou wilt not permit them to trample and scoff at Thee. Remember Thy sufferings, for they were beyond conception. Are those sufferings to go for naught, as they do, if Thou permit these unconquered enemies to prevail against me, Thy own flesh and bone? Thy member?"

One other quotation may be given to indicate more fully Gordon's estimate of the present life and his conception of the nature of the Christian's union with Christ: "The world is a vast prison-house under hard keepers. We are in cells, solitary and lonely, looking for a release. By the waters of earthly joy and plenty to this world's inhabitants, to our

flesh; but by the waters of lively affliction to our souls, we sit down and weep, when we remember our home, from which death, like a narrow stream, divides us. We hang our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof; for they that oppress require of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of home. How shall we sing the song of the Lamb in a strange land; in the, to us, waste, howling wilderness, in the land of strangers? Oh! for that home, where the wicked will cease from troubling, and the weary have rest; where the good fight will have been fought, the dusty labour finished, and the crown of life given; when our eyes will behold the only One that ever knew our sorrows and trials, and has borne with us in them all, soothing and comforting our weary souls. No new Friend to be made then, but an old Friend! Are you weary? So was He. Are you sad? So was He. Are you despised and laughed at? So was He. Is your love repelled, and does the world not care for you?

Neither did it for Him. He has graciously taken a lower place than any of His people. Unutterably weary, sad and lonely was He on this earth. A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, strong crying and tears. And shall we repine at our trials, which are but for a moment? We are nearing home day by day. No dark river, but divided waters are before us, and they let the world take its portion. Dust it is, and dust we will leave it. 'I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, happy are the dead that die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours',—rest from their troubles,—rest from works of weariness, from sorrow, from tears, from hunger and thirst, and sad sights of poor despairing bodies, and sighing hearts, who find no peace in their prisons,—from wars, and strifes and words and judgments. It is a long weary journey, but we are well on the way of it. The yearly milestones quickly slip by; and, as our days, so will our

strength be. Perhaps before another milestone is reached the wayfarer may be in that glorious Home, by the side of the River of life, where there is no more care, or sorrow, or crying, and rest for ever with that kind and well-known Friend.

"The sand is flowing out of the glass, day and night, night and day; shake it not. You have a work here, to suffer even as he suffered."

III.

OUTWARD LIFE.

III.

GORDON was a man of such perfect simplicity of nature that he would have been well content to pass his life in the discharge of common and humble duties, but he did not shrink from the great tasks which were actually imposed upon him. Nor did he ever falter in his loyalty to his governing principles. From the beginning to the end of his career his inward and his outward life were in absolute accord.

Gordon's first experience of war was in the Crimea, whither he went as an Engineer officer when he was about twenty. An incident which happened before Sebastopol may suffice to indicate his spirit at this early age. Some soldiers in a trench, who were not under Gordon's command, had suffered so severely that not even a non-commissioned officer survived to command them. Gordon, seeing the danger of the men, sprang in among them, armed only

with a stick—which may have suggested the use of the "wand of victory" at a later time in China. He at once raised his head above the earthworks, thus freely exposing himself to the fire of the enemy; and he did not quit the trench until he had enabled the men to understand exactly what they were to do.

The command in China he would never have thought of soliciting. Owing to the death of Ward, the dismissal of Burgevine, and the subsequent defeat under the English Captain Holland, the Chinese army happened to be urgently in want of a leader. The Chinese Prime Minister applied to the English Government, and Gordon was selected by General Stanley, who knew him well.

This difficult position he accepted, as he himself wrote at the time, simply because he hoped that it might be in his power to save China from the pillage, fire, and famine with which it was threatened, and to open the country to civilisation. His

magnificent energy and resource in the fulfilment of his mission soon made his name famous. The "ever-victorious army" was composed of only some five or six regiments, armed with smooth-bore muskets, and six batteries of artillery. The officers were chiefly American, French, and German adventurers, who, though brave and sharp, were extremely quarrelsome, and so much given to drink that, out of some one hundred and forty officers, eleven died of *delirium tremens*. This motley crew was thoroughly drilled and provided with transport by Gordon. They frequently mutinied, it is true, but these were opportunities for the display of the determination and decision of their commander. Mr. Hake, Gordon's biographer, mentions two such occasions. Once when the artillery refused to "fall in," and threatened to shoot their officers, Gordon called the non-commissioned officers together and asked them to give up the name of the writer of the proclamation of the mutiny. On his

request being refused, he told them with quiet determination that one in every five would be shot—an announcement which was received with groans. Gordon dragged out of the ranks, with his own hand, the man who was making the greatest disturbance, and had him shot by some infantry, who were standing by. This brought the men to their senses—the files fell in, and the writer's name was given up. He happened to be the man who had been shot.

