THE WAR
IN
THE SOUDAN.

GENERAL GORDON.

THE

WAR IN THE SOUDAN

AND

THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO IT,

WITH SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONAGES ENGAGED.

BY

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PREFACE.

The historian of contemporary events labours under a two-fold disadvantage: the unfinished state of the period he attempts to depict precludes the possibility of representing it in artistic form; the incompleteness of the circumstances with which he deals, and the inability accurately to gauge their results, make it impossible to indulge in any philosophical generalizations. Added to this, the want of perspective that obtains in treating of events still in progress, makes it difficult to rightly judge their relative importance. This account of the war in the Soudan and the causes which led to it, must, therefore, be regarded as a narrative rather than as a history.

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THE

WAR IN THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST SHOT.

Let us imagine ourselves, you and me, my reader, at Alexandria on the night of the 10th of July, 1882. We shall not sleep ; the whole town is in a state of suspense and excitement. Outside there, in the harbor, are thirteen great ships of war, England's ironclads, prowling about within gun-shot of us. This morning, at seven o'clock, the Admiral in command, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, gave notice that if work on the fortifications lining the shore did not cease, twenty-four hours from that time he would open fire. No wonder nobody sleeps. With the muzzles of those 81 ton guns peering at us through the iron walls of the greatest naval force in the world who could lie down unconcerned? No one knows what is going to happen. Arabi Pasha has sent two of his officers to the Admiral to make terms. But the electric light from the fleet which has been silently pouring its searching rays on the Arab gunners in the forts, shows that the work is still going on. Now the sun rises and shows the great ships ready for action. Seven o'clock strikes,—boom ; a puff of smoke from Her Majesty's ship Alexandra shows what is meant. Four minutes' grace is given, then up goes the signal from the Invincible, "Attack the enemies' batteries," immediately the Monarch, Penelope, Invincible, Sultan, Superb, Téméraire, Inflexible, and Alexandra, pour in shells which weigh some 1,500 lbs., the cost of firing of each of which would buy a comfortable lot in a country town.

For ten mortal hours the deafening thunder is kept up. One by one the great forts are silenced. The largest of the Egyptian cannons are turned on end like pop-guns. The solid masonry of the parapets yawn with great holes.

The light-house has holes in it visible at two miles' distance. Powder magazines have been blown up, and where were once trim fortifications, are now masses of ruins.

But what is it all about? What is England doing in this part of the world, smashing forts, shelling soldiery, and doing damage that will cost some millions of dollars to rebuild? To answer this I must trouble you, my reader, with a few dry facts. We shall not linger over them. But before it is possible to know why England is now in Egypt, why she is warring against the Mahdi, why she has voluntarily spent £3,000,000, been content to lose some of her bravest generals, and risked the lives of thousands of her soldiers in a foreign country that does not belong to her and probably never will belong to her, it is necessary to go beneath the surface, and to inquire into a few things not quite so interesting as the destroying of forts.

NOTE.—Arabi's own version of the bombardment, as given in his newspaper, *El Taif*, is very interesting reading:—

"War news.—On Tuesday, 25 Shaban, 1299, at 12 o'clock in the morning (July 11, 7 a.m.), the English opened fire on the forts of Alexandria, and we returned the fire.

"At three o'clock (10 a.m.) an ironclad foundered off Fort Ada.

"At 5 o'clock (noon) two vessels were sunk between Fort Pharos and Fort Adjemy.

"At half-past 6 (1.30 p.m.) a wooden man-of-war of eight guns was sunk.

"At 10 o'clock (5 p.m.) the large ironclad was struck by a shell from Burj-ez-Zefr, the battery was injured, and a white flag was immediately hoisted by her as a signal to cease firing at her, whereupon the firing ceased on both sides, after having lasted 10 hours without cessation. Some of the walls of the forts were destroyed, but they were repaired during the night. The shots and shells discharged from the two sides amounted to about 6,000, and this is the first time that so large a number of missiles have been discharged in so short a time." And so on.

THE LION'S SHARE.

CHAPTER II.

WHY ENGLAND IS FIGHTING.

This is by no means an easy thing to find out. Every nation and every country will give us a different answer. France will probably tell us that we are a nation of shopkeepers, and that we are merely fighting for money. Germany, perhaps, will say we are fighting to keep up our prestige—whatever that may mean. Russia says we are aggressive. The Conservatives think we are not fighting half enough. Gladstone does not know whether we are or not, but enigmatically says that we must not "merely secure tranquility for the moment, but must obviate future perturbations."

Perhaps the truth lies in a mixture of all these.

I shall not trouble you, my reader, to go into details; we will keep clear for the present of all such phrases as condominium, entente cordiale, unified debt, Daira estates, Domain lands, caisse, dual control, protocol, finance adviser, procureur-général, etc., etc. Let us put the events that led up to

England's taking the responsibility of helping Egypt to govern herself (for that is what she is really doing) in the form of a fable.

In a great street where rich and powerful merchants were wont to congregate stood a large shop. This shop was owned by a man who lived far away, and who took little interest in the business as long as his share of the profits was regularly sent to him. The proprietor was called by some people the sick man. This shop of his was very badly managed. The head clerk cared as little as did his master as to how matters stood. He was very extravagant, he spent enormous sums of money, presumably in the management of the business, and his subordinates did the same. The consequence was that both the customers and the wholesale merchants were very harshly treated. The former did not get the worth of their money; the latter were never paid. The whole affair naturally soon became insolvent.

Behind this shop stood a great warehouse. It was a very grand one—so grand that the lady who owned it (for it was a lady at the time I speak of) called herself by a title specially on its account. This title was "Kaiser-I-Hind." Unfortunately the only way worth speaking of to get into this warehouse was through the shop I spoke of a moment ago. There was a back way, but it was very round about. Amongst the clerks of another merchant was one clever one who proposed that people should go through the shop into the warehouse. The lady jumped at the idea at once and gladly paid an enormous sum of money (she was very rich) for the right to go through the sick man's premises whenever she wished.

Well, as I have said, the shop was in a bad way. The great lady, seeing how useful, in fact necessary, it was to her that the business should be kept on, lent the managers money, more money probably than all the other merchants put together felt inclined to do. The consequence was she became the chief creditor—and this is a very important point. The merchant to whom the clever clerk belonged certainly had great claims too, but he did not seem to take any very great interest in matters. He had no warehouse in the rear, you see.

Matters instead of getting better grew worse. The hands employed in the shop—and there were very large numbers of them—were harshly treated. But they had no redress. The head clerk pocketed as much money as he could, every other clerk did the same, the expenses were tremendous, the money spent in stationery alone being something fabulous.

Amongst the subordinates was a bold man. He saw the disaffection which existed amongst the shop-boys. He made friends with them, and defied the chief manager, the real proprietor, and the great lady—all three. The down trodden shop-boys, and indeed many in higher positions also, flocked to him; the managers were powerless; he seized the shop—and the greatest tumult arose.

There are some who think, in fact, I dare say they are very few who do not think, that the sick man connived at what the rebellious clerk was doing. At all events he made no attempt whatever to put a stop to the uproar. He ought, one would have thought, to have upheld the chief manager at all hazards, and to have helped him to quell the rebellion. But this he did not do. What was to be done? Things could not go on in this way. The interest on the loans must be paid, and while the shop was in this state this was out of the question. Nobody in the establishment seemed to have any wits about them except the bold man, and his hand was turned against every one. It would never do to let him go on in this way, for what would become of the right of way through the shop to the warehouse? In this extremity the great lady asked a friend—the same merchant in whose employ was that clever clerk who proposed the short-cut—the great lady asked this friend to join her in putting a stop to the rebellion. The friend higgled and haggled a great deal but finally refused. So there was nothing for it but to do it single handed. The other merchants who lived in the neighbourhood did not object; and so it was determined to send some good strong men down at once to take possession of the premises, and to put an end to the doings of the recalcitrant clerk and his followers.

This brings us to THE FIRST SHOT.

This fable needs scarce any explanation. The great lady is Her Majesty Queen Victoria; her warehouse is India, the short-cut to which is the Suez Canal; the shop is Egypt, with its proprietor the Sultan of Turkey, and its chief clerk the Khedive; the clever proposer of the short-cut is M. de Lesseps; his merchant is France; and the rebellious clerk is Arabi.

I have, perhaps, laid scarcely sufficient stress on the vast mass of corruption which existed in the internal administration of Egyptian affairs, for this, it appears to me, is the secret of England's presence in that country. If Egyptian officials were honest, if they had a keen sense of justice, if they cared more for the well-being of the lower classes than for the filling of their own pockets, the fertility of the soil and the industry of its tillers would suffice, not only to pay off the debts with which Egypt is now burdened, but to bring the country into a high state of commercial efficiency. But as it is, this was the very remotest of all possibilities. It is not saying too much to assert that as little reliance could be placed in the integrity of the highest as in the integrity of the meanest of the dignitaries employed by the government. Bribes were known openly to be the key to all favours. The taxes were farmed. As long as the requisite sum was paid into the treasury what cared any governor of any province how he obtained the remainder? Corruption existed in the very heart of administrative affairs. The *London Times* correspondent tells us that the expenditure in Cairo for one year on stationery

alone amounted to upwards of $240,000. The fellaheen were ground down. The insolence of their superiors was as intolerable as their taxes. A system of forced labor existed, from which there was no relief. Under these circumstances: with the bulk of the working-classes groaning under irremediable wrongs, their spirits broken, their intelligence stunted, their self-respect nowhere, their industry fruitless, their property and even their lives (owing to the detestable character of the Cadi courts) in jeopardy, what could be expected of poor Egypt if left to herself? Only ruin more complete. With an indifferent and apathetic suzerain who never visited his tributary state, who only proved his authority over it by drawing a yearly income and occasionally uttering a weak protest against the actions or demands of interested powers, and who openly connived at anarchy; with a powerless Khedive, an extravagant ministry, and a merciless executive, no wonder that the poverty-stricken natives rallied round Arabi Pasha as their deliverer. No wonder that his fame spread; that the ranks of his followers were joined by thousands. Loyalty there was none, and patriotism in such a country was a misnomer. No wonder then, again, that even from the so-called army his numbers were augmented.

But such a state of affairs could not be allowed to exist. If the Sultan would not, and the Khedive could not, interfere—even if—and there were such rumours—even if these both sided with the rebel, he must be put down; and if France will not lend a helping hand, England will do it alone.

This it was that led to the bombardment of Alexandria, and, in process of time, to all those events which it is the object of this narrative to record.

CHAPTER III.

TEL-EL-KEBIR.

We left Alexandria with its forts dismantled, its guns dismounted, and its fortifications generally abandoned. The events which followed need not be described in detail. Arabi and his army left the city, which was now in the hands of marauding hordes, many of them composed of released convicts. The larger portion of the town was burnt, and wholesale depredations and murders continued for two days, after which they were checked by the landing of a body of marines and blue-jackets.

England now decided to send troops into Egypt to reconquer the country for the Khedive. A vote of credit was passed (July 27), and three days afterwards the Scots Guards sailed for Alexandria, followed at short intervals by troops amounting in all to 1,010 officers, 21,200 non-commissioned officers and men, 54 field guns, 5,600 horses, and 500 mules. But this force was in a short time swelled—including contingents from India, Cyprus, and elsewhere—to 40,560.

Sir Garnet Wolseley took command, arrived at Alexandria on August the 15th, and was immediately empowered by the Khedive to undertake operations and occupy the country.

The campaign against Arabi was destined to witness some notable and successfully carried out surprises by this general. The first was the occupation of Port Said. The fleet sailed, cleared ready for action, from Alexandria as if with the intention of seizing Aboukir, but when night fell, the order to "'bout ship" was given, and the ships steamed back and took possession of Port Said. Several minor actions took place at Tel-el-Mahuta, Kassassin, etc., but by a wonderfully accurate prophecy of General Wolseley's the spot on which the whole campaign was settled was Tel-el-Kebir. To this we will at once proceed.

The body of the troops was now stationed at Kassassin. The intentions of the General were kept secret in the extreme ; and it was not till within twelve hours of the premeditated attack that orders were given to leave the camp. At sundown, on the evening of Tuesday, September 12th, every tent was struck. The men bivouacked on the ground, taking a rest of five or six hours. At midnight the order was given to march, and in a few moments the men were noiselessly moving over the ground in the direction of the enemy's entrenchments. "Never," says the *London Standard's* correspondent, "did

a body of 14,000 men get under arms more quietly ; the very orders appeared given in lowered tones, and almost noiselessly the dark columns moved off, their footfalls being deadened by the sand. The silence broken only by the occasional clash of steel, the certainty that the great struggle would commence with the dawn, and the expectation that at any moment we might be challenged by the Bedouin horsemen far out in the plain in front of the enemy, all combined to make it an impressive march, and one which none who shared in it will ever forget.

"There were frequent halts to enable the regiments to maintain touch, and to allow the transport waggons, whose wheels crunched over the sandy plains with a noise which to our ears seemed strangely loud, to keep up with us."

This silent march across from Kassassin to Tel-el-Kebir has been most graphically described. The night was pitch dark ; not a word was uttered ; and when nearing the enemy not even a match to light the longed-for cigarette was allowed. The line of march was followed by means of the stars, a young lieutenant of the navy leading the way. At times, however, incidents occurred which were within an ace of bringing about the most disastrous results. For instance, the force moved in two divisions, and it sometimes happened that the outer part of the wings moved faster than the centre, thus bringing the men partly opposite and within ear-shot of each other. In the pitch darkness that prevailed, relieved only by starlight, it was quite possible, nay probable, that each wing might mistake the other for the enemy, and without command open fire. Such a catastrophe was indeed once narrowly averted.

"By early dawn the troops had arrived within a thousand yards of the enemy's lines, and halted there for a short time to enable the fighting line to be formed, and other preparations to be made.

"A perfect silence still reigned over the plains, and it was difficult to credit the fact that some fourteen thousand men lay in a semi-circle round the enemy's lines, ready to dash forward at a signal at the low sand heaps in front, behind which twice as many men slumbered, unsuspicious of their presence.

"Swiftly and silently the troops moved forward to the attack. No word was spoken, no shot fired until within 300 yards of the enemy's earthworks, nor up to that time did a sound in the Egyptian lines betoken that they were aware of the presence of their assailants. Then suddenly a terrific fire flashed along the line of sand heaps, and a storm of bullets whizzed over the heads of the advancing troops. A wild cheer broke from the troops in response, the pipes struck shrilly up, bayonets were fixed, and at the double this splendid body of men dashed forward.

"The first line of entrenchments was carried, the enemy offering scarce any resistance, but from another line of entrenchments behind, which in the still

dim light could be scarcely seen, a burst of musketry broke out. For a few minutes the troops poured in a heavy fire in exchange ; but it was probably as innocuous as that of the unseen enemy, whose bullets whistled harmlessly overhead. The delay in the advance was but a short one. Soon the order was given, and the brigade again went rapidly forward. Soon a portion of the force had passed between the enemy's redoubts and opened a flanking fire upon him.

"This was too much for the Egyptians, who at once took to their heels and fairly ran, suffering, as the crowded masses rushed across the open, very heavily from our fire, being literally mown down by hundreds.

"The fight was now practically over, the only further danger arising from the bullets of our own troops, who were fixing bayonets in all directions upon the flying enemy, as with loud cheers our whole line advanced in pursuit. The Egyptians did not preserve the slightest semblance of order, but fled in a confused rabble at the top of their speed.

"It is stated that from the time our men gathered for the first rush at the trenches to the time when Fort Galeis fell into our hands it was but fifteen minutes."

The *Morning Post's* correspondent states that the whole of the action occupied exactly one hour and forty minutes.

The *Times* correspondent says :—The Egyptians were panic-stricken ; they crouched and threw themselves down, and multitudes fled across their fortified plateau, now strewn with their mangled bodies, or through the luxurious station filled with camels and bales of cloth, fresh fruit, and stores of every description.

The surprise of the Egyptians (the *Times* correspondent says) must have been complete. Breakfasts are left spread in some tents, and some wretches lie dead in the midst of food and cooking utensils. Several shammed dead, and I saw one young Nubian revived in a marvellous way. The soldiers are careful to ascertain the fact of death before passing recumbent Arabs. "I went to help one man, and he fired after me," said an indignant sergeant.

The services of the Indian contingent, which hitherto had played but a subordinate part, were now called into use. Pressing rapidly over the battle-field, they made straight for Zagazig, which was occupied in the course of the day. The bulk of the cavalry and mounted infantry, seized upon Beilbeis. From this place they were again soon astir, and by a forced march of 39 miles under a blazing sun, they reached Cairo on the evening of September 14th, captured Arabi, and preserved the city from the dangers of a repetition of the Alexandria horrors. On the following day Sir Garnet Wolseley entered the capital.

Thus, in reality, in an engagement lasting some twenty-five minutes was the rebellion crushed ; the loss of life on our side being as small as the battle was short—amounting, in all, to 54 killed and 342 wounded.

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Events after this are comparatively uninteresting. With the fall of Cairo and the capture of Arabi the "national" movement, as it was called, completely collapsed. The re-embarkation of the British troops at once commenced. Arabi Pashi was tried and condemned, although he put into the hands of his counsel documents which implicated the Sultan, Ismail, the ex-Khedive, and numerous Egyptian officials. Lord Dufferin was sent to suggest reforms, and the last day of 1882 saw the first instalment of his much-praised scheme for the regeneration of Egypt.

Ex-Khedive Ismail Pasha sums up Arabi's character thus : "I remember Arabi well. He became a Lieutenant-Colonel when very young, and, in the second or third year of my Administration, was tried by Court-martial for breach of trust. He should have been broken, but one of my Generals persuaded me to pardon him, and I did so. He was then transferred to the Commissariat, and only quite recently returned to active service in the army. Arabi can be painted in a word—he is what the French call a 'blageur.' He can talk and do nothing else. He is the tool of Mahmoud Fehmy and Toulba, about both of whom I have nothing good to say. Arabi is, and always was, an arrant coward. I always said he would run away, and he certainly decamped very quickly at Tel-el-Kebir. The only brave men in his party are Ali Fehmy and Adelal ; they are soldiers, but I would defy Arabi himself to define either 'patriotism' or 'national feeling.' He certainly has neither one nor the other, although half Europe seems inclined to regard him as the would-be saviour of his country. The truth is that the Egyptian people must lean on something and follow some one. The Egyptian Government was hopelessly weak, and Arabi and his friends knew it. He and his partisans achieved three visible and striking successes, and the Egyptians saw this, and saw, morever, the representatives of great Powers practically in treaty with him. Arabi pointed triumphantly to these facts, and told the Egyptians he could and would restore Egypt to the Egyptians ; and it is not surprising in the circumstances that the Egyptians clung to him as the stronger vessel. The movement he headed was from the first actively encouraged at Constantinople, but it is very improbable that either the Sultan himself or any of his responsible Ministers were ever in direct communication either with him or his associates. Direct communication is not a feature of Turkish intrigue, as the desired effect can be produced without it. Arabi and his accomplices must be severely punished. An example should certainly be made of the leaders of the revolt, and half-measures will only be a premium to future disturbances. They may give to Egypt a succession of Arabis. Arabi himself should be treated as a vulgar mutineer and rebellious soldier ; to look on him as an Egyptian Garibaldi is a capital mistake, and one which augurs ill for the future."

CHAPTER IV.

INTERNAL REFORMS.

Tel-el-Kebir fought, and Arabi safely shut up in Ceylon, nothing of any very sensational character occurred for some months. The murder of Professor Palmer (Professor of Arabic, at Cambridge), Captain Gill and Lieutenant Charrington, who had been sent to various Arab tribes by the English Government ostensibly for the purpose of purchasing camels, but in reality probably to learn the attitude and gain the good will of the Bedouins, was avenged on the 28th of February by the execution of five prisoners who were convicted of the crime; and many of the pillagers of Alexandria and the perpetrators of the atrocities that followed its bombardment were tried and punished. An army of occupation was still retained in Egypt, a measure which evoked much criticism in Parliament and some comment from foreign powers. The attitude of these latter towards England has been described as "one of acquiescence tempered by expectancy." There was no denying the rapidity and success with which the rebellion had been quelled, and the declared purpose of England had been to uphold the then existing regime. Few, however, conceived it either likely or possible that the *status quo ante bellum* would be restored, and the announcement of England's intentions was awaited with some anxiety. The suspense was speedily relieved by a circular note issued to the Great Powers by Lord Granville early in January of 1883. Lord Granville first proposed various measures to secure at all times the freest possible navigation of the Suez Canal, its strict neutrality in time of war, and equal rights therein to all nations; second, the attainment of greater economy in the management of the Daira estates; third, the treatment of foreigners on the same footing as natives with regard to taxation; fourth, the continuance for the present of the system of mixed tribunals for civil suits between natives and foreigners; fifth, the formation of a small Egyptian army, with British officers, lent for a time, to fill the higher posts, and of a separate force of gendarmerie and police; sixth, some new arrangement in lieu of the dual control; seventh, the prudent introduction of representative institutions in some form adapted to the present political intelligence of the people, and calculated to aid their future progress. (*See Annual Register for 1883.*)

Lord Dufferin was now sent out to elaborate a scheme of administrative and social reform. With the usual astuteness with which this famed diplomat

grasps the general character of a country, Lord Dufferin recognized at once the lamentable state into which Egyptian politics had sunk, and advocated sweeping reforms. He proposed amongst other innovations the establishment of an Egyptian army of 6,000 men, a semi-military constabulary of 5,600, both officered to a small extent at first by Europeans ; an urban police force of 1,600, to maintain order in the large towns of the Delta ; representative institutions comprising village constituencies, provincial councils, a legislative council, a general assembly, and eight ministers responsible to the Khedive ; a thorough revision of the codes ; the organization of new tribunals ; reassessment of the land tax ; assistance to the fellaheen in relieving themselves from the heavy debt encumbering their lands ; a national system of education ; reform of the civil service; and the effectual suppression of the slave trade.

The document containing these schemes of the noble Lord's is already famous, but to practically carry out its details was a task perhaps beyond human power. It is hard to conceive of the character of the Egyptian people. One ludicrous example of their blunted intelligence and indomitable apathy is seen in the fact that when asked to vote for the election of representatives, they displayed a wide-spread desire to pay a sum of money rather than cease their work to attend the polling, although it had been distinctly pointed out to them that the measures of reform undertaken were for their exclusive benefit.

Now come upon the scene two English names of merit—that of Colonel Valentine Baker, now called Baker Pasha after his services in the Turkish army, and that of Colonel Hicks. Both deserve some mention. Colonel Baker, a dashing cavalry officer of great popularity in the army, will perhaps on this side of the Atlantic be best remembered as having been the object of an unpleasant accusation. Although the charges were not wholly substantiated Col. Baker was forced to quit the army, and he was soon after heard from as having obtained a commission under the Sultan.

Colonel Hicks was one of those brilliant Indian officers, who having retired while as yet in the prime of life, discovers that a life of inactivity at home, separated from all the associations which have grown almost a necessity of existence, find it impossible to abstain from volunteering to undertake any expedition of novelty and danger which may be opened to them. He was typical of his class : proud, high minded, imperious, yet withal generous and tender to a degree ; hating sham and cant, but willing to take any trouble to benefit those in whom there is no taint of these. He was English to an extreme. A somewhat ludicrous incident has been told of his reply to a young German officer who introduced himself to him in a ball room. He was ignorant of the permissibility of this proceeding at a German military ball, and the young gentleman who with a nice bow remarked that "he had

the honour to be von So-and-So," was rather astonished to be answered by "Indeed! Glad to hear it. Good name," as the Colonel turned on his heel.

Colonel, now General, Baker, was charged with the formation of a gendarmerie for the protection of Egypt along the desert borders. Colonel Hicks undertook to attack the Mahdi at El Obeid (to the south-west of Khartoum), and was killed at the battle of Kashgill. But of this more hereafter.

CHAPTER V.

THE SOUDAN.

We now come to the true field of war, that terrible region in which has been spilt some of England's noblest and bravest blood—the Soudan. A few remarks are necessary to explain its position and its relations and connections with Egypt proper.

The population of the Soudan Provinces is estimated at 12,000,000, three-fourths of them of pure or mixed negro descent, mostly pagans, but including many thousands of Mohammedan natives, some of whom were, at last accounts, making war under the direction of the Mahdi's agents upon the Egyptian garrisons in the Bahr el Ghazal Province. The remaining millions are Arabs, whose ancestors entered the country centuries ago by way of Egypt and the Nile, and the indigenous peoples north-west of Abyssinia and in the Nubian Desert, from whom Osman Digna's army is recruited. They are not Arabs, though commonly called so, but they equal the Arab tribes of Kordofan and Darfur in ferocity and fanatical zeal. Lieut.-Colonel Stewart, in his report two years ago on the Egyptian Soudan, gives an interesting account of the nomad Arabs of Kordofan and Darfur, who are the mainstay of the Mahdi. He says they are born robbers, hunters, and warriors, who leave manual work to their women, and, after caring for their cattle, devote all their time and energies to slave hunting and war. They are all large owners of cattle, camels, horses, and slaves. The Nile for 500 miles from Khartoum to the Sobat River is held by cattle-raising Arab tribes, and it was estimated ten years ago that there were 6,000,000 beeves, besides an immense number of sheep, in the Egyptian Soudan.

Two years ago Egypt was about to divide its Soudanese possessions into four administrative districts, when the Madhi ruined the Khedive's project. The proposed districts, Western Soudan, Central Soudan, Eastern Soudan, and Harrar, all have their distinctive geographical features. Western Soudan, including Dongola, Kordofan and Darfur, is strikingly uniform in the steppes-like character and partial aridity of the country. Many Arab tribes live in these regions, each wandering with its herds within certain well-known limits. Southern Darfur, however, is very fertile, and supports a population estimated at 600,000 people. The Bahr of Ghazal region on the south is also rich in resources, and Lupton Bey, its Governor, sent word late in 1883 that, though he was fighting with four tribes that had espoused the Madhi's cause, his

revenues for the previous year, if he could get his ivory, gums, and other collections north, would exceed the expenses of his province by £60,000. The proposed district of Central Soudan is the flower of the Egyptian provinces. It includes the Provinces of Khartoum, Sennaar, Fashoda, and the equator, and the magnificent subtropical region east of the Nile, embracing the basins of the Azrek and Atbara Rivers. It is the rich sediment from the Atbara that annually renews the fertility of Lower Egypt. Prof. Keane says the basin of the Atbara is a succession of dense woodlands, rich pastures, and well-watered arable tracts. The country is healthful, and is said to contain many millions of acres of unsurpassed cotton lands. This country, according to Sir Samuel Baker and many others, needs only transportation facilities to make it a region of great commercial importance.

The proposed district of Eastern Soudan includes the well-known country along the Red Sea littoral and a part of Nubia.

Though the Egyptian Soudan is a region of great ethnical complexity, Arabs, negroes, and negroids fusing here and there, and forming a great variety of clans and tribes, nearly all the people, except the pagan Soudanese, are united in religious fanaticism and in their hatred of Egyptian rule. The time has come when civilization must gain the mastery in their land, or be content to abandon its immense resources, and the millions of poor blacks who live in and around it, to a horde of slave-hunting semi-barbarians, who will perpetually menace the white settlements south of them and the peace of northern nations as well.—*New York Sun.*

The region in central Africa, known as the Soudan, extends from Assouan on the equator, and from Massowah on the Red Sea, to the western limits of Darfour, a territory 1,650 miles long by 1,200 broad.

The name Soudan is from the Arabic aswad, plural suda, black, and Beled-es-Soudan, as the Arabs call it, means literally the Land of the Blacks.

Of the desert General Colston thus writes:—"All the vast spaces east and west of the Nile valley between the fourteenth degree and the Mediterranean (over eight hundred thousand square miles) are The Desert. It would seem at the first glance to be absolutely unfitted for the habitation of man. He who has never travelled through the desert cannot form a just idea of that strange and marvellous region, in which all the ordinary conditions of life are completely changed. It is essentially a waterless land, without rivers, creeks, rivulets, or springs. Once away from the Nile, the only supply of water is derived from deep wells, few, scanty, and far apart. Long droughts are frequent. When I explored the great Arabian Desert between the Nile and the Red Sea, it had not rained for three years. Between the twenty-ninth and the nineteenth degree of latitude it never rains at all. Water becomes precious to a degree beyond the conception of those who have never known

its scarcity. Members of the Catholic mission at El Obeid, where water is much more plentiful than in the deserts, assured me that, the summer before, water had been sold as high as half a dollar a gallon by the proprietors of the few wells that had not dried up. As to the quality, desert water is generally bad, the exception being when it is worse, though long custom enables the Bedouins to drink water so brackish as to be intolerable to all except themselves and their flocks. The atmoor, as the Arabs call it, is truly the ideal desert, consisting mainly of hard gravel plains diversified by zones of deep sand, rocky ridges, sometimes of considerable altitude, and rugged defiles. It is absolutely destitute of all vegetation, and consequently of animal life, only the ostrich and hyena cross it swiftly by night, and the vulture hovers over the caravans by day. Not a tree, not a bush, not a blade of grass relieves the glare of the sunlight upon the yellow sand. No one can resist the solemn impression of deep silence and infinite space produced by the desert. When night has come, and the soldiers and Bedouins are asleep in their bivouacs, walk away under the unequalled African moon beyond the first ridge of sand or rocks. Around you stretches a boundless sea-like horizon. The sand gleams almost as white as snow. Not a sound falls upon the ear, not the murmur of a breeze, not the rustle of leaf or grass, not the hum of the smallest insect. Silence—only silence—as profound as death, unless it is broken by the howl of a prowling hyena or the distant roar of the king of beasts. Within the limits of Egypt and the Soudan these desolate atmoors extend over three-quarters of a million of square miles, never trodden by the foot of man. Only a few caravan trails cross them in their narrowest parts, with scanty wells at long intervals ; and the necessities of trade can alone account for their being penetrated at all. They are oceans, where caravans pass each in haste, like vessels at sea. The marches are perfectly terrible, and yet it is worse to halt during the day than to keep in motion, for the heat makes sleep or rest impossible, even under canvas. With the burning sand under your feet and the vertical sun over your head, you are as between the lids of an oven. In June the thermometer rises to 150° and 160°. The air that blows feels as if it had just passed through a furnace or a brick-kiln. Over the plains it quivers visibly in the sun, as if rising from a red-hot stove, while the mirage mocks your senses with the most life-like image of lakes, ponds, and rippling waters."—(*Century*, March, 1885.)