Again, at Quinsan (Hake, p. 232): "The artillery refused to march from the parade-ground to the boats, which were about fifty yards off, and on which their baggage had been already stowed. Gordon arriving at this juncture, unarmed, and as usual exceedingly quiet and cool and undemonstrative, ordered every man who had refused to embark to step to the front. One only advanced: Gordon presented a pistol to his head and ordered him embark, which he did, and the rest followed him. It

was said by the officers that the success in this instance was solely due to the awe and respect in which General Gordon was held by the men; and that such was the spirit of the troops at the time (who were much demoralised by the excessive heat of the weather, the ravages of cholera and their consequent inaction), that, had any other but he attempted what he did, the company would have broken into open mutiny, shot their officers and committed the wildest exesses. In less than a week the spirit of the troops was as excellent as before."

Gordon's influence was of course mainly due, as Mr. Hake says, first, to his military genius, and second, to his moral qualities, which were such as to cause all brought in contact with him to have unbounded faith in his capacity.

It is well known that in battle Gordon was always foremost, and never armed, except with a cane, which his men called the "wand of victory." We are told that

the officers of his force would sometimes hold back. "Gordon, in his mild way, would take one or other of these by the arm and lead them into the thick of the fire. When he was once wounded in battle, and his men wished to carry him out of it, he would not allow it, but went on leading them till he fainted from loss of blood."

In return for his splendid services to China, Gordon would accept only the distinctions of the "Yellow Jacket" and the "Peacock's Feather," which correspond to our own Orders of the Garter and the Bath. Of these rewards he wrote to his mother: "I do not care twopence about these things, but know that you and my father like them." The Chinese Government twice offered him a fortune. On the first occasion 10,000 taels were actually brought into his room, but he drove out the bearers of the treasure and would not even look at it. On the second occasion the sum was still larger, but this also he

declined, and afterwards he wrote home :— "I do not want anything, either money or honours, from either the Chinese Government or our own. As for the honours, I do not value them at all. I know that I am doing a great deal of good, and, liking my profession, do not mind going on with my work." "Do not think I am ill-tempered, but I do not care one jot about my promotion, or what people may say. I know I shall leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upwards of eighty to one hundred thousand lives have been spared."

Mr. Hake says that Gordon not only refused two fortunes, but spent his pay of £1200 a year in comforts for his army and in the relief of the victims of the insurgent troops, and that for these purposes he even taxed his private means. Who can wonder at the vast influence exerted on the Chinese by one who displayed so great a spirit ?

It would be hard to find a counterpart to Gordon among European soldiers who have commanded native armies in the East. Clive was a man of unsurpassed energy and courage ; he never lost control over himself in the presence of danger ; and he exhibited high genius in organising armies out of mere rabbles. His influence over Oriental races was extraordinary, and has never perhaps been excelled. But, unlike Gordon, Clive did not scruple to promote his interests by falsehood and hypocrisy ; and instead of refusing two fortunes, he accepted between two and three hundred thousand pounds for his services, and after his return to England lived in the greatest luxury and splendour.

When Gordon came home, he refused to be treated as a hero, and earnestly requested that no record of his deeds should be published. He even went so far as to demand back his Journal of the Taiping War, which a Minister of State had borrowed and sent to the printers.

So successful (as in other operations) was Gordon in seeking to be forgotten that he very soon ceased to be even talked about.

His quiet life at Gravesend, as an Engineer officer, was not, perhaps, less remarkable than his career in China, although in a very different way. There he devoted himself to the service of the poor. "His house," says Mr. Hake, "was school, and hospital, and almshouse in turn. The troubles of all interested him alike. The poor, the sick, the unfortunate were ever welcome, and never did supplicant knock vainly at his door. Many children he rescued from the gutter, cleansed, clothed, and fed them, and for their benefit established evening classes, over which he himself presided. What a living likeness this seems to be of the life of the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, during his short residence on this earth! What sympathy and even love for his poorer brethren! How the Light—the true Light—shines! What a 'single eye!'

A lover of God, a despiser of Mammon. In this he outshines Peter the Hermit, Savonarola, and Havelock."

In 1876, Gordon was again brought prominently before the world, as Governor-General of the Soudan. This vast region was entirely in the hands of slave-dealers, with Zebehr at their head. Having formed military posts, they were able to monopolise the trade in ivory, and, while kidnapping human beings, to depopulate and turn into deserts great districts which had formerly been flourishing. The Khedive Ismail, rather from jealousy than from humane motives, requested Gordon to crush Zebehr and his vile traffic. Gordon accepted the appointment, and in doing so displayed his usual generosity, for he was offered a salary of £10,000 a year but declined to take more than £2000 a year, that being the amount he had for some time been receiving from the British Government as Commissioner at Galatz. The reason given by him for not taking

the larger sum was that he knew it would be "blood-money wrung from the wretches under his rule." Afterwards he cut down his pay one-half, to save the revenue to that extent; and ultimately he left the Soudan, as he had left China, no richer than when he entered it. "I am like Moses," he wrote, "who despised the riches of Egypt. We have a King mightier than these, and more enduring riches and power in Him than we can have in this world."

Aided by only one European, the gallant Italian Gessi, Gordon overcame what seemed to be almost insurmountable difficulties in the Soudan. On the eve of resigning his Governor-Generalship he wrote: "I do not profess to have been a great ruler or a great financier; but I can say this, I have cut off the slave-dealers in their strongholds, and I made the people love me." And his success was not surprising to those who knew on what principles he carried on his work. "The

main point," he wrote, "is to be just and straightforward, to fear no one, or no one's sayings; to avoid all tergiversation or twisting, even if you lose by it, and to be hard on all if they do not obey you. All this is not easy to do, but it must be my aim to accomplish it."

By his courage, resolute will, and humanity, Gordon gained as strong a hold over the imagination and feelings of the Soudanese as he had gained over those of the Chinese. A remarkable proof of this was afforded by the results of his now famous ride to Dara, which Suleiman (Zebehr's son) was on the point of attacking. The rebel camp consisted of some 3000 trained warriors, similar to those who fought so furiously at Teb and Tamanib against the English under General Graham. Gordon rode into this nest of slave-dealers with only a very small escort of men, who were so utterly worthless as troops that he called them "sheep" soldiers. He sent for Suleiman, told him plainly that he knew

what he was about, and warned him that if he did not submit he and his tribes would be disarmed and broken up. Strange to say, Suleiman, who could easily have captured Gordon, submitted unconditionally. "The people," wrote Gordon, "were paralyzed when they saw a single, dirty, red-faced man on a camel ride into their camp."

He was equally fearless when, with only ten men, he entered Walad-el-Michael's camp of 7000 armed warriors and was made a prisoner. The following letter explains how he came to expose himself to peril on this occasion :—

"I do try and think, and try to put in practice, that God is the Supreme Power in the world, and that He is Almighty; and though 'use your judgment' people may say, You tempt your God in putting yourself in positions like my present one, yet I do not care. I do *not* do it to *tempt* Him. I do it because I wish to trust in His promises, and I feel sure,

however trying it may be (and it is trying to me in a great degree), that I gain in strength and faith by it. If He wills me to fail, so be it."

When marching in Darfour on Fasher, with a body-guard consisting only of subdued enemies, whom he had enlisted, he prayed that the Chief whom he was about to meet might be influenced by God. "Something," he wrote, "seems already to have passed between us, when I meet a Chief (for whom I have prayed) for the first time. On this I base my hopes of a triumphant entry into Fasher. I have really no troops with me, but I have the *Shekinah*, and I do like trusting to *Him* and not to *men*. Remember, unless He gave me confidence and encouraged me to trust Him, I could not have it; and so I have the earnest of success in this confidence."

He was once defied by some 6000 Turks and Bashi-Bazouks, whom he had employed as his frontier-guards, but who would not

carry out his orders to stop caravans of slaves. He resolved to disband them, and this was how he commented on his determination : "Let me ask who that hath not the Almighty with him could do that? I have the Almighty with me, and I will do it. Consider the effect of harsh measures among an essentially *Mussulman* population, carried out brusquely by a *Nazarene* ; measures which touch the pocket of every one."

Hard as Gordon could be on occasions which required him to be so, as when he came across a slave-dealer carrying on his nefarious trade, his soul revolted at the sight of misery, and he was at times moved to tears by the sufferings of even his enemies. His hand on these occasions acted in unison with his heart. He could not bear to see wretchedness without if possible trying to alleviate it. Mr. Hake describes how Gordon, whilst travelling in the Soudan, used so freely to distribute grain to the hungry and give employment

to the needy, that the poor negroes flocked about him in great numbers. Here we find him bringing, as he wrote to his sister, "a poor old bag of bones" into his camp and trying to restore life by feeding her up. To another wretched woman, who is struggling along the road and is such a "wisp of bones that the wind threatens to overthrow her," he sends some doora. When he finds a baby in the grass, he does not pass it by, or even direct that the infant shall be looked after by others, but he himself pours some brandy down her throat, carries her in his arms to a hut and has the mud washed out of her eyes. The dullest natures were touched by the spectacle of this inexhaustible pity, and it was not strange that before he left the Soudan he could write, "I have made the people love me."

He once wrote from the Soudan: "I dare say some of my letters have been *boastful;* but I know that my conscience has remonstrated whenever I have so written. Some

of my letters have been written by one nature; others by another nature, and so it will be to the end." No one else would have thought of accusing him of boastfulness. His most astonishing achievements he recorded as if honour were not in any way due to himself. And the secret of his modesty is to be found in his own words :—

"How often do the Scriptures claim for Him *all* honour, power and might, and yet all of us claim honour from our fellow men." "As Solomon asked, I asked wisdom to govern this great people, and He not only will give me it, but all else besides . . . . . I feel my own weakness, and look to Him."

In this constant and devout reference to an unseen world Gordon was, perhaps, more like Cromwell than any other great figure in our history. Nor did the resemblance between them end here. They had the same vigour, the same control over a naturally fiery and masterful temper, the same hatred of pretence, the same un-

flinching determination, when the path of duty seemed clear, in marching straight to their goal. And both were equally remarkable for their power of fascinating and dominating other minds.