The dress of the Soudanese women if not voluminous is simple. They attire themselves in dark blue calico, which they wrap round the waist, and which covers them down to the knees. Besides this they wear a white muslin veil, which covers the head and the face, leaving only the eyes exposed. They are very fond of ornaments, especially of beads, which they wear not only round their necks, but also round their waists, and their wrists. They further

decorate themselves with necklaces of "saumeet," or pieces of agate an inch thick, with alternated colours of black, brown and white. They wear ear-rings and nose-rings of gold. Those in the ear weigh half an ounce each, and that in the nose is so large as to cover the mouth. It is worn on the right side of the nose. When they cannot afford the gold rings they put a piece of coral through the nose. Not only are the neck, ears and nose ornamented, but the ankles also. Strings of glass beads, or filigree ornaments fastened with a silk tassel, generally red, above thick-soled brown leather sandals, adorn the feet of the Soudanese girls. The girls themselves are thus described in Petherick's interesting book, *Egypt*:—

"Their colour partakes of various shades, from light to brown, almost black; and although they scarcely ever wash—using the "dilka," dough and oil, instead of water—their skin appears clean and fresh. The hair, which never reaches below the shoulders, and inclines to be woolly, is plaited into a variety of forms, but generally closely to the head, fitting like a skull-cap, and hanging down in thick masses of innumerable small plaits all round the side and back of the head. Another form is to plait the hair so as to adhere close to the top of the head, as in the former case, but the ends, instead of being plaited, are combed out and stiffened with a solution of grease, forming a thick bushy circle around the head. With this head-dress, as the lady only arranges her hair once or twice a month, she cannot recline upon a pillow, for which she is obliged to substitute a small wooden stool, hollowed out to fit the neck, upon which she reposes."

The houses of the people in the Soudan are as simple as their dress, and more simple than their ornaments. They are built of sun-burnt bricks, plastered with a composition made of manure and grey sand. There is generally only one large room in the house, which is used both for living and sleeping in, and a small one used as a lumber-room. Often there are no windows, but if there are any, they are placed in very high positions.

The children are never dressed until they are eight or nine years old, and they are very young when they are married. A mother carries her baby on her left hip: the baby is always naked, and sits astride.

The following extract from a letter from one of the Canadian Voyageurs, descriptive of this region, will be read with interest:—

MERAWI, 31st January, 1885.

I know not but I may have conveyed a wrong impression in some of my former letters respecting the fertility of the Soudan, which certainly improves vastly as we go south. The banks of the river from Abbafatma, where not encroached on by the sterile desert, are very fertile.

Here we come upon patches of well-tilled soil filled with the vegetable productions of the country. There may be seen on the right or left bank beautiful groves of date palms alternating with thorn trees with lovely green spray and yellow blossoms, a strong contrast with the white thorn; and every now and then a lawn-like expanse strikes the eye, the ground looking as if it was rolled, so even and smooth is it—fields of barley in all stages of growth, the castor oil plant, cotton, corn and beans of various kinds, many of the latter having a beautiful purple and white flower. To the eye, tired and sun-scorched with the glare of the desert sand just left behind, it is indeed a vision of the Elysian fields.

On the 25th, we passed an island of exceeding fertility and beauty—a very Arcadia—where one might fancy that they had found a haven of rest and peace, that the desire of their soul and their longings for the beautiful and the "Rest for the weary" had at last been attained, were the scene not marred with the miserable mud huts and filthy corrals of the natives, which are surrounded by such an atmosphere that any description of it would so taint the paper on which it was written that you could not get near enough to read it.

I cannot by any description that I can give do justice to Merawi. Stretching back from the river about a quarter of a mile, the cliffs rise boldly and assume quite a castellated form. Huge blocks of white, grey and pink freestone seem to have been laid together like built masonry. But nature has done a work that man with all his ingenuity and education could only faintly imitate. The impress of the Master hand is there, stamped with the Maker's name from everlasting to everlasting. Right from the foot of this wall of rock to the river edge, a lawn level as you could imagine slopes gently, dotted with groups of palm and thorn and fringed as it were here and there with crops of young barley, with the odd-looking mustic plant with its broad leaves, very like those of the cactus, interspersed, and nearer the bank of the stream a belt of grass looking very like our Canadian foxtail, and close on the water edge a broad belt of the bean plant, making a most charming scene. But delightful as all this is, it has only the effect of making me sigh for the green fields, the forest glades and the lovely lakes of dear Canada my home.

The tribes up this way are slightly different from those below, the men are certainly better and more independent looking, better clothed also and altogether more manly.

The women wear their hair in the form of a fringe, each strand about a quarter of an inch in diameter, plaited and well greased, rings in their noses and their ears, with bracelets and anklets. As a general thing this is "full dress for the belles of the Soudan."

"Though the middle and doubtful aged ladies wear a plaited fringe of hair, something after the fashion of a Highlander's kilt, but—'rather shorter.'

"A race of negroes, very thick-lipped, are scattered thickly among the natives, and I fancy these are slaves—in fact, I saw one poor devil with a heavy ankle lock on the other day.

"All traffic is conducted by convoys or caravans of camels and donkeys, and there seems to be a very fair share of trade going on."

The population of the Soudan, north of 11 N. lat., consists chiefly of Mahommedan Arabs, whilst south of that line, negro tribes, mostly pagans, are scattered more or less densely. For centuries past the former have found among the latter supplies for the slave markets of Cairo, Damascus and Constantinople. Egyptian rule was first extended to these districts by Mehemet Ali, under whom Ibrahim Pasha carried it as far south as Kordofan and Sennaar. The Arabs sullenly acquiesced in this invasion so long as their slave trade was not interfered with. When, however, Ismail Pasha, under European pressure, was induced to issue his proclamation against slavery, he alleged the necessity of extending Egyptian rule to the parts whence the traders drew their supplies. Sir Samuel Baker's expedition in 1870 thus led to the conquest of the equatorial provinces, of which, in 1874, Colonel ("Chinese") Gordon was appointed Governor-General. In the following year Darfour was added to the Egyptian possessions. Two years later Ismail Pasha brought all his Central African provinces under one Government, and this he entrusted to Colonel Gordon. The influence of the just rule of such a Governor-General can be imagined. By treating his subjects on principles of absolute justice, by listening attentively to all their little grievances, by mercilessly repressing all those who defied the law, "Chinese" Gordon accustomed the Soudanese to a much higher standard of Government than they had ever yet seen. But alas! on the fall of Ismail, economy necessitated the recall of their exemplary ruler, and he gone, a whole horde of Turks, Circassians, Bashi-Bazouks were once more let loose to harass and oppress the unfortunate Soudanese.

Now arose a deliverer, by name Mahomet Achmet, self-called El Mahdi.

Carlyle believes the great man is heaven-sent. To say that the time calls forth the man he declares is "melancholy work." "The great man," he says, "with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. His word is the wise healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when he has once struck on it, into fire like his own. The dry mouldering sticks are thought to have called him forth. They did want him greatly; but as to calling him forth—!—Those are critics of small vision, I think who cry: 'See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?'"

This sounds very nice ; but Thomas Carlyle's "great man" is so great that Carlyle can see nothing else. He forgets that the dryness of the sticks is one factor in the creating of a great man. If there were no dryness there were no need perhaps of a great man. It is the seeing the dryness and then holding to them a lighted torch that makes the man great.

The sticks were very dry indeed in the Soudan, and there was a man there who knew it. Of him let us now take notice.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAHDI.

In many Mussulman countries there existed a belief that on the completion of twelve centuries from the Hegira, the Mahdi, or new deliverer, would appear. The twelve centuries were reckoned to come to an end on 12th November, 1882. But one who would not await for that eventful day had already arisen, and declared himself the Mahdi. This was a man about thirty years of age, who is described as being tall and slim, and having a light brown complexion. His name was Mahomet Achmet, and he was the son of a carpenter. He was apprenticed to his uncle, who one day gave him a beating, which so enraged him that he ran away and went to a free school kept by one of the dervishes at Hoghali, a village near Khartoum. This school is attached to the shrine of the patron saint of Khartoum, and is greatly venerated by the natives. From this school he went to another at Berber, where also there is a shrine ; and he there seemed to be a religious boy.

In 1870 he became the disciple of Sheikh Nur-el-Dami, a name which means "continuous light," and he ordained him a faki or sheikh. After this he went to live in the island of Abba, on the White Nile, where he dug a cave for himself, which he called a retreat, and into which he went constantly to worship. He began to be known as a very pious man, greatly given to fasting and incense-burning, and prayers. After a time he was joined by followers, who gave him presents, so that he became very wealthy. He married as many wives as he was allowed to have, and always took them from wealthy families, by which means, of course, his own wealth and influence were increased. In May, 1881, he began to write letters declaring himself the Madhi whom Mahomet had foretold. He said that he had been sent to reform Islam, that he would bring a new state of things into the Mahommedan world, that he would establish the equality of man, and make the rich share with the poor. A great many people at once believed in him and followed him. Then he went further, and said that those who did not receive him should be destroyed, whoever and whatever they were.

The world had been so occupied with Arabi Pasha in Egypt, that very little notice was taken of the Mahdi for some time; but on the 19th December, 1881, news came that there were troubles in the Soudan. The False Prophet, at the head of one thousand five hundred men, totally annihilated an Egyptian force of three hundred and fifty men, who were led against him by the Governor of Fashada. The Governor himself was among the killed. The Governor-General of the Soudan at once sent for reinforcements, and the Black Regiment, under the command of Abdallah Bey, was ordered to advance. But the Egyptian forces were very half-hearted in the matter, and were beaten again and again.

In July, 1882, the Mahdi brought his followers and made them surround the Egyptian soldiers under Yusef Pasha. The Egyptians were without food, and were easily overcome, the entire army being massacred by the Mahdi.

On the 8th of September, he attacked Obeid and was repulsed. He made a second and a third attack with the same result; and on the last occasion 10,000 of his men were slain.

On the 8th of December, a man arrived on the scene who was likely to make things better if it were possible, and that was Colonel Stuart; but in the beginning of January, 1883, both Bara and Obeid surrendered to the Mahdi, who at once entered the latter town and took up his residence there.

The *Daily News* published a very curious letter from an Effendi, which had been forwarded by its special correspondent, Mr. O'Donovan, and which shows how some of the Mahdi's followers regard him:—"The Mahdi seeks nothing but God. He is kind and speaks civilly to all. He abhors falsehoods, and his pride is to spread the glory of our religion. He fights in the path of

God, and only with those who refuse to obey him. His daily life (peace be unto him !) is quite opposed to worldly matters, nor does he care for its enjoyments. He is simple in his diet and plain in dress. Kisaret dourra (millet) steeped in water is all that he eats. A plain shirt and trousers made from the native cloth is all that he wears. He is always smiling, and his face is as resplendent as the new moon. His body and form is of the sons of Israel, and on his right cheek is a mole (khal), and also other marks which are written in the books of the holy law are stamped upon him. He neither honors the rich for their riches, nor does he neglect the poor on account of their poverty. All Muslims to him are equal. Like a kind father to his children, so much is his kindness towards us. Had he punished us for what we have done none of us would be saved, but he forgave us on our repentance. We all received a sufficient sum from the treasury for the support of our family, but do not get any fixed pay. If I were to describe to you all the good qualities of the Mahdi, it would take a long letter to do so. He is following in the footsteps of his grandfather (ancestor ?)—peace be to his bones !—and if you are Muslims and the sons of Muslims, banish worldly affairs, and follow not the inclination of sinful souls, which leads its possessor to destruction, but look to the end and to Paradise."

Such is the man whom England is now doing her best to crush.

It would be interesting here to discuss the rightness or wrongness of so doing—indeed this is a question which not a few of the journals on this side of the Atlantic have already more than once touched upon. On the one side it may be said : His followers, if not he himself, believe him to be the true Imam Mahdi who was to appear ; they are fighting against oppression and a government which they abhor ; and they believe they are doing God's service by exterminating the feringhees or infidels sent by the British and Egyptian Governments to conquer him. The following letter sent to Admiral Hewett and General Graham, signed and sealed by the sheikhs of twenty-one tribes, describes accurately their belief :—

" In the name of the most merciful God, the Lord be praised, etc.—From the whole of the tribes and their sheikhs who have received your writings, and those who did not receive writings, to the Commandant of the English soldiers, whom God help to Islam. Amen. Then your letters have arrived with us, and what you have informed us in them—to come in—then know that the gracious God has sent his Madhi suddenly who was expected, the looked-for messenger for the religious and against the infidels, so as to show the religion of God through him, and by him to kill those who hate him, which has happened. You have seen who have gone to him from the people and soldiers, who are countless. God killed them, so look at the multitudes." Here follow verses from the Koran. " You who never know religion till after

death hate God from the beginning. Then we are sure that God, and only God, sent the Mahdi, so as to take away your property, and you know this since the time of our Lord Mahomet's coming. Pray to God, and be converted. There is nothing between us but the sword, especially as the Mahdi has come to kill you and destroy you unless God wishes you to Islam. The Mahdi's sword be on your necks wherever you may escape, and God's iron be round your necks wherever you may go. Do not think you are enough for us, and the Turks are only a little better than you. We will not leave your heads unless you become Mussulmans and listen to the Prophet and laws of God, and God said in His dear book those who believe Him fight for Him, and those who do not believe in Him shall be killed." Here follow many verses from the Koran referring to permission to kill infidels. "Therefore God has waited for you for a long time, and you have thought that He would always go on waiting for you; but God said He would wait for you as you were bad. People but know that during the time of the Mahdi he will not accept bribes from you, and also will not leave you in your infidelity, so there is nothing for you but the sword, so that there will not remain one of you on the face of the earth, therefore Islam.

On the other hand it may be said: He is no prophet; he is deceiving his disciples; even the Mussulmans of India declare he is no Mohammedan; the just rule of England will be superior to any Oriental government; he is in revolt against the rightful powers; Egypt under England is better able to judge what is best for the Soudanese; and his defeat will lead to the rapid spread of civilization.

Some of the former of these considerations, added to the extreme difficulty which, it was felt, attended any attempt to bring the whole of the Soudan provinces completely under subjugation, seem to have had great weight with the British Cabinet. The instructions issued to General Gordon on the occasion of employing him as the pacificator of these regions show this. "Her Majesty's Government," said Lord Granville, "are desirous that you should proceed at once to Egypt, to report to them on the military situation in the Soudan, and on the measures which it may be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding positions in that country, and for the safety of the European population in Khartoum. You are also desired to consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan, and upon the manner in which the safety and the good administration by the Egyptian Government of the ports on the sea coast can best be secured. In connection with this subject, you should pay especial consideration to the question of the steps that may usefully be taken to counteract the stimulus which it is feared may possibly be

given to the slave trade by the present insurrectionary movement, and by the withdrawal of the Egyptian authority from the interior."

However, public opinion is now less soft-hearted, and the intention seems to be at all hazards to—"smash the Mahdi."

What a Mahdi is.

The ordinary reader is perhaps satisfied to think that *el Mahdi* signifies nothing more than "the prophet"—or, in the case of Mahomet Achmet, the rebel of the Soudan, "the false prophet." But the word Mahdi has a deeper meaning, and contains a whole history in itself.

At the risk of being tedious, not to say "dry," a few remarks may be here inserted on the origin and growth of the true notion of the Mahdi.

On the death of Mahomet, no successor having been appointed, and uncertainty existing as to whether the succession should be elective or hereditary, three different parties put forward pretensions: first, the Mohadjirs, or early converts; second, the Ansars, who had powerfully contributed to the prophet's success; third, the prophet's near relations. This last party gained the succession, but personal rivalries led to a long and bitter conflict between the partisans of Ali, the prophet's cousin and son-in-law, and the supporters of Moawia, a more distant relative. In the long run the latter were successful, but the adherents of Ali's descendants continued to regard Moawia and his successors as usurpers, and held that the true line would some day again be looked upon as the proper successors of Mahomet, and the personage who would soon appear to demand and seize the succession would be—the Mahdi.

This, in brief, is the history of the idea, but it is invested with many metaphysical, theological, and mystical doctrines. A renegade Jew, by name Abdallah-ibn-Saba, preached that Ali was an incarnation of the divine essence; that he had disappeared from the world for a time, and would reappear as Mahdi. The object of this Abdallah-ibn-Saba was to overthrow the Abbaside dynasty (the successors of Moawia); he cared little for consistency, and explained the Mahdi theory under various forms: to the Jew he represented him as the Messiah, to the Christian he identified him with the Paraclete.

In all ages it has been believed that the Mahdi would have both a political and a religious mission. It is in this sense, probably, that the simple people of the Soudan have received Mahomet Achmet. They think little—probably know little—of his presumed descent from Ali, of his being an incarnation of the divine essence; they have heard naught of the mystical and theosophical dogmas with which the office is encompassed. "It is enough for them to know," says a Constantinople correspondent, "that Allah has sent a prophet and a deliverer who is to drive unbelievers and tax-gatherers out of the country, and to give his followers abundance of opportunities for obtaining plunder. So long as he continues to accomplish successfully this holy mission his pretensions to being something more than an ordinary mortal will not be too closely scrutinized, and the fetwahs of learned sheikhs in Cairo, Mecca, or elsewhere, declaring him to be an imposter, will produce very little effect upon his followers. The followers, on their part, need not know anything of the early history of Islam, or be capable of understanding pan-theistic doctrines. All they require is to be brave and enduring, and to be capable of a certain enthusiasm for the cause which they have espoused. That they possess these requisites in a very high degree they have abundantly proved."

CHAPTER VII.

SLAIN IN THE DESERT.

To give some of the reasons of the Mahdi's astonishing progress and the successes he achieved, as well as to record the sad fate of Colonel Hicks and his 11,000 men, it will be well to say something of the expedition led by this splendid officer against the forces of the false prophet.

The Mahdi's influence was spreading. All the country about Khartoum and El Obeid was ablaze with rebellious and furious fanaticism. The Egyptian authorities became seriously alarmed, and it was resolved to send troops immediately for the purpose of quelling the rising. The disbanded soldiers of Arabi's shattered army were sent to the south, and Colonel Hicks, having been created a Pasha, was given the virtual command. He left Cairo accompanied by several British officers early in February, 1883, and proceeded to Suakim ; from thence they made for Khartoum via Berber. At Khartoum no time was lost in obtaining reinforcements and organizing an army. From March to October various reverses and successes were recorded. Amongst the latter being the battle of Assalia, fought on April 29th.

The desperate way in which the Arabs rushed fearlessly to certain death in this engagement has been described by Colonel Colborne. "With the greatest *sang froid*," he says, "they came up within a few paces. Those whose horses were killed advanced on foot. One Arab coolly walked up to within ten yards of us, and when told to lay down his spear brandished it in defiance. Call this valour, infatuation, madness, or what you will, such cool determination and such utter disregard of certain death has seldom been equalled on the battle-field." This reminds one strongly of the recklessness of the Zulus, who rushed frantically, armed perhaps only with a spear and an ox-hide shield, upon the ranks of their foes. Or of the Moplahs in the south-west of Hindustan, who, it is said, even when transfixed by the bayonet strive to reach their opponent by drawing themselves up the musket.

The last telegram received from Hicks was on the 17th of October, and not till the last week in November was it known that he and his army had perished in the desert, fighting doggedly for three days against countless numbers of the enemy.

The most authentic accounts give the following particulars :—

In September, Hicks Pasha set out from Duem on the Nile for a two-hundred-mile march across the desert with the intention of capturing El

Obeid. His army bore the character more of a mob than of disciplined soldiers, and although consisting of some 11,000 men it seemed to all a sort of forlorn hope to attempt to vie with the hosts of the Mahdi, especially in such a country.

Worse than all, they could never be sure that they were free from treachery. Indeed, as the sequel will show, this it was that brought on the almost unparalleled disaster of which I am about to speak.

On November 3rd, the army entered a sort of defile. Unsuspecting danger they entered fearlessly, but when fairly enclosed, suddenly they found themselves absolutely surrounded by the enemy. It was an ambuscade. The guide had deceived them. And now alone in the desert, encompassed by thousands of wildly fanatical rebels, scarce of water, and with no path by which to advance or retreat, there was nothing for it but to stolidly fight it out to the bitter end. And this they did. For three days did that army under the inspiring valour of their magnificent leader, repel the onslaughts of their foes. Day and night they fought though parched with thirst and with aching limbs. Night only brought fears of surprises, and dawn only showed the numbers of the enemy augmented with fresh and vigorous reinforcements. Ammunition ran short; the foe pressed closer. A third of the Egyptian troops surrendered, and the remainder, with the courage of despair, resolved to die in a last charge upon the foe. The last cartridge was fired. Bayonets were fixed, and recklessly they threw themselves against the dark wall of men before them. It was useless. The bullets of the opposing forces mowed them down by hundreds; and of that army of eleven thousand men it is said that one man only escaped to record the dauntlessness of his fellows. Hicks Pasha himself was found dead, a bloody sword grasped in one hand, and in the other a pistol. With him fell Mr. O'Donovan, correspondent of the *Daily News*, famous for his adventures in Merv; Alla-ed-Deen Pasha, Governor-General of the Soudan, and several British officers, pashas, and beys.

Such a victory naturally set the whole Soudan in a blaze. The fiction of the Mahdi's divine mission required no further confirmation, and additional thousands rallied to his standard.

The history of the events which led up to the war in the Soudan would have been incomplete without special mention of this expedition and its sad termination. This, more perhaps than any other success achieved by the Mahdi, tended to spread his fame far and wide. The consternation even at Cairo was profound. If the false prophet continued upon his path of victory what hindered his marching on the very palace of the Khedive? He had myriads at his beck, and the fate of those sent against him showed the comparative uselessness of the Egyptian soldiery when pitted against men fighting

for their liberty, their country, their prophet, and their God. The rebellion of Arabi was, as compared with this, as a momentary blaze to a vast and rushing prairie fire. So useless did the British Government consider it to oppose this new-arisen Soudanese spectre, that it earnestly advised the Khedive to leave that country to its own fate, and not to attempt further the reconquest of those distant provinces. Reluctant as the Egyptian Government evidently was to act upon such advice, there seemed but little possibility for anything else to be done.

Fresh troubles sprang up. The Soudanese spectre of fanaticism and revolt had hitherto haunted the deserts of the west; now it stalked through the east also. Sinkat was surrounded by the exasperated foe; Tokar was surrounded; the high road between Berber and Suakim was seized; Suakim itself threatened; a relief force for Tokar was cut to pieces; 760 men out of 800 fell in one day at Sincat.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE DISASTERS.

To the civilian and to the ordinary reader the chief business of the soldier seems to be to fight: to form square when the enemy appears; to put a cartridge into his rifle and fire it off; to charge at the sound of the bugle; to kill as many men as he can; and to avoid being killed himself. People do not think of the long, long marches with heavy knapsacks; the getting up to start perhaps across a waterless desert, at half-past one in the morning; the looking after jaded horses and unruly camels; the going without water under a terrific sun for hours and hours; the dragging of guns over, commonly speaking, impassable ground; the hard fighting for long wearying hours, at any time of day or night, with or without meals; the glaring sun; the intense heat; the parched throat; the aching legs and arms; the likelihood of surprises; and, not least, the absence of all news from home: no letters, no newspapers, no word at all from the longing wife and the loving children; really quite alone in the horrible desert; behind—a thousand miles to the nearest seaport; in front—three hundred miles of desert, and two hundred thousand black savages waiting for blood. These are some of the things that make up war. Perhaps the fighting is the best part of it. There is excitement in that, there is some tangible evidence of the result of hard work; there is the chance of being mentioned in despatches; there is the praise given in the general orders. But before the battle—what hardships! and after it—what agony often! If one hundred men die on the battlefield, how many people, think you, weep at home? Too many poets sing the "pomp and circumstance of war;" too few poets weep the pain of wounds, the pang of loss.

Wounds and loss now followed in thick succession.

Elated by the grand defeat of the gallant Hicks the rebels grew bold. Tokar is surrounded, Sincat is surrounded. The latter place cannot be reached, and brave Tewfik Bey, the commander of its little force, is left to die. The black hordes come up to the walls and shout curses at its gallant defenders. There is no food; the last dog even is killed to keep off starvation. Half a pound of grain in the twenty-four hours is all the fighting men get now. And at last there is but one sack of this left. They make up their minds. The guns are spiked; the stores burned; the magazines blown up, and the six hundred men who are left to defend Sincat resolve to cut their way through the enemy. They fill their pouches with cartridges and sally forth. Osman's

men at once rush down. The six hundred form square and fight,—it is true fighting this, but it is useless. One side of the square is burst in and that brave little band is massacred to a man. Sincat is captured. Five men and thirty women are spared—that is all, and when the news reaches Suakim there are streets filled with weeping women and—yes—weeping men.

Sincat fallen and Tokar surrounded, something must be done. In this dilemma the Khedive turned to Baker Pasha, now at the head of a creditable body of gendarmerie. This general managed to get together 3,000 troops of an utterly nondescript character, and with these attempted the relief of Tokar. His men were perfectly useless. In the first battle, about 10 miles from Trinkitat, they fell on their knees and begged for mercy from the rebels. It was not a battle, said a correspondent, but a butchery.

Soon Graham is ordered to take 4,000 men and fight for Tokar. He does so, and the battles of El Teb, in which he was victorious, did a little to damp the ardor of the rebels.

It is necessary now to go back a little and speak of the causes which brought the great Gordon on the scene.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CALL FOR GORDON.

MEANWHILE the cry went up from all sides "Send Gordon." Every one who had heard his name and knew of his popularity as Governor-General of the Soudan cried out for him. Why not sent Gordon? said newspaper correspondents; where is Gordon? said natives who had experienced his beneficial rule. Above all, the *Pall Mall Gazette* urged his employment.

"Why not send Chinese Gordon," it wrote, "with full powers to Khartoum, to assume absolute control of the territory, to treat with the Mahdi, to relieve the garrisons, and do what can be done, to save what can be saved from the wreck in the Soudan? There is no necessity to speak of the pre-eminent qualifications which he possesses for the work. They are notorious, and are as undisputed as they are indisputable. His engagement on the Congo could surely be postponed. No man can deny the urgent need in the midst of that hideous welter of confusion for the presence of such a man, with a born genius for command, an unexampled capacity in organising 'Ever-Victorious Armies,' and a perfect knowledge of the Soudan and its people. Why not send him out with *carte-blanche* to do the best that can be done? He may not be able, single-handed, to reduce that raging chaos to order, but the attempt is worth making, and if it is to be made it will have to be made at once. For before many days General Gordon will have left for the Congo, and the supreme opportunity may have passed by."

The cry was echoed and re-echoed till it became the voice of public opinion. The Government recognized it, saw the cogency and force of the appeal, and at once decided to act.

On Wednesday, January the 16th, Gordon had started for Belgium on his way to the Congo, which region he had undertaken to administrate for the King of the Belgians. On Thursday he received a telegram from the British Government asking him if would undertake the pacification of the Soudan. He returned to London at once; and Friday evening saw him *en route* for Cairo.

This, as it proved, the most momentous errand of his whole life, was commenced in the simple, quiet way in which this truly wonderful man was accustomed to conduct all his affairs. Accompanied only by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, of the 11th Hussars, he left Charing Cross Station by the evening train for Dover. The Duke of Cambridge, Lord Wolseley, Colonel

Brocklehurst, and Lord Hartington's private secretary, were the only ones to see him off. The Duke got the ticket; the hero of Tel-el-Kebir carried the portmanteau, and Colonel Brocklehurst opened the carriage door for the quiet gentleman who was going away never to return. Who does not envy the men who were able to render to him the last little services England could do? It was the last London saw of him. For one year and eight days there were thousands in England who watched and waited anxiously for any, the minutest piece of, information they could obtain about him. At the end of that time there arrived the news that he was no more. A grand history his; full of infinite sadness, inexpressible nobility.—Are they ever separable?—!

CHAPTER X.

"I WILL SAVE THE HONOUR OF EGYPT."

But what definitely is the object of Gordon's mission? Briefly, the pacification of the Soudan. But how to be accomplished? This it is not easy, even with the light of after events, accurately to determine. We have seen that the British Government at one time recommended Egypt to give up the southern provinces. We have seen that notwithstanding this she permitted or allowed Generals Hicks, Baker and Graham to march against (a part at all events of) the foe that was menacing these southern provinces. One thing, however, is clear: a resort to arms will be the last resort; that is resolved upon, and a man is sent whose chief influence lies in his known distaste for an appeal to the sword. General Gordon is to use his friendship with the Sheikhs and his popularity with the people, not his power as the representative of a belligerent intruder. "You will bear in mind," writes Sir Evelyn Baring to him, "that the main end to be pursued is the evacuation of the Soudan. This policy was adopted, after very full discussion, by the Egyptian Government on the advice of Her Majesty's Government. It meets with the full approval of His Highness the Khedive and of the present Egyptian Ministry. I understand also that you entirely concur in the desirability of adopting this policy, and that you think that it should on no account be changed. You consider that it may take a few months to carry it out with safety. You are further of opinion that the restoration of the country should be made to the petty Sultans who assisted at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; and that an endeavour should be made to form a confederation of those Sultans. In this view the Egyptian Government entirely concurs. It will, of course, be fully understood that the Egyptian troops are not to be kept in the Soudan merely with a view to consolidating the power of the new rulers of the country. But the Egyptian Government has the fullest confidence in your judgment, your knowledge of the country, and of your comprehension of the general line of policy to be pursued. You are, therefore, given full discretionary power to retain the troops for such reasonable period as you may think necessary, in order that the abandonment of the country may be accomplished with the least possible risk to life and property."

This was written after a long and earnest conversation with General Gordon himself, his own phrases being occasionally inserted.