IV.

KHARTOUM.

IV.

When Gordon left the Soudan, the old system of oppression, by means of Circassians, Turks, and Bashi-Bazouks, was restored, and all the results of his labour seemed about to be swept away. He had warned the Khedive that, if this were done, Egypt would soon find herself in a position of extreme difficulty. As he afterwards said to Mr. Stead, "I had taught the natives that they had a right to exist. I had taught them something of the meaning of liberty and justice, and accustomed them to a higher ideal of government than that with which they had previously been acquainted." He believed, therefore, that the Soudanese would not again tamely submit to tyranny, and events proved that he was right. Under the Mahdi, whose religious claims Gordon believed to have been in the first instance merely a mask for political de-

signs, a number of tribes revolted against Egyptian rule; and they had the enthusiastic support of the slave-dealers, whose traffic Gordon had so earnestly striven to destroy at its source.

The attention of British Ministers being absorbed by their troubles in Egypt Proper, they gave little heed to what was going on in the Soudan; and about six months after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir the Egyptian Government were allowed to dispatch a force thither under Hicks Pasha, a retired officer of the Bombay army. Egypt being unable or unwilling to send the large reinforcements which Hicks Pasha frequently and urgently demanded, his troops were annihilated by the Mahdi in November, 1883. After this the Mahdi's power rapidly increased, and Sinkat, Trinkitat, Tokar, and Souakim were besieged by the "rebels."

Meanwhile, Gordon returned from Palestine, having been invited by the King of the Belgians to succeed Mr. Stanley in

the government of the Upper Congo in its equatorial regions. At Brussels he made some arrangements with the Belgian King as to his mission, and early in January, 1884, he arrived in England. He found time to spend a night at Heavitree Vicarage, and on the morning of Friday, the 11th of January, he received Holy Communion in the parish church. This, so far as I can trace his course, was, with one exception, his last communion. On the same morning he visited Bishop Temple, with whom, as we have seen from a letter already quoted, he had wished to "talk about those things"—the only things which seemed to him to be of really vital interest and importance.

Later in the day he went on to Sandford Orleigh, Sir Samuel Baker's house; and to those who accompanied him it was pleasant to see the meeting between the two ex-governors of the Soudan. While we were driving from Newton Abbot Station to Sandford Orleigh, Sir Samuel

Baker pressed on Gordon the expediency of his again going to the Soudan as Governor-General, if Her Majesty's Government should require it. Gordon was silent, but his eyes flashed, and an eager expression passed over his face as he looked at his host. Late at night, when we had retired, he came to my room, and said in a soft voice, "You saw me to-day?" "You mean in the carriage?" "Yes; you saw *me*—that was *myself*—the self I want to get rid of."

The possibility of his going to the Soudan was really being talked of, and on the 12th of January a telegram from Lord Wolseley, asking him to go to London, was delivered at my house. This telegram was forwarded to Gordon at Southampton after he left Sandford Orleigh, and on the 15th he had an interview with Lord Wolseley. Their conversation led to no definite result, and next day Gordon went to Brussels. On the forenoon of the 17th Lord Wolseley again summoned him

by telegraph to London; and Gordon spoke of the matter to the King of the Belgians, who was greatly disappointed at the prospect of even a temporary loss of his services. Gordon started from Brussels in the evening, and early next morning (the 18th) he was at Lord Wolseley's office. Later in the day he saw Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, Lord Northbrook, and Sir Charles Dilke; and after a brief consultation it was decided that he should proceed to the Soudan as the representative of the British Government, but in no way responsible to the Khedive. His mission was to superintend the evacuation of the Soudan. He was to withdraw the Egyptian garrisons, the civil officials, and as many of the inhabitants as might wish to be taken away.*

Having spent much time in seeking for Colonel Stewart, who was to go with him, Gordon started for Khartoum the same evening at eight o'clock. He was accom-

* See Appendix, B.

panied to the station by H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge and by Lord Wolseley. Lord Wolseley, it may be mentioned, was Gordon's comrade at the Crimea, and he declared some time ago that Gordon was one of the only two heroes whom he had ever personally known; the other being Lee of the Southern army.

Gordon realised distinctly, as he alone was in a position to do, all the perils which might attend the fulfilment of the mission undertaken on this memorable day. Yet never, perhaps, had he experienced a deeper feeling of inward serenity. In the evening I received from him the following telegram, dispatched from the War Office at 5 P.M.: "I go to the Soudan to-night. I came from Brussels this morning. If he* goes with me, all must be well." To those who read Gordon's character aright, the whole story of his life will seem to be written in these simple words.

* The word "He" has no capital letter in the telegram, but no one who knew Gordon could doubt what was meant.

At Cairo Gordon's functions were greatly extended. He accepted from the Khedive the office of Governor-General of the Soudan, and in the firman conferring on him this appointment he was instructed not only to effect the evacuation of the Soudan, but to "take the necessary steps for establishing an organised government in the different provinces of the Soudan, for the maintenance of order and the cessation of all disasters and incitement to revolt." At that time it appeared to Gordon that the best course would be to restore the country to descendants of the petty Sultans who had existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and to try to form a confederation of the new rulers. In this view the Egyptian Government concurred; and he received full discretionary power to retain the troops until the completion of such arrangements as would enable the evacuation to be accomplished "with the least possible risk to life and property."