It will be well if we enter into this intricate subject at some little length, seeing that on the solution of this problem depended (indeed we may say depends) the whole of the future conduct of affairs in Egypt.

The state of the Soudan at the time of Gordon's arrival at Cairo was this: The Mahdi's power had swelled to gigantic proportions. It now extended from beyond El Obeid to within a few miles of Suakim. His troops were elated with successes, and having been promised a certain and immediate entrance into paradise by death on the battlefield, they fought with a recklessness that might truly be called supernatural. They were consequently to be dreaded. Sincat was in their hands; the battles of El Teb (which to a slight extent decreased their ardour) had not yet been fought; Tokar was not yet saved. Osman Digna was rivalling his master in daring. The Egyptian garrisons were faltering, and the rebels were correspondingly exultant. Every day added fresh numbers to the foe. Years of oppression had done their work but too well, and it might be said without exaggeration that the whole Soudanese were clamouring for 'home-rule.' Deeply impressed with this, the British and Egyptian Governments decided to bring about a sort of compromise. The Mahdi was not to be considered as an integral part of the problem at all. The people were to be won back by assurances of kind government; their estates were to be deeded over to them; their debts for unpaid taxes were to be repudiated—they were, in short, to be coaxed into loyalty—not to any hated power, but to governors of their own choice—from among their own families. To bring this about the man was chosen whom they knew, whom they could trust, who had trusty friends amongst their chiefs, and to whose rule they had been already accustomed.

I cannot do better than to append here the memorable memorandum of General Gordon, which gives in his own words his views of what lay before him.

"*Memorandum by General Gordon.*

"I understand that Her Majesty's Government have come to the irrevocable decision not to incur the very onerous duty of securing to the peoples of the Soudan a just future Government. That, as a consequence, Her Majesty's Government have determined to restore to these peoples their independence, and will no longer suffer the Egyptian Government to interfere with their affairs.

"2. For this purpose Her Majesty's Government have decided to send me to the Soudan to arrange for the evacuation of these countries, and the safe removal of the Egyptian employés and troops.

"3. Keeping Paragraph No. 1 in view—viz., that the evacuation of the Soudan is irrevocably decided on, it will depend upon circumstances in what way this is to be accomplished.

"My idea is that the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; that the Mahdi should be left altogether out of the calculation as regards the handing over the country; and that it should be optional with the Sultans to accept his supremacy or not. As these Sultans would probably not be likely to gain by accepting the Mahdi as their Sovereign, it is probable that they will hold to their independent positions. Thus we should have two factors to deal with—namely, the Petty Sultans asserting their several independence, and the Mahdi's party aiming at supremacy over them. To hand, therefore, over to the Mahdi the arsenals, etc., would, I consider, be a mistake. They should be handed over to the Sultans of the States in which they are placed.

"The most difficult question is how and to whom to hand over the arsenals at Khartoum, Dongola, and Kassala, which towns have, so to say, no old standing families—Khartoum and Kassala having sprung up since Mehemet Ali's conquest. Probably it would be advisable to postpone any decision as to these towns till such time as the inhabitants have made known their opinion.

"4. I have, in Paragraph 3, proposed the transfer of the lands to the local Sultans, and stated my opinion that these will not accept the supremacy of the Mahdi. If this is agreed to, and my supposition correct as to their action, there can be but little doubt that, as far as he is able, the Mahdi will endeavour to assert his rule over them, and will be opposed to any evacuation of the Government employés and troops. My opinion of the Mahdi's forces is, that the bulk of those who were with him at Obeid will refuse to cross the Nile, and that those who do so will not exceed 3000 or 4000 men, and also that these will be composed principally of black troops who have deserted, and who, if offered fair terms, would come over to the Government side. In such a case, viz., 'Sultans accepting transfer of territory and refusing the supremacy of the Mahdi, and Mahdi's black troops coming over to the Government, resulting in weakness of the Mahdi,' what should be done should the Mahdi's adherents attack the evacuating columns? It cannot be supposed that these are to offer no resistance; and if in resisting they should obtain a success, it would be but reasonable to allow them to follow up the Mahdi to such a position as would ensure their future safe march. This is one of those difficult questions which our Government can hardly be expected to answer, but which may arise, and to which I would call attention. Paragraph 1 fixes irrevocably the decision of the Government—viz., to evacuate the territory, and, of course, as far as possible, involves the avoidance of fighting. I can, therefore, only say that, having in view Paragraph 1, and seeing the difficulty of asking Her Majesty's Government to give a decision or direction as to what should

be done in certain cases, that I will carry out the evacuation as far as possible according to their wish to the best of my ability, and with avoidance, as far as possible, of all fighting. I would, however, hope that Her Majesty's Government will give me their support and consideration should I be unable to fulfil all their expectations.

"5. Though it is out of my province to give any opinion as to the action of Her Majesty's Government in leaving the Soudan, still I must say it would be an iniquity to reconquer these peoples and then hand them back to the Egyptians without guarantees of future good government. It is evident that this we cannot secure them without an inordinate expenditure of men and money. The Soudan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so. Larger than Germany, France, and Spain together, and mostly barren, it cannot be governed except by a Dictator, who may be good or bad. If bad, he will cause constant revolts. No one who has ever lived in the Soudan can escape the reflection—'What a useless possession is this land.' Few men also can stand its fearful monotony and deadly climate.

"6. Said Pasha, the Viceroy before Ismail, went up to the Soudan with Count F. de Lesseps. He was so discouraged and horrified at the misery of the people, that at Berber Count de Lesseps saw him throw his guns into the river, declaring that he would be no party to such oppression. It was only after the urgent solicitations of European Consuls and others that he reconsidered his decision. Therefore, I think Her Majesty's Government are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of such an attempt being made. Indeed, one may say it is impracticable at any cost. Her Majesty's Government will now leave them as God has placed them; they are not forced to fight among themselves, and they will no longer be oppressed by men coming from lands so remote as Circassia, Kurdistan, and Anatolia."

Thus he wrote officially; but in his speeches to the people, in his private correspondence, and in his semi-official communications, the thoroughly wholehearted manner in which he seemed to be eaten up with the zeal of his project continually shows itself. As probably it has been with all truly great conquerors, clemency was, if not his salient characteristic, by no means a secondary one. The wrongs which the poor, wretched, down-trodden Soudanese had so long borne seemed to pierce him to the heart. He was on an errand of mercy. It was a labor of love in the truest sense. This he believed; this he expressed. His last words to Nubar Pasha on leaving Cairo were: "I will save the honour of Egypt."

CHAPTER XI.

AT KHARTOUM.

"KHARTOUM is a city numbering between fifty and sixty thousand people. Several European consuls reside here. The European colony is small and continually changing; Khartoum is a perfect grave-yard for Europeans, and in the rainy season for natives also, the mortality averaging then from thirty to forty per day, which implies three thousand to four thousand for the season. Khartoum is the commercial centre for the Soudan trade, amounting altogether to sixty-five million dollars a year, and carried on by one thousand European and three thousand Egyptian commercial houses. There are large bagans, in which is found a much greater variety of European and Asiatic goods than would be expected in such distant regions. In the spacious market-place a brisk trade is carried on in cattle, horses, camels, asses, sheep, as well as grain, fruit, and other agricultural produce."

Here General Gordon arrived on the morning of February the 18th, 1884.

The telegraphic despatches reporting his actions and movements on reaching the seat of government are at this date sufficiently full to quote :—

"KHARTOUM, Feb. 18, 3.30 p.m.

"General Gordon's arrival here this morning led to a wonderful demonstration of welcome by the people, thousands of them crowding to kiss his hands and feet, and calling him the 'Sultan of the Soudan.'

"His speech to the people was received with enthusiasm. He said :—

"'I come without soldiers, but with God on my side, to redress the evils of the Soudan. I will not fight with any weapon but justice. There shall be no more Bashi-Bazouks.'

"It is now believed that he will relieve the Bahr Gazelle garrisons without firing a shot.

"Since they heard that he was coming the aspect of the people has so changed that there are no longer any fears of disturbances in the town. They say that he is giving them more than even the Mahdi could give.

"He is sending out proclamations in all directions.

"Such is the influence of one man that there are no longer any fears for the garrison or people of Khartoum.

"Feb. 19, 4.30 p.m.

"Yesterday was one series of acceptable surprises for the people of Khartoum.

"General Gordon's proclamation preceded him, and immediately on his arrival he summoned the officials, thus preparing the people for some salutory changes. He next held a levée at the Mudirieh, the entire population, even the poorest Arab being admitted. On his way between the Mudirieh and the Palace about 1,000 persons pressed forward kissing his hands and feet, and calling him 'Sultan,' 'Father,' and 'Saviour of Khordofan.'

"General Gordon and Colonel Stewart at once opened offices in the Palace, giving to every one with a grievance admittance and a careful hearing. The Government books, recording from time immemorial the outstanding debts of the over-taxed people, were publicly burnt in front of the Palace. The kourbashes, whips, and implements for administering the bastinado from Government house were all placed on the blazing pile. The evidence of debts and the emblems of oppression perished together.

"In the afternoon General Gordon created a Council of the local notables, all Arabs. Then he visited the hospital and arsenal. With Colonel Stewart, Coetlogon Pasha, and the English Consul he visited the prison, and found it to be a dreadful den of misery. Two hundred wretches loaded with chains lay there. They were of all ages, boys and old men, some having never been tried, some having been proved innocent, but forgotten for over six months, some arrested on suspicion and detained there more than three years, many merely prisoners of war, and one a woman, who had spent 15 years in the prison for a crime committed when she was a girl.

"General Gordon at once commenced to demolish this bastille. All the prisoners will be briefly examined, and if it be advisable set at liberty. Before it was dark scores of wretches had had their chains struck off, and to-day Col. Stewart is continuing this work.

"Last night the town was in a blaze of illumination, the bazaar being hung with cloth and coloured lamps and the private houses beautifully decorated. There was even a fine display of fireworks by the negro population, who indulged in great rejoicings till midnight.

"The people are devoted to General Gordon, whose design is to save the garrison and for ever leave the Soudan—as perforce it must be left—to the Soudanese.

"By private advices from Cairo we learn that surprise is expressed at General Gordon's proclamation. Here the Europeans hail it with delight, and agree that it is the only means of saving the lives of themselves and the garrison.

"The Mahdi is proclaimed ruler of Kordofan, it is true; but he is already its virtual ruler, and the official recognition of the fact will prevent his advance upon Khartoum. The slave trade is not to be interfered with; but the Gov-

ernment is already powerless to interfere with it, and the General is, therefore, only making a virtue of necessity. Half of the taxes are remitted, because the people are totally unable to pay.

"General Gordon is evidently determined to carry out his orders to effect the evacuation of the Soudan, without risking the lives of another ten thousand men. The Egyptians and Europeans have the utmost confidence in him and his measures, and foresee that he will spare the useless effusion of blood."

CHAPTER XII.

STILL FURTHER REVERSES.

After Gordon's arrival at Khartoum, while he was exerting his utmost endeavours to avert warfare and bring about a peaceful solution of all difficulties, affairs elsewhere wore a threatening aspect. On February the 21st, Tokar surrendered to the rebels. This in itself was a loss of the first magnitude, for, in addition to its important position, being on the littoral and within a short distance of Suakim—a port of inestimable value, the effect upon the rebels was much to be dreaded. The way in which it was given up also added to its ill effects. There was no valid reason for its surrender: there was an abundance of provisions; the garrison truly numbered only 300, but there were 45,000 rounds of ammunition, and the authorities were perfectly aware of the fact that British forces were hastening to their rescue.

Bad news came also from Massowah further down (south) the coast. And it was said that the insurrection was spreading everywhere even amongst the Government officials. Suakim also was reported to be in a disorganized condition. One thing saved Tokar's garrison from the sad fate of that of Sinkat, viz.: the presence of an English regiment at Trinkitat. Sinkat was helpless, and no terms would the rebels make. Tokar was within reasonable distance of aid, and the life of its garrison was spared. "Possibly too," says the Cairo correspondent of the *London Times*, "because the prestige of General Gordon had reached the eastern tribes." On this subject this writer waxes warm. "Mr. Gladstone," he says, "despises prestige. So do many less able men despise prestige—as well as sugar-plums and children's toys. But if by one or the other we can save valuable lives and restore peace, why not employ them? The other day the adhesion of some powerful Sheikhs was gained at Suakim by presenting them with some squeaking dolls. Because such gifts would not influence the Premier, there is no reason why we should not employ them with savages. And it is the same with prestige. What else but prestige enabled General Gordon to cross the desert and create peace as if with a magic wand? It may be foolish to fight solely for prestige, but, having it, it is more foolish to refuse to use it in order to obtain valuable ends. Had the policy accepted a week ago been adopted a fortnight earlier, it would have saved Sinkat. A month earlier it would have saved Morice Bey and his companions; six months earlier it would have saved Hicks Pasha, Colonel Moncrieff, and 10,000 Egyptians. If it had been adop-

ted two years earlier the massacre at Alexandria, the ruin of that town, the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and all the attendant waste of life and treasure would never have occurred. Let us not be content with this one feeble use of a valuable and bloodless weapon. Other garrisons remain. Shall we wait until they are beleaguered before we attempt to save them from their fate? Shall we tempt Providence by leaving all on the broad shoulders of one man? No; let us appoint General Gordon British High Commissioner in the Soudan, placing at his disposition not only the force now commanded by his old friend and school-fellow, Major-General Graham, but a supplemental body of Indian cavalry. Let such a force be used only when and where he directs, and it may march unopposed through the whole of the Soudan. Then, when all the beleaguered garrisons are free, when the accursed rule of the Turkish-Egyptians over a people who are their superiors is destroyed, let us withdraw once and forever from the Soudan, accept our responsibilities in Egypt, strangle the slave trade where it can alone be reached, trust to time bringing the Soudan voluntarily under the civilized rule of a regenerated Egypt, and receive the gratitude of the millions inhabiting the Nile Valley!"

Many other towns were either in the hands of the rebels or were surrounded by them; amongst others: El Fasher, Darra, Masteri, Foga, Om Shanga, and Thashi.

CHAPTER XIII.

EL TEB.

THE last day of February, 1884, witnessed a long expected battle—that of El Teb, in which General Graham inflicted a severe lesson upon the rebels.

An eye witness gives the following account:—

"At 10 o'clock in the morning the scouts felt the enemy and fire was opened on the mounted infantry, who covered the right flank. Shortly afterwards we neared the old battlefield and saw the enemy in considerable numbers on a small hill, which they had fortified and where they had two Krupps. The hill was dotted with numerous flags and seemed to be the rebel headquarters. As we approached the rebels hid, but occasionally we could mark heads popped up out of holes watching us. We marched to within a quarter of a mile of the hill to its right and then halted. Directly we had done so the enemy opened a tremendous shell and rifle fire. The bullets fortunately went high; but it was evident that, if the enemy had had more time and practice, they would have made good shots. The shell practice was very good, the shells bursting in the square, but fortunately doing no damage, only causing a stampede among the mules and horses. At this moment General Baker was wounded under the eye by a shrapnel bullet, and lost a great deal of blood. He refused to dismount, but was finally persuaded, re-mounting, however, as soon as the wound had been bandaged.

"Most of the men shot were hit about this time; but soon the artillery drove the rebels from the two guns in the first fort.

"About 11.40 we advanced again, inclining to the left, which brought us to the rear of the enemy's position. As we advanced, Lieutenant Royds, of Her Majesty's ship Carysfort, received a ball in the stomach; the wound is very dangerous. When about a thousand yards in rear of the enemy, towards Tokar, we halted, changed front, bringing the 42nd in the front and the Gordon Highlanders in the rear, and advanced on their position. Then they tried to pass us, and while the men in the forts poured a heavy fire from rifles and guns, a vast number more encircled us, coming down on all sides at once. Our men lay down and waited till the enemy were within 150 yards, when the fire from the hill ceased. Then the Gatlings and Gardners got to work, and a deadly fire poured forth from all sides of the square. In spite of our fire, however, which every second knocked over hundreds like rabbits, the rebels came on, rushing up to meet their death in our very ranks. Their courage

was incredible. I saw men rushing wildly on singly, all their comrades for yards around having fallen, and in spite of the hail of bullets, reach the square and throw their spear, or stab, before despatched by the bayonet.

"But no courage or determination could avail against the steadiness of our men, and after half an hour's struggle to break the square, the rebels were obliged to retire, leaving numbers killed on the ground, and more dropping at every step as our men sent volley after volley after them, till they sought shelter behind the hill to the right rear of the first fort. As the enemy retired a wild cheer broke from our men, who, taking advantage of the momentary check, advanced rapidly towards the first works. The rebels, however, were by no means beaten yet. Behind the hill they stopped, apparently to concentrate their forces and to concert measures for another rush. From all sides fresh bands of them hastened up. The ground about here was greatly broken and very difficult. The formation became consequently slightly irregular in places, and gaps were left here and there. A halt was, therefore, called to re-form and distribute fresh ammunition to all needing it. After a few moments the rebels, thinking we were hesitating, came on again in greater numbers than before, and had another three-quarters of an hour's hard fighting before they retired again, baffled.

"Taking advantage of every inch of cover they hid behind each hillock and bush, creeping towards us, and dodging the bullets, so to speak. When sufficiently near they would start up, make a dash for our lines, stab, or attempt to stab, and die. One moment's hesitation on the part of our men would have caused a very serious disaster, but they never flinched or recoiled a step. At last the enemy withdrew some 300 yards, and we advanced upon the fort. When we got close a company of the Black Watch charged the fort, Colonel Burnaby and some sailors being with them. Here the rebels made a desperate stand; Colonel Burnaby's horse was shot under him, and he himself was wounded in the arm. Colonel Burnaby did good work with a double-barrelled gun and slugs, finishing ten men with 20 cartridges. Another gallant act in the fort was that of Captain Wilson of the Hecla, who, seeing a marine closely pressed, rushed to his assistance, and while surrounded by five or six of the enemy broke his sword at the hilt in the body of one of them. The others closing round him, he tackled them with his fists, doing terrible havoc with his sword hilt. He received a sword cut through his helmet, cutting the scalp, but after having the wound dressed was at it again.

"The fort was at last taken and we halted, while the gunners turned the captured guns on the enemy's second position, from which they were still actively firing. We could now see the village of Teb close to; hitherto it had been hidden by high ground. Some hundred yards in front was a brick building, in which large numbers of the rebels were concealed, while in front

of this building was a large iron boiler lying on the ground. All around, thick as a rabbit warren, were pits dug for the enemy to lie hidden in and then spring up suddenly as we passed. These pits gave considerable trouble, some of the rebels lying low, feigning to be dead, till the first lines had passed, and then springing up and doing much mischief before they were killed. As we advanced we shelled the building to break down the walls, but the guns were too small to effect this. The walls were loop-holed and the rebels fired heavily from within. Lieutenant Graham with the Naval Brigade, charged the building, the sailors firing revolvers through the windows while the Highlanders shot the rebels who rushed from behind the walls. When quite close I saw three or four men creep from the boiler, rush at us with indomitable pluck, and meet their doom.

"Now, the cavalry, which hitherto had been idle, got to work, sweeping round our rear, getting to the left, and then charging the rebels on our front. In the plain behind Teb the rebels were thick as bees, but the cavalry were unable to effect much, as the men dodged and lay down, rising as the horses passed, and attacking in the rear. We charged three times through them with little effect and losing heavily.

"The building taken, the enemy were now greatly wavering, but still shelling us from their last position to the right rear of Teb as we advanced. The Gordon Highlanders at once advanced on the village, where the enemy, who were thick in the huts, attempted again to hold their own, but after a sharp fight were put to flight, and this time for good. Thousands made off at a great pace in the direction of Tokar and on this side the rout was now general.

"The fight was now over, the distant plain was covered with fleeing rebels, and ten minutes later not one was within sight, save on the distant ridge already mentioned. Inch by inch the rebels had fought the ground for three-and-a-half hours, with a courage that only fanaticism could give, and no higher praise can be given our men than that they met a worthy enemy. That naked savages should have held their own against troops splendidly trained and disciplined, and armed with the best arms existing, makes it easier to understand General Baker's defeat. It is regrettable to be obliged to fight such an enemy for such an ally. The conduct of every single man of our own troops was simply admirable. Officers and men, one and all, behaved with perfect coolness, forethought and courage."

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT GORDON IS DOING.

Let us now go back to Khartoum and Gordon.

It is difficult for us to imagine what in that far off place his thoughts and feelings are. He is almost alone—latterly quite alone. Col. Stewart and the *Times* correspondent are at present the only Englishmen with whom he can talk over his hopes and fears. He has no army to rely upon, and no army is within call. Around him are vast numbers of Soudanese, some friendly, more treacherous, still more hostile. There are conflicting interests which it seems impossible to adjust; there are petty wrongs to be avenged, and there are gigantic problems to be solved. There are thousands of poor, helpless, ignorant blacks to care for, and there are numbers of powerful and wealthy Sheikhs to conciliate or to punish. Gordon may be said to be Governor, Mayor, Police Magistrate, President of the Bank, Chairman of the Board of Trade, and Chief of Police of Khartoum all in one. What courage, what forbearance, what calm dispassionate judgment does it require!

External influences, too, add to his difficulties. Parliament does not hesitate to question the rightness of his doings*; the Egyptian Government, although under the sway of England, and although pretending to place implicit confidence in the man she has chosen to rule the Soudan, is watching him with a keen eye. Once before Egypt had objected to a feringhee (an infidel) being placed at the head of affairs in the Southern provinces, and though now his presence seems to be a necessity, it is perhaps still a distasteful one. England herself, too, thwarted him in some of his plans. Gordon wants Zebehr—he even goes so far as to offer him (April 16) the Assistant-Governorship of the Soudan—but England will not allow it.

Was ever man placed in so critical a position? The Soudan belongs to Egypt, Egypt belongs to Turkey, Gordon undertakes to manage matters for all three; and France, Germany, Russia, Austria, and Italy are critically looking on to see how he does it. The future of the Mahdi, the future of the Soudanese, of Egypt herself, of England's relationships to Egypt, and of her relationships to the five great powers—all may be said to hinge directly or indirectly on Gordon's actions at Khartoum.

He and his few faithful followers too, were continually attacked by the rebel tribes surrounding the town. Now 3000 of them fall upon a party of

* His proclamation on the slave trade, for example.

some 300 who are sent out to gather fire-wood; now they draw up in long lines under arms with colours flying and drums beating and threaten the whole town. Worse than all, the Egyptian soldiers under Gordon are almost worthless. On one occasion they behaved so badly that Gordon was utterly defeated. On March the 16th, about 2000 troops were got together composed of Bashi-Bazouks, Egyptians, and regular Soudanese, and it was determined to sally forth and attack the rebel lines about eight miles from Khartoum. As Gordon's men approached, the enemy quietly slipped away, disappearing behind some low sand hills. On reaching these, the five chief Egyptian officers, who were leading the force, suddenly wheeled round and galloped back, breaking through their own ranks. Of course their men followed suit, and the whole army broke up and rushed back for Khartoum. The enemy now re-appeared and dashed after their retreating foe in all directions. One Arab lancer, armed with a lance and sword only, killed seven Egyptians in as many minutes. All the sword and spear wounds received by Gordon's men were in the back. So terrified were they during the retreat that not a shot was fired nor a bayonet fixed throughout the day. The enemy captured a field piece, 58 rounds of shell, and 15,000 rounds of cartridges. This was the so-called battle of Halfiyeh. Luckily this defeat tended in no way to depreciate General Gordon's influence; the townspeople remained as staunch as ever. An Arab on the following day came and offered to lend the treasury a thousand guineas free of interest. Another Arab equipped, armed, and paid 200 blacks for Gordon.

Fighting now took place daily. The steamers were continually engaged in shelling the enemy, and heavy rifle firing was often continuously kept up. The rebels became every day bolder and bolder; they approached the town on all sides. They fired incessantly upon the palace. Krupp ammunition was running short in the city. Gordon's steamers were so heavily fired upon that they were obliged more than once to relinquish the objects of their expeditions. Fresh numbers were added daily to the opposing forces, and on April the 7th came the telegram: "Khartoum is at present the centre of an enormous rebel camp. The situation is now very critical."

Of the pass to which matters had come we may judge by the feeling of those shut up in the invested town, and by the measures they were already discussing for their relief. "The total ignorance which exists among us," telegraphs the *Times* correspondent, "as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government is far worse than the certainty, however bad. We have not learned that any help will be sent from without. It is now (April 2nd) four months since the English Government heard of Hicks Pasha's disaster; yet, except the sending of General Gordon, no step has been taken to relieve us. Would it not be more honest of the Government, if it cannot carry out its

self-imposed duty towards us by means of British troops, to hire Turkish regiments? If England will not arrest the advance of the Mahdi, why not give £500,000 to the Turks to do so? It would not cost more. Again, if the Government has decided to do nothing, would it not be better to say so to the townspeople, instead of persuading them to hold out, day after day, and thus to jeopardize their chances eventually with the rebels? General Gordon might tell them to make the best terms possible with the enemy, while we might try to get together the garrison, and attempt to escape, leaving the townspeople to their fate. The hope deferred of English intervention is making the people heart-sick. I have only two sources of hope in this crisis —first, the expectation of an English relieving column; secondly, the plan of a retreat across the Equator. Because I am confident that General Gordon is abandoned by the Government, and that without Zebehr Pasha he can never beat the rebels, I fear that he will be driven to retreat by Central Africa. For to-day arrived an unciphered telegram sent from Sir Evelyn Baring to Berber, saying that no English troops would be sent to that place—in a word, clearly indicating that General Gordon and the others who have been faithful to the Government are thrown over. To retreat on Berber is impossible. Sir Evelyn Baring's unciphered telegram to that place will quickly be spread abroad, and the Arabs will learn that the members of the English Government have turned down their thumbs while General Gordon is struggling here. A retreat on the Congo will entail great hardships."

Still worse news comes. Hussein Pasha Khalifa, Governor of Berber, pathetically telegraphs that he "trusts now in Providence alone," since he has been abandoned by the Government. The insurgents show themselves as far north as the Cairo-side of that town: Nubar Pasha declares he will not take the responsibility of refusing aid, and hastily requests the Khedive to summon a council. Gordon meanwhile telegraphs Sir Samuel Baker that he is surrounded by 2,500 Arabs, and goes the length of proposing that an appeal be made to wealthy Englishmen and Americans to advance £200,000 to enable the Sultan to send 2,000 or 3,000 Turkish regulars to Berber, by which to dispose of the Mahdi. Earl Granville issues a circular note inviting a conference on the subject of Egypt. At Cairo a most uneasy feeling prevails: the stagnation is degenerating into administrative anarchy; no one feels secure; credit is destroyed; the crops are threatened; and the people show lively signs of discontent.

Then come the following telegrams:—

No one will go to Khartoum at any price.

The position is declared to be desperate.

Exasperation against England is increasing.

All the country is in a state of rebellion.

Impossible to communicate with Gordon.

Berber seriously threatened.

Every one leaving for Cairo.

Absolute obscurity veils the fate of Khartoum.

Suddenly Sir Evelyn Baring is summoned to London.

NOTE.—It may cause a smile—especially to those given to moral reflections—to know that while the seething cauldron of Egypt and the Soudan was well nigh bursting with antagonistic forces, the papers in England were quietly informing the world that:—the Duchess of Edinburgh had been safely delivered; primroses were worn on the anniversary of Lord Beaconsfield's death; the London Corporation deprecated the Municipality-bill; the Bell public-house, Old Bailey, took fire; Mr. Farmer, a trades man, swallowed ammonia for cough-mixture; excavations had been made at San; the lot of a Russian Student was not a happy one; and so on.

CHAPTER XV.

PROBLEMS.

On the arrival of Lord Dufferin at Cairo, two main courses were open to the British Government: To leave Egypt to govern herself; or to govern it for her. England tried a compromise: she would govern Egypt through Egyptian officials. Under the first, the Khedive wou'd have been re-established together with the Government of Riaz Pasha, and the country would probably have soon lapsed into the same condition in which it was before. Under the second it is difficult to say what would have taken place —perhaps some awkward questions might have been asked by European powers. Under the third—the one adopted—there arose constant conflicts between the English and the native element.

Since the rise and fall of Arabi the problem had become infinitely involved, and the conflicting elements still survived. First of all, the financial difficulties were enormously augmented, (1) by the destruction of property at Alexandria, and the awards of the indemnity commission; (2) by the prolonged endeavours of Egypt to hold the Soudan and to suppress the insurrection in that region; (3) by the precautionary measures which must be taken in view of this danger; (4) by the excess of ordinary current expenditure over revenue; and (5) by the necessity of undertaking works of irrigation.

Then came the insurrection, and the problems became even more intricate. England desired Egypt to relinquish the Soudan and stick to her eastern seaports—a policy naturally most advantageous to English commerce; Egypt on the other hand wished to keep the Soudan and give up the eastern ports, for the ports monopolized the trade which would otherwise have gone to her great cities. In this contest, however, Egypt had to give in, and it was resolved that the Soudan should be evacuated.

But the Mahdi at El Obeid, and Osman Digna in the region of Tokar and Sinkat, were investing Egyptian towns and massacring Egyptian garrisons. Now England gives in and adds to Egypt's feeble exertions by sending her own troops.

But affairs look very threatening near Khartoum, so England sends help again in the form of General Gordon.

Now Gordon is hemmed in; the Mahdi is growing invincible; Khartoum is likely to fall at any moment; and the insurrection attaining incredible proportions. What is to be done?

CHAPTER XVI.

ENGLAND ROUSED.

We left Khartoum invested, Gordon virtually a prisoner, the insurrection rapidly spreading, and Sir Evelyn Baring on his way to London. What was to be done?

To this question the British public gave no uncertain answer.

A Blue-book had by this time been issued containing the despatches which had passed between Lord Granville, Sir Evelyn Baring, and General Gordon. The London dailies had reprinted the best part of these. Mr. Power's telegrams from Khartoum had given the fullest information of all that had been going on in that town. The correspondents at Cairo and Suakim had sent graphic accounts of the feeling which existed at these ports. The public, therefore, were well competent to express a correct opinion on the present state of affairs and the best course to be pursued. And the opinions the public now began to express were strong in the extreme.