In Gordon's camel-ride across the desert he may be said to have been accompanied in imagination by the whole civilised world. Everywhere his heroic devotion was spoken of with glowing admiration. It seemed like a gleam of poetry in the prose of the nineteenth century.

On the 19th of February I received from him the following note, written on a post-card on the 1st :—

"Arrived borders of Desert, am quite well. Hosts with me through your kind prayers. I do not believe in advance of Mahdi, who is nephew to my old guide in Darfour, who was a very good fellow. The little letter your children gave me is now before me. I shall have no eating [Holy Communion] in Soudan. The Roman Catholic priests have all left and are at Assouan. Several will want copies of the book. It must be all on the point 'GOD in you.' I see 28th January Psalm is 'Remember David and all his trouble,' —how he sware he would find habitations

[tabernacles] for the Mighty GOD, who is houseless if not in our hearts. Kindest regards to you all, and to Mr. Maclelland, to the Bishop and Mrs. Temple. I am very hopeful, for men's hearts are in His hand.—C. G. GORDON."

From Abou Hamed he wrote to me on the 8th of February :—

"Thanks to all your kind prayers, we arrived safely here yesterday. People are quite quiet, and all seems hopeful. Evidently the defeat of Hicks has been much less thought of here than at Cairo, and now it seems as if it would be more difficult to get the Egyptian element out of Soudan than I expected, for they will not go. They think that things will settle down, and wish to stay. I hope (D.V.) that in a month the country will be quiet and the roads open. The cold was great in desert at night, and heat ditto by day. It is a terrible desert [between Korosko and Abou Hamed], worse than any in the Soudan. . . . . I am glad to have come,

for somehow I think GOD will bless my mission, aided as I am by so many prayers. His glory, the people's welfare, my humiliation (*i.e.* an increased sense of His indwelling in me, which is the sequence of a humble heart, to be *nothing* in this world, the dust of His feet, for who has caused Him greater pain, greater shame than myself, who had so much light ?)

"I saw *two pleasant things* at Cairo, Baring's and Wood's chicks, and I heard one pleasant thing—Mrs. Amos wanted me to see her lambs. Good-bye, my dear Mr. Barnes. . . . . P.S. We are now on Nile, the river of Egypt, the strength of the Flesh, in which the Law was nearly destroyed in Moses. It is a mighty river with its Leviathan the crocodile."

On the 18th of February he arrived at Khartoum. He was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and the city was illuminated in his honour. "I come," he

said, "without soldiers, but with God on my side, to redress the evils of the Soudan. I will not fight with any weapons but justice. There shall be no more Bashi-Bazouks. I will hold the balance level." He then held a levée, at which the poorest might attend and pour out their grievances. The people appeared in their thousands to kiss his feet, styling him "The Sultan of the Soudan." With the aid of Colonel Stewart, he inquired into their grievances, remitted public debts, publicly burnt instruments of torture, and delivered prisoners of all ages, old men and boys, who had been unjustly imprisoned for years, many of them without even the form of a trial. "Backsheesh," without which it had been impossible for suppliants to obtain a hearing from their superiors, was abolished, and in several places he set up boxes into which petitions might be dropped. At the same time he issued a proclamation declaring the independence of the Soudan, granting an amnesty, and repealing the

laws against slavery. "Henceforth none shall interfere with your property; whosoever has slaves shall have full right to them." "Such is the influence of one man," telegraphed the Khartoum correspondent of the *Times*, "that there are no longer any fears for the garrison or people of Khartoum."

Gordon at once proceeded to send down sick men, women, and children to Egypt; but it was impossible for him to remove the garrisons and civil officials until he had taken steps for the establishment of a stable government. He was of opinion that only about one-third of the population were favourable to the Mahdi. If, however, the whole machinery of administration had been suddenly withdrawn, the remaining two-thirds would have had no alternative but to recognise the pretensions of the False Prophet, whose supremacy would at least have been better than anarchy. Gordon's proposal was that Zebehr should be made ruler of Khartoum; and there

can be little doubt that if this plan had been adopted a tolerable settlement would have been rendered possible. Whatever may have been Zebehr's crimes as a slave-dealer, he is a man of ability and energy; and, as Gordon urged again and again, power might have been granted to him on terms that would have provided for some time an adequate guarantee for his good behaviour. But the British Government peremptorily refused to sanction Zebehr's appointment; and Gordon knew of no other native of the Soudan who was competent to gain the allegiance of those who feared or disliked the Mahdi.

When Gordon became convinced that Zebehr would not be sent to Khartoum, he asked for the dispatch of troops both from Cairo and from the Red Sea; and, after General Graham's victories in the Eastern Soudan, it was the opinion of the highest military authorities that the opening of the route between Souakim and Berber was not impracticable. Gordon

felt so confident that he would receive the aid he had declared to be necessary that he "ordered messengers to be sent along the road from Berber to ascertain whether any English force was advancing." But he was again to be cruelly disappointed. The Government procrastinated, and finally decided that his request should be refused.

The inevitable consequence was that the friendly and the neutral tribes began to lose confidence in Gordon's professions. Knowing that the connection between the Soudan and Egypt was to be severed, and perceiving no sign that a new administrative system was to be substituted for the old, they naturally reflected that it might be prudent to be on good terms with the Mahdi, who alone seemed likely to have permanent authority. At the same time, the longer Gordon remained in Khartoum, the more deeply he was pledged not to desert the inhabitants. He had encouraged them to hope that a Soudanese Govern-

ment would be formed; he had called upon them to make serious sacrifices; by the mere fact of his presence among them he had prevented them from coming to terms with the only rising power in their country. Having done all this, he could not honourably go away and leave them exposed to the vengeance of their enemies.

How bitterly he resented the conduct of the Government he showed in the famous dispatch of the 16th of April—the last received before the final severing of the telegraph: "As far as I can understand, the situation is this: you state your intention of not sending any relief up here or to Berber, and you refuse me Zebehr. I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold on here as long as I can, and if I can suppress the rebellion I shall do so. If I cannot, I shall retire to the Equator, and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Senaar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will

eventually be forced to smash up the Mahdi under great difficulties if you would retain peace in Egypt."

Abandoned by the Government, Gordon tried in desperation to obtain help by other means. Before he was cut off from communication with the outer world he telegraphed to his friend, Sir Samuel Baker, to ask whether "an appeal to the millionaires of America and England, for the raising of £200,000, would be of any avail." "With this sum you might get permission of the Sultan for the loan of 2000 or 3000 men, and send them up to Berber. With these men we could not only settle our affairs here, but also do for the Mahdi, in whose collapse the Sultan would be necessarily interested. I would not send many Europeans with them, as they cost too much, and I will put Zebehr in command."

In the midst of his perplexities, Gordon was able for some time to give his friends an occasional glimpse of the thoughts and

aspirations which no external troubles could quench. On the 24th of February he wrote: "An eventful day in 1870 for all your circle. [The reference is to the birthday of Angela Annie Barnes.] I hope God will bless you all. I am all right, but there is no '*eating*' up here, which I miss. Things look settling down a little, but I have the weight on me at times very heavily, and the natural infirmity of human nature brings me down. It is as well it should be so, for the forbidden fruit is glorying in self, which one is prone to do. Herod was eaten by worms for not giving glory to God when the people cheered him. I have no time. C. G. GORDON."

The next letter he sent me was dated the 3rd of March:—

"Thanks for your letter of 28th January, received to-day. Thanks for all the pains you have taken about the *Reflections*. As to the title, I am interested, for I hope the book may tend to show forth GOD'S

dwelling in us. This is the great secret. I would sooner pay more than £25 than have any bother to you. About Congo, there is no issue. I shall (D.V.) start for it in September, 1884, when I hope to be at Brussels. GOD made us, to have a house to live in: without us He is houseless. He needs us, and how much more do we need Him! I am comforted up here in my weakness by the reflection—Our Lord rules all things, and it is dire rebellion to dislike or murmur against His rule. May His name be glorified — these people blessed and comforted, and may I be deeply humbled, and thus have a greater sense of His indwelling Spirit. This is my earnest prayer. Kindest love to you all, and to——. Believe me, yours ever sincerely, C. G. GORDON."

His last note to me, dated the 6th of March, ended with the words: "Let no news from hence move you. He overrules all for good."

The Arabs began to attack Khartoum

on the 12th of March, and from that time until his death Gordon was engaged in defending the city against its assailants. The record of his achievements in this memorable siege will form one of the most heart-stirring pages in English history.

Khartoum is situated on the western bank of the Blue Nile, and within about three miles of that river's junction with the White Nile. Both the rivers are from 600 to 800 yards in width at their lowest point. The Blue Nile, though fordable at its lowest season in many places above the town, has very steep banks. The White Nile is fordable only in one or two places far up, and has a dyke on its right bank. The ferry over this river can be strongly defended, and adequate measures were taken by Gordon for its defence.

Gordon had several Yarrow-built steamers, which, with remarkable ingenuity, he made bullet-proof. He also erected on them towers capable of delivering a powerful fire. He thus not

only rendered himself perfectly secure from the north and west, but was able to make sorties and gather provisions for his garrison.

Towards the south, about half a mile from the town, Khartoum was defended by earthworks with ditches, extending from the White Nile to the Blue Nile, a length of about three miles. Within this exterior line, the outskirts of the town formed a good second irregular line; and in Khartoum itself guns were mounted on the public buildings, the Palace being, in Gordon's words, "the great place for the firing." It was his habit every morning, shortly after sunrise, to scan the surrounding country from these dominating points, and to note any change in the enemy's situation.