If the English people take some time to form an opinion, they are not backward in forcibly expressing it when formed; but rarely has it been expressed with such stinging force as it was on the present occasion. Sir Samuel Baker wrote numerous vigorous and incisive letters to the *Times*, denouncing the Government, mapping out an Egyptian policy, and proposing elaborate schemes for the conveyance of a flying column to Khartoum. A subscription list was opened at the *Times* office for the rescue of the beleagured garrison and its heroic leader. One lady offered £10,000 towards the equipment of a force, and hundreds volunteered their services. Political speeches delivered throughout the country inflamed the minds of the people. The Government was taken to task in phrases to which English ears had long been strangers. Gordon was declared to have been "cruelly abandoned." The nation was said to have "forfeited its prestige." The policy of the Gladstone ministry was characterized as a "career of madness." "I never remember," said Lord Salisbury, leader of the Conservative party, at a dinner of the London and Westminster Working Men's Constitutional Association, "I never remember a case where the conduct of the Government in Egypt generally with respect to those garrisons and with respect to this unhappy and splendid hero General Gordon (cheers) has excited a deeper and unanimous feeling in the country—a feeling of condemnation which is intense. Men are horrified that a man who has been guided by such high motives as

General Gordon should be abandoned. ('Shame,' and cheers.) Everyone must feel that as a matter of business nothing could be more contemptible than the course which the Government has pursued, except, perhaps, the excuses by which they have defended themselves. Having had all the winter to undertake the rescue of those beleaguered garrisons they have dawdled away the time until it is too late, and then they put forward as an overwhelming justification that it has now become too hot to move. (Laughter.) What man of business in this city would endure such an excuse for those whom he employed? (A voice—'No one.') Then those who look rather deeper and think of the effect of those things upon England's empire and England's reputation, see how our power is gradually ebbing under the influence of this display of indecision; how foreign countries less and less regard our wishes, how more and more we are sinking from our high estate, and how we are even beginning to lose all the acknowledged superiority which is the sole pledge to those vast multitudes of Eastern races that have hitherto submitted to us. (Cheers.)"

Lastly the Opposition determined to introduce a motion for a vote of censure against the Government. The excitement rose high. Defections from the Liberal ranks were numerous and important. Staunch supporters of the Cabinet wavered or altogether fell away. The majority upon which the Conservatives had all along depended was known to have dwindled appreciably. How the voting would go not one could calculate, and what would be the outcome of either defeat or victory could even less easily be conjectured. A change of ministry at a time so critical was a change surrounded with grave responsibilities, and a retention of office could hardly be accompanied by the same inaction of which, by the verdict of the masses, that ministry now stood convicted.

Monday, May the 12th, was the day appointed for the trial. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, pursuant to notice, rose and formally moved a vote of censure on the Government "for their failure to take the necessary steps to secure the success of General Gordon's mission, and especially to provide for his personal safety."

Though couched in calm and dispassionate phraseology, as befitted Parliamentary procedure, the motion contained in it the essence of the popular feeling. It was not so much the general policy of the cabinet, not so much the view they had taken of the limit to which they should go in their interference in Egyptian affairs, not even so much the measures they had taken for the solution of the Soudan difficulties, as it was the uncertainty of the fate of the much-loved man who might even at this moment be in the hands of a crafty and merciless foe, that troubled the minds of the British public. Had no fears arisen as to the safety of their hero, had it been

certain that there was no cause to doubt his ultimate extrication from his present unfortunate position, it is doubtful if popular sympathy could ever have been fanned into so hot a flame, even were Khartoum doomed and the Mahdi finally triumphant.

Of all nations, perhaps the English is the most sentimental—in the true, deep, and better meaning of the word. The stolidity of the Germans prevents the free exercise of this feeling among those people ; amidst the frivolities of the French it is evanescent ; in America more or less sordid influences stifle its growth.

Of this feeling Sir Michael Hicks-Beach took excellent advantage. In an energetic and closely-reasoned speech he reviewed the history of the mission, and recalled the feeling of gratification which the country experienced on learning that Gordon was to be untrammelled. He showed how, nevertheless, the Government had thwarted their envoy, had intimated that no assistance would be sent him, and lastly had invited him to retire as best he could. With much effect he flung at the Treasury benches, with a marked stress on the personal pronoun, the sentence from Gordon's despatch—"I shall leave to *you* the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons." *

To this speech Mr. Gladstone replied with all the exuberance of debating power and aggressive energy of invective of which he was capable. He had for ten days previously refused to give any detailed statement regarding General Gordon's mission, and the means to be adopted for his relief, on the ground that it was proper to wait for the debate on the vote of censure. This debate had now come. But, according to the *Times*, "it is hardly too much to say that the emptiness and irrelevance of his speech filled the most faithful of his followers with consternation. . . . The impression produced in the House of Commons was one of deep disappointment, and that feeling, we believe, will be still stronger out of doors." This—whether or not it be a correct estimate of Mr. Gladstone's defence, resulted in, if not a theoretical, yet a practical, defeat of the Government. The motion certainly was negatived

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* The despatch reads thus :

"(Telegraphic.) KHARTOUM, April 16, 1884, 5.15 p.m.

"MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

"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 to 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."

by 28, but in addition to the extreme narrowness of this majority, the fact that many of the strongest adherents of the Liberal policy either declined to vote or sided with the minority, was eloquent in its significance.

The tension was over. If the Government had scored a technical victory, they had suffered a moral defeat. Public opinion had asserted itself, and its influence had penetrated within the gates of Westminster. Henceforth the Ministry must change their ways. True, they retained office; but the conditions under which they did so were now altered. To ignore that any pressure had been brought to bear upon them was out of the question. It was necessary now to allow that that pressure had driven them from their previous course. Deviation was forced upon them. To act antagonistically to popular opinion was absurd. England had been roused.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MEDLEY.

If the Government had determined artistically to act out a tragedy, they could not have better arranged their materials. The last chapter has described them going through the third act—the climax ; and the ordinary individual would have imagined that after such rapid succession of events, involving such tremendous influences, the end was not far off. In this he would be mistaken. With the skill of practised dramatists they now insert a long fourth act, keeping their audience in the most painful suspense. Whether they over-did it or not is a party question.

To explain :—After the very vigorous onslaught made by the Opposition in moving the vote of censure, backed up as it was by the full force of public opinion, people naturally expected that some decisive action regarding, at all events, the safety of General Gordon, would be taken. So confident were they in this assurance, that the ringing cheers with which the Opposition greeted the announcement of the bare majority by which censure was averted —the insignificant (or rather extremely significant) twenty-eight—were—at least mentally—echoed and re-echoed throughout the country. The Ministry must surely now definitely formulate some policy, and immediately put it into execution. Even the tone of the leading articles of the great papers was re-assuring. The party in power, they took for granted, would now retrieve the prestige of the nation, and so sure were all parties that the rescue of Gordon could be safely left to their care, that for a time it was with a comparatively light-hearted feeling that Egyptian questions were discussed.

But in reality the utmost that had been dragged from the occupiers of the Treasury benches was that they considered themselves responsible for their envoy—a phrase perhaps as vague as it was seemingly definite ; as empty as it was seemingly full of meaning.

As a sort of episode to this terrible tragedy there was introduced now a new element—an Egyptian conference. As an episode it did good service : it took, for a time, the public mind off the main plot ; it delayed admirably the succession of events ; it involved and made more intricate the already complex sequence of actions ; it introduced new characters ; and made more difficult any prophecy as to what would be the final catastrophe.

This proposed Egyptian conference caused much friction between Government and Parliament ; it was understood that the only question to be dis-

cussed was the financial one, but so many rumours were afloat to the effect that a secret treaty with France was under ministerial consideration ; that an understanding on matters unconnected with finance was to be arrived at with that country ; that Parliament would be kept in the dark as to all that was done ; etc. ; that the House of Commons was goaded into a high state of irritability, and evinced the same by pertinacious and pointed questions.

So great in fact was the reticence of the Government, that rumours now flew thick and fast. It was asserted that the co-operation of a Turkish army was sought by the Cabinet ; that troops were shortly to be despatched to Khartoum ; that a railway was to be built for the conveyance of a force from Suakim to Berber ; that international control was to be adopted ; that a dual control was again to be tried ; that British influence was to be altogether withdrawn from Egypt ; and such like.

Meanwhile in Egypt itself British influence fell to low-water mark. Mr. Clifford Lloyd was recalled from Cairo (May 28), on which occasion a high Egyptian official was heard to remark, "England's paramount influence in Egypt began on July 11, 1882, and closes on May 28, 1884. I have learnt English ; I shall now learn French."

In England affairs seemed altogether in a strange state. It was as if the diagnosis of the disease under which the country suffered was thought to be a mistaken one by the consulting physicians (public opinion) who were called in, that a new and powerful remedy had been applied, and that both the attendant doctor and the new arrivals were watching its effects with curiosity, and not without anxiety. A pretty strong dose had been prescribed by the new-comers, which the patient, beginning to lose faith in his old adviser, took with avidity. But unfortunately the regular practitioner kept on his old treatment, and for a time perhaps the last state of affairs was worse than the first. Dissensions, too, arose in the Conservative ranks. And altogether the public mind was tossed about by every wind of policy.

In Egypt and in the Soudan there was no better outlook. No news came from Khartoum, and no news could be sent to that ill-starred town. It was rumoured that the Mahdi had gone thither in force, and that its fall was imminent. Yet nothing could be done. Troops were stationed at Assouan, troops were stationed at Korosko, but the rebels over-ran the country and excited the neighbouring tribes. Attacks were made nightly on Suakim. What news could be gleaned of Gordon showed that he was still harassed by his ever-increasing foes. The only welcome intelligence came from the telegrams of the pious Mudir of Dongola, who, "by the help of God," managed now and again to defeat a few troublesome insurgents. A little by-play (as though an episode were not enough) was introduced in the shape of a treaty concluded by Admiral Sir William Hewett with the King of Abyssinia, who

undertook to move some troops in the direction of Kassala. Then came a catastrophe—the fall of Berber and the massacre of its garrison and population—3,500 souls—another victory for the rebels.*

The plight of the poor fellah became weekly worse and worse, the price of grain fell, taxes remained as before except that now they were allowed to be paid in kind. Anarchy surged over the land like a flood, panic was chronic, and the people cared not who ruled over them. "We possess nothing but our shirts to defend our bodies," they said, "we are friends of the first who brings the stick."† All was a medley: no news could be relied on, no official could be relied on, even the pious Mudir of Dongola began to be suspected; whether Berber had fallen no one knew; what was the fate of Khartoum no one knew.

In England a similar medley existed: amidst a host of internal topics Egypt actually began to be forgotten. The Egyptian conference, with the interminable researches of the "financial experts," for a long while dragged out a sorry existence, then ended in nothing; the Franchise bill and the famous Reform demonstration gave the people something else to think about beside the oppressed fellah, the unsettled finances, and the beleaguered garrisons. Worse than all, the fate of Gordon himself seemed for a time to have slipped the public memory, for we find a correspondent writing on the advance of the Mahdi and the situation in Upper Egypt actually apologizing for his temerity and saying that "even Gordon's isolation at Khartoum and the question as to whether an attempt is or is not to be made to relieve him is one about which the public has apparently ceased greatly to care."‡

It seemed as if by some curious influence the public senses were dulled to all external impressions though the mind still wandered excitedly within—as a man in delirium perceives no outward object yet furiously raves on ideas of his own making. The drug, in the form of the vote of censure, had acted differently from the manner expected, and instead of inducing activity it brought on stupor—a stupor only made more profound by the lulling influence of the conference.

At length this last is brought to an end. France and England cannot agree, and the meeting is adjourned *sine die*. England is once more free to act; she has thrown off the fettering friendship of her quondam ally in Egyptian affairs and henceforth will act alone. The fever is gone; the senses

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* This massacre, by the way, the *Nord Deutsche Zeitung* calmly remarks was due solely to England's Soudan policy.

† See despatch from Alexandria to the *Times*, dated June 23, 1884.

‡ Mr. Claude Vincent in the *Times*, July 17th, 1884.

resume their wonted acuteness ; and Parliament rises from the bed of diseased inactivity to the contemplation of what is going on around it.

And what is going on around it is now of no mild, calming kind. A letter from Gordon, it was known, was at Dongola in the hands of the Mudir. The fall of Berber had been fully confirmed. Sixteen thousand rebels sat close round Khartoum. Debbeh had seen the fall of 5,000 of the followers of the prophet. Something shall be done.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

"ENGLAND may thank God that the conference is a still-born child, and that the miscarriage has saved us from a multiple paternity with an individual responsibility. The question of a new birth now arises. What shall we do?"

So wrote Sir Samuel White Baker in the week in which happened the events chronicled in the closing paragraph of the last chapter.

We are now, my reader, approaching one of the most interesting of the stages of English interference in Egyptian affairs. That interference may be divided into five periods: First, from the bombardment of Alexandria to the sending of General Gordon; second, from the sending of General Gordon to the investment of Khartoum; third, from the investment of Khartoum to the vote of censure; fourth, from the vote of censure to the sending of a relief expedition; the fifth period is that in which we now find ourselves. Where it will end who shall say? * This tragedy—as I have already called it—bears a likeness more to the drama of the Greeks than to that to which Coleridge has given the name "romantic": the hero truly dies—dies as a hero should die, in the midst of his foes, never for one moment relinquishing his aim, but there the play does not end. There is yet to follow the avengement of his death. How or when this shall take place, till the curtain falls, none can say.

The play is complete in all its parts: the shelling of the Alexandrian forts, followed by the brilliant defeat of the up-start Arabi and the sober attempt to quell oppression and introduce reforms, was a fitting opening for a drama in which the exhibition of determined force was linked with a moral aim. Under-plots in the shape of expeditions against a rebellious prophet and his doughty lieutenant only served to extend and enhance the effect of the main plot. The episode of the Egyptian conference contributed, as we have seen, to the further complication of the sequence of events. That dispelled, we enter upon, of all the phases of the war, the saddest because the most disastrous.

Already, perhaps, we have lingered too long upon a period in which so little was done; but we who know how fatal was the result of that inaction,

* 1. July 11, 1883—January 18, 1884; 2. January 18, 1884—March 24, 1884; 3. March 24, 1884—April 12, 1884; 4. April 12, 1884—August 28, 1884; 5. August 28, 1884—

cannot but vividly recall its history, and regretfully dwell upon its consequences. Let us rapidly recall the steps taken for its remedy.