The first battle was fought on the 16th of March, and this engagement Gordon himself described:

"At 8 A.M. on the 16th, two steamers started for Halfaya. Bashi-Bazouks and

some regulars advanced across plain towards rebels. At 10 A.M. the regulars were in square opposite centre of rebels' position, and Bashi-Bazouks were extended in their line to their right. The gun with regulars then opened fire. Very soon after this a body of about sixty rebel horsemen charged down a little to the right of centre of Bashi-Bazouks' line. The latter fired a volley, then turned and fled. The horsemen galloped towards the square, which they immediately broke. The whole force then retreated slowly towards the fort with their rifles shouldered. The horsemen continued to ride along flanks cutting off stragglers. The men made no effort to stand, and the gun was abandoned with 63 rounds and 15 cases of reserve ammunition. The rebels advanced, and the retreat of our men was so rapid that the Arabs on foot had no chance of attacking. Pursuit ceased about a mile from stockade, and the men rallied. We brought in the wounded. Nothing could be

more dismal than seeing these horsemen, and some men even on camels, pursuing close to troops who, with arms shouldered, plodded their way back."

Most commanders would have abandoned the hope of being able to do anything with such troops. Not so General Gordon. Two Pashas who had disgraced themselves in the battle were tried and found guilty of cowardice, and by his orders they were shot. His "sheep" he made determined efforts to convert into soldiers.

After this defeat there was continual skirmishing with the Arabs. On one occasion, when the river rose, they were driven off in three or four engagements, and their towns were burned. Gordon sent up two expeditions to Senaar; and in a battle fought on the 25th of August his troops took the Arab camp and killed the Arab commander-in-chief. On the 4th of September the Arabs gained a victory; but they derived from it no solid advan-

tage, and for some time afterwards there was "comparative quiet." In a letter to the officer commanding the royal navy at Massowah, dated August 24th, Gordon mentioned that his steamers had been doing "splendid work." "You see," he added with grim humour, "when you have steam on, the men can't run away, and must go into action."

During the whole course of the siege he displayed his usual dauntless spirit and inexhaustible resource. When the Arabs captured two small steamers at Berber and one on the Blue Nile, he caused two new steamers to be built. His exterior lines he defended by means of wire entanglements, with live shells as mines; and these land-torpedoes (used for the first time) "did great execution." They were ignited with lucifer matches. On the 11th of November (the date of an important letter to Lord Wolseley) his soldiers were only half-a-month in arrears; and he had evidently succeeded in inspiring many of

them with something of his own courage and vigour.

He had never ceased to resent the strange indifference of the authorities at home to the events in which he was playing so great a part. On the 9th of September he wrote to the Khedive, Nubar Pasha, and Sir E. Baring: "How many times have we written asking for reinforcements, calling your serious attention to the Soudan? No answer at all has come to us as to what has been decided in the matter, and the hearts of men have become weary of this delay. While you are eating, drinking, and resting on good beds, we and those with us, both soldiers and servants, are watching by night and day, endeavouring to quell the movement of this false Mahdi. Of course you take no interest for suppressing this rebellion, the serious consequences of which are reverse of victorious for you, and the neglect thereof will not do." It was in order that the English Government might learn the

whole truth about the state of the Soudan, that Colonel Stewart and the French and English Consuls started in September on the journey which was to have so sad a close.

Towards the end of 1884 there was much hard fighting at Khartoum; and, notwithstanding Gordon's written messages, he had forebodings of coming disaster. The runner who brought the famous note of the 14th of December—"Khartoum all right"—was instructed to say, "Our troops in Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. Food we still have is little; some grain and biscuit. We want you to come quickly. . . . In Khartoum there are no butter nor dates, and little meat. All food is very dear." On the very day on which he wrote that Khartoum was "all right," he also wrote to a friend in Cairo: "All is up. I expect a catastrophe in ten days' time. It would not have been so if our people had kept me informed as to their intentions. My adieux to all."

On the 28th of January, 1885, soon after the hard-won victory at Abou-Klea, in which Sir Herbert Stewart received his fatal wound, Sir Charles Wilson approached Khartoum with soldiers, food, and ammunition. A heavy fire was opened on his steamers, and he was unable to land. The town which had been so grandly defended was in the hands of the Mahdi. Two days before Sir Charles Wilson's arrival the besiegers had been admitted by traitors, and Gordon had been killed.

So ended a career as romantic and as noble as any that the modern world has seen. When the terrible tidings were made known, England mourned for Gordon as she has seldom mourned even for her heroes. His unworldly temper, his ardent faith, his magnificent energy, his sublime unselfishness—in all this there was something that captivated the heart of the nation; and it needed but the crowning glory of his death to evoke an

expression of love and reverence to which there is hardly a parallel in our history. They who knew him best knew that his countrymen had obeyed a true instinct in placing him, even while he lived, beside those whose names are "on fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed." With regard to Gordon's character there are no popular illusions to be dispelled. The more closely it is studied the deeper will be the admiration excited by his strength, his tenderness, his purity, and his honour.