On Tuesday, August the 5th, the public were first officially informed that a "step of some importance" was contemplated by the Government in reference to Egyptian affairs. Mr. Gladstone, when the questions for the day had come to an end, without further preface than an acknowledgment of the serious responsibility imposed on the Government by the failure of the Conference, said that to assist the cabinet in meeting this responsibility Her Majesty had been pleased to approve their proposal that Lord Northbrook should proceed to Egypt to inquire and report and advise the Government upon the counsels they should give to the Egyptian Government, and also on the steps which it might be necessary to take in connexion therewith. Lord Northbrook had accepted this commission, and would proceed to Egypt in the course of the present month. Sir E. Baring would accompany him. Upon this the House went into committee of supply, and Mr. Gladstone moved a vote of credit of £300,000 to enable the Government to undertake operations for the relief of General Gordon. At the outset he reminded the House of the pledges which the Government had given at various times, especially of the promise of Lord Hartington, to undertake military measures for the rescue of General Gordon if they should be demanded for his safety, and he then canvassed the conflicting reports which had appeared in the papers as to the position of Khartoum since there had ceased to be any official communication with him. The general conclusion he drew was that the contingency contemplated by Lord Hartington, when military measures would be necessary, had not yet arisen, but it might arise during the recess, and the object of the vote was to put the Government in a position to meet it if it occurred while Parliament was not sitting. It was also desirable to make certain preparations, the nature of which he thought it advisable not to state. The vote, he added in conclusion, was one rather of principle than an exact estimate of the sum which would be required, and under cover of it the Government would be able to undertake whatever measures might be necessary.

Gordon then was to be rescued. One would imagine that from every heart would have gone up a sigh of relief. Yet the report of the debate which followed the motion for a vote of credit for the sending of an expedition to extricate the defender of Khartoum from his perilous position is curious in the extreme. Mr. Labouchere opposed the vote, arguing that General Gordon was disobeying instructions by remaining at Khartoum, and that the expense of his relief should fall on the Egyptian Government. Sir W. Lawson, facetiously or otherwise, objected to the vote, being opposed to the policy of "smashing" anybody, and would prefer to vote £300,000 to the Mahdi to

put down General Gordon. If he was a Christian hero he ought not to require military operations to relieve him. Lord Galway expressed his opinion that the vote was a mere electioneering trick, and that the Government did not intend to spend a shilling of it. Sir J. Hay asked whether there was any truth in the rumour that a portion of the vote was to be spent on subsidizing the Abyssinians. Sir G. Campbell decidedly objected to a "vote of principle" which might involve the country in much larger expenditure.

On the day following the passing of the vote of credit, Gordon's letter was telegraphed by Major Kitchener from Dongola, together with news more accurate than had lately been obtained. His despatch reads as follows:—

"Gordon's letter, sent by post on the 2nd instant, contains the following:

"'Khartoum and Senaar are still holding out. The bearer of this letter will give you full news of me. Give him all the news you have, and tell him where the expedition is that is coming from Cairo, and the numbers of the soldiers coming. We have eight thousand soldiers at Khartoum. Give the messenger one hundred dollars. (Signed) C. G. Gordon.'

"It is sealed and dated 28th Shaaban.

"The messenger returns to-day. He says that Gordon, Stewart and Power are quite well. The siege of Khartoum is still kept up, but the rebels have retired from their first positions. The rebel army is composed of 5,000 men under the Sheikh el Obeid, 2,000 with Sheikh Abu Gegah, and 3,000 with Sheikh el Buseer between the Niles. On the White Nile is the Sheikh Fadleh, with 3,000 men; and the Sheikh Mustapha, with 3,000, is at Omdurman. Total, 16,000.

"Gordon possesses seven armed steamers with which he makes attacks in every direction.

"Berber fell through the treachery of Hussein Pasha Khalifa, who let the rebels in. The soldiers fought after the entry of the rebels, but were slaughtered. Hussein Pasha Khalifa was not wounded.

"This account is corroborated by thirteen soldiers who have arrived at Dongola from Berber, and who escaped after the fight.

"The people appear to want the old Government back, but are much afraid of the Mahdi's Arabs.

"Gordon, with the help of three steamers and a part of the garrison, seized 5,000 quarters of maize from about 11,000 of the rebels. Gordon's men waited till the rebels' ammunition was finished, and then landed, and thoroughly routed the enemy and carried off the maize."

Four facts were learned from this: The rebels had organized a systematic warfare; their influence was spreading; they centred specially round Khartoum; and Gordon was evidently expecting support.

These things being so, Gordon shall be relieved, this was now the determination of the Government—a determination not hastily arrived at, nor blatantly announced. What was meant by the relief of Gordon must now occupy our attention.

It is only after the lapse of a comparatively long space of time that the facts of history can be viewed in their true light. To the foreign policy of a government this rule especially applies, and more particularly to the foreign policy of the Court of St. James. Little is known—nothing positively—outside the cabinet of the intentions of the Government. Even blue-books give only facts, not motives, and refer only to particular parts of operation. We have not come to the end of the story yet; and till the last chapter is finished the preface must remain unwritten. If we recognize this we shall exercise caution in dealing with, or forming opinions on, England's present relations with Egypt and the Soudan. We are not far enough advanced in the history of the contention with the Mahdi and the pacification of the Soudan to be able to formulate accurately what is or has been the true end in view in the determination to despatch troops for the "relief of General Gordon." We must be careful also not to be led away by the superficial meaning which attaches to this phrase. We know that these were the words oftenest in the mouths of all speakers on the question; we know they were used with great effect upon the occasion of the vote of censure; and we know that the expedition the head-quarters of which are at this moment within easy reach of Khartoum, has been denominated the "relief expedition." But we need not therefore necessarily suppose that the fitting out of 10,000 men, and the spending of some £3,000,000 had only for their object the extricating of one individual from the hands of an enemy. It must be remembered that Gordon represented at Khartoum the Egyptian Government; that he also bore in his own person, as it were, the concrete embodiment of English supervision—to use no more definite language; that the population and garrison of Khartoum had been loyal to Gordon, and, through him, therefore, to the Khedive as against the Mahdi; that promises of succour and support had been made this population and garrison; that money had been borrowed from them with the Governor-General's endorsement and the implied security of England; that Khartoum was a town of unrivalled strategic importance; that if it fell, the Soudan States would fall with it; that unless Egypt, or England through Egypt, held this commercial centre, no influence over slave traders could be exercised; that the abandoment of this place would virtually mean the abandonment of the Soudanese to the new prophet; and that such abandonment would draw in its train political, commercial, social, and religious eruptions the influence and ultimate outcome of which it is utterly impossible to conjecture. If we bear these in mind, it will, I say, be with excessive caution

that we shall express any opinions on the political significance of despatching a so-called "relief expedition." Everything points to the necessity of suspending our judgment on this point; for, leaving out of consideration the probabilities of affairs taking a new turn at any moment, the political, commercial, social, and religious eruptions which, as has been pointed out, would in all probability follow in the train of an evacuation of the Soudan, are in themselves so numerous and so complicated as to baffle all analysis. This problem alone is infinitely involved. Politically, either the Soudanese would submit in a body to the usurper, or individual tribes would still stand aloof. Each alternative contains numerous other alternatives: the connexion between Egypt and these States, hitherto definite, would now be indefinable; the treatment the pretender should receive would be equally so; and complications with the Suzerain and with Abyssinia might occur difficult to adjust. Commercially, the finances of the Egyptian Government would be placed on a different basis —a change involving much; the trade of the littoral ports, and, consequently, of Upper Egypt, would be seriously affected; financial securities would, in all likelihood, fluctuate; stocks would fall, and trade relations be shaken. Socially, the slave trade, with all its attendant influences, would once more flourish; change of masters, together with the changes in property, rank, esteem, and favour, would bring in new elements. Religiously, the pretensions of the new prophet and the verdict of the authorities at Mecca would clash; true Moslems would regard him as an intruder; religious sects would split up; and fanaticism would put a torch to these highly inflammable materials, the blaze of which it is hard to determine what could quench; India might receive a spark; the Porte might interfere; the holy green flag might be unfurled; and Islamism might be so convulsed that its eruptions would efface the entire road from England to her farthest eastern belongings.

The consideration of such possibilities, even in their merest outlines, would lead us far beyond the limits of this narrative; and yet in dealing with the significance of England's present position in Egypt they cannot be altogether overlooked. It is only possible here to state the fact that England had at length determined to send a force to Khartoum, and to chronicle the events which followed that determination.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW TO GET THERE.

I HAVE remarked that the Government by no means erred by any precipitate or hasty arrival at their determination to despatch a relieving force, or in blatantly announcing the same. This is very far within the truth. If they erred at all—and there are some, as we have seen, who thought so—it was in the opposite direction. The public were not informed, nor the enemy through the public, that a force would immediately take the field ; that the conqueror of Tel-el-Kebir would assume command ; that Gordon would be reached, and rescued without delay ; that the Mahdi would be smashed ; and that the last spark of insurrection would be stamped under foot. Much as such a report might have cowed the rebels, the reverse of such a course was adopted. The intentions of the Ministry only leaked out by slow degrees ; even people at home found extreme difficulty in ascertaining their true policy ; the little phrase "if necessary" crept in, as a sort of saving clause, in all their utterances ; and the frequent changes of purpose served excellently to mystify all concerned and unconcerned. At first it was believed that the Suakim-Berber route was to be the one adopted. There were troops at the former place ; railway plant had been there deposited ; indeed some rails were already laid, and two engines were already on the spot. Then great stress began to be laid on the fact that Major Kitchener, a young officer of engineers, —a host in himself, certainly,—was at Debbeh, and he was described as the rocket line by which the cable was to be conveyed to the ship-wrecked vessel. Then people learned that the Nile between Assiout and Assouan was the "scene of unwonted activity." Soon it was rumoured that the Admiralty had ordered 400 boats for the navigation of the river, and that a contingent of Canadian voyageurs had been telegraphed for, and that 3,000 troops were to be concentrated at Wady Halfa. Altogether, as the leading London paper editorially remarked, "the Government had kept the secret of their plans—for that they had a plan it would not be reasonable to doubt—without faltering, and they will be entitled hereafter to claim whatever credit may turn out to be due to the gift of silence as contributory to military success."

We know now, however, what was in the minds of the authorities, and it is needless to pursue further the details of its working out. Suffice it to say, troops were to proceed to Khartoum, and Lord Wolseley was to take command.

There are three ways of reaching Khartoum. (1) There is the river Nile, which may be followed from Cairo to Khartoum—a distance of some 1,900 miles ; (2) there is the choice of making short cuts across deserts—more especially the Nubian Desert, from Korosko to Abu Hamad, shortening the river route by some 500 miles ; (3) and there is the Suakim-Berber route, 245 miles. Each deserves notice.

The river route is long, tedious and has many disqualifications. The Nile is very circuitous, is navigable only at certain seasons of the year, is in many places shallow, and contains dangerous cataracts where the water rushes over a rocky bottom. It requires, too, many embarkations and disembarkations. From Cairo to Assiout the journey is usually performed by train. At Assiout travellers take to the water. From thence, steamers towing barges conduct them to Assouan. At Assouan is the first cataract. To obviate this a railway has been built to Philæ. From Philæ to Korosko is done by steamers again. From Korosko we can go round the long bend of the Nile, or take camels across to Abu Hamad. From Abu Hamad it is possible to follow the river all the way to Khartoum, or at Korti, by means of camels, the Bahiuda Desert may be crossed to Metamneh.

The Nile itself is a terrible stream to navigate : there are great stretches of shallow and broken water, nearly all of them impassable when the river is low, and even when it is high too dangerous to be common. Passing the cataracts is most toilsome work and fraught with extreme difficulties. Great rocks jut out, the water pours over them and between them, forming swift rapids, and boats have usually to be towed up by means of ropes from the banks.

The desert routes are far worse, that from Korosko to Abu Hamad across the Nubian Desert being particularly bad. It has not a single well. It has been described as "absolutely ferocious in its desolation." From Korti to Metamneh is not so terrible : there are here a few wells of drinkable water to relieve the awful aridity.

The road from Suakim to Berber passes through a very different country. In the first 195 miles there are wells at every stage. There is plenty of brushwood and herbage for fuel and forage, and frequently there is the shade of trees. There is a good deal of grain in the country, and there are large flocks of sheep and goats. A railway can here be built within the space of a few months by which communication with Berber from the Red Sea may be accomplished in some sixteen hours. Tanks of water, it is said, can be deposited at regular intervals, and even a pipe line be laid down.

Of these three—or, in main, two—ways of reaching Khartoum, the first was the one chosen.

This choice has been made the object of severest criticism—expressed

vehemently at the time, and since equally vehemently renewed. It will be well, therefore, to give in full the Government's own reasons for their decision —especially as many of the arguments adduced will be interesting to Canadian readers and those acquainted with the Red River expedition :—

"In the selection of the route by which a force operating for the relief of General Gordon should advance into the Soudan the question of water supply held by far the most important place. Putting aside for a moment the consideration of the physical suffering produced by thirst and the rapidity with which men in tropical and semi-tropical regions are brought face to face with it, and applying to the question only the tests of weight and carriage, it was calculated that the carriage of water for one man for one day would require five times the amount of transport necessary for the conveyance of food per head for the same time, while the difficulties in the way of conveying and storing water are at least doubled by the nature of the burden carried.

"Alone among the routes proposed, the Nile was free from this paramount water difficulty. Whatever might be the length of its water-way or the obstacles that lay in its cataracts and rapids, the first and most important consideration—that of an inexhaustible supply of pure and wholesome water, in a land the climatic and physical conditions of which induced almost constant thirst—was met ; and this advantage alone was considered so great, that if the cataracts had been much more difficult than they were known to be the certainty of an inexhaustible supply of water through the Egyptian desert would have inclined the authorities to operate by the Nile route rather than to commit an army of English soldiers to the intense sufferings of a march across the practically waterless waste that for more than 200 miles lies between Suakim and Berber. But the difficulties which the Nile presented in its cataracts were not unknown in the history of the British Army ; they were almost identical, indeed, with physical obstacles which on another continent had been successfully surmounted by British troops.

"Fourteen years ago a small expedition had followed a water-way in the depth of the North American wilderness, where there were rocks, rapids, cataracts, and waterfalls as formidable as those of the Nile. The boats used in that expedition had been specially constructed for the work—quickly put together in different parts of Canada. They had been conveyed by steamer and railway many hundreds of miles before they could be placed upon the waters which they were finally to navigate. They carried 10 men, with from two to three months' supplies. They were adapted for sailing, rowing, poling, and "tracking," and they were light enough to be lifted, in case of necessity, out of the water, and dragged or "portaged" along the shore.

"In the 500 or 600 miles that lay between the height of land north of Lake Superior and the basin of Lake Winnipeg, which was the destination of

the Red River Expedition, there were nearly 50 interruptions from rapids and falls over which those boats had to be carried. Within the space of three months a battalion of infantry, with a small force of artillery and engineers, traversed the double journey 1,200 miles in all, having in that time carried their boats, provisions, stores, and munitions, on 94 separate occasions, a total distance over rocks and through forest of 15 miles. It was a military feat which attracted at the time less attention than it deserved, because the great struggle between France and Germany was then at its height.

"In this Red River enterprise lay the germ of the expedition now proposed along the Nile. If boats of a certain description manned by soldiers had successfully ascended the Winnipeg river with its fall of 2 ft. 8 in. to the mile, why, it was asked, should not similar craft carry troops up the Nile when the fall was not above 1 ft. to the mile? There did not happen to be in Egypt any officer who, from personal experience with the American expedition, was

WHALER-GIG.

in a position to explain to the authorities in Cairo the real nature of the craft proposed and of the methods of using them, and hence it was that the consideration of the Nile route was approached both by the naval and military authorities in Egypt from a point of view which regarded the employment of steamers