APPENDIX.

A.

GORDON'S family is of Scottish origin. In the service of Peter the Great there was a General Gordon, who in a barbarous and coarse society maintained his integrity; and it is worth noting that his favourite author was Thomas à Kempis. A distinguished officer who was one of Gordon's immediate ancestors served under Wolfe on the plains of Abraham.

Gordon's grandfather, Captain William Augustus Gordon, R.A., lived in Exeter; and in the present church of St. Thomas, a suburb of Exeter, there are monuments which, with the more recent monuments in the cemetery at Southampton, give the family history through a full century. Over one of the vaults in the church of St. Thomas, near Exeter, is the following inscription:—"Anna Maria Gordon died in Exeter, 25th February, 1796, aged 47, after two days' illness, and her son on the

8th March, 1796, by a fall from his horse at the Cape of Good Hope, in the 19th year of his age." These were Gordon's grandmother and uncle. Captain Gordon, the bereaved husband and father, died at Exeter, in June 1809, and his body was buried in the same vault.

Gordon's father, the late Lieutenant-General Henry W. Gordon, R.A., was born in Devon, and always reckoned himself a Devonshire man. Both he and Gordon's mother (whose maiden name was Enderby) were alive at the time of their son's successes in China.

The family is one of soldiers, and they have served chiefly in the Royal Artillery.

B.

The following letters were written in January, 1884, when Gordon was on the way to Egypt :—

Mont Cenis, 19. 1. 84.

My dear Mr. Barnes,—

I left last night for Soudan to arrange for evacuation. I enclose cheque for book ; if more is wanted up to £10 I will send it, for it ought to be done well. Colonel Sir C. Warren, R.E., Chatham, would give a good plan of Jerusalem without the *débris*. I hope you, Mrs. Barnes and the six are well, also Miss Freeman. Ministers said they were determined to evacuate. Would I go and superintend it ? I said "Yes." Good night. With kindest love to you. I

expected Baker ere, but he may be at Brindisi.

[No signature follows.]

At Sea, 22. 1. 84.

My dear Mr. Barnes,—

Your letter written on Epiphany has been read, but I have seen you since. The repentant thief was on *right* side—the side pierced—this is another point which fixes the side pierced. On the left was the unrepentant thief.

You must be told shortly what passed. You know Wolseley sent a telegram to me at your house, but I did not know it until Sunday—he said, "Come up at once." This telegram came when I was so bothered that I said to my sister, "I will fly on Wednesday, the 16th, to Brussels;" so I said to Wolseley, "I will come up on Tuesday the 15th and go to Brussels on

16th." I reached London at 2 P.M., Tuesday, stayed with Wolseley in Wolseley's office from 2 till 5 P.M., while he talked to Ministers. Nothing, however, came of it; so I said, "I will go to Brussels." I did not see Ministers. I consequently went to Brussels on Wednesday, and got there Wednesday night. At noon on Thursday I got telegram from Wolseley saying, "Come over at once;" so I saw the King, who did not like my going, and left Brussels at 8 P.M., Thursday, reaching London at 6 A.M., Friday. I saw Wolseley at 8 A.M. He said nothing was settled, but Ministers would see me at 3.30 P.M. No one knew I had come back. At noon he, Wolseley, came for me, and took me to Ministers. He went in and talked to the Ministers, and came back and said: "Her Majesty's Government want you to understand this—Government are determined to evacuate Soudan, for they will not guarantee future government. Will you go and do it?" I said "Yes." He

said, "Go in." I went in and saw them. They said, "Did Wolseley tell you our orders?" I said "Yes." I said, "You will not guarantee future government of Soudan, and you wish me to go up to evacuate now." They said "Yes," and it was over, and I left at 8 P.M. for Calais. Very little passed between us. The Duke and Wolseley came to see me off, so that is over.

The day after to-morrow I reach, D.V., Port Said, and go through Canal on to Suakim by H.M.S. 'Carysfort,' and reach that, D.V., on my birthday. I am quite restored to my peace, thank God! and in His hand He will hide me. You and I are equally exposed to the attacks of the enemy. Me not a bit more than you are. Kindest love to you all. I am sorry not to have time to write to you graphic details. Lord Granville thanked me for going very nicely. Government are right, if they will not guarantee future government of Soudan, to evacuate it.

Good bye, kindest regards to the Temples, Bowring, Blackmore, and you all.

Yours sincerely,

My dear friend,

C. G. GORDON.

The Hosts are with me, "Mahanaim." *

* Gordon frequently referred to the word "Mahanaim," and he liked the full explanation of its meaning given in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible.' It means "the two hosts," and is so used by the patriarchs in Holy Scripture.

It is necessary to add that these letters, although apparently private and confidential in their character, were not intended by the writer to be so regarded. They belong to a series of which the first letter states that I am to make them known as I may see fit, and whensoever I may see fit. He called on me as a friend, to whom he had said "that he should probably not see me again on earth," both "to defend his character and to make known his religious views;" adding that I was to "act on my sole discretion and responsibility."

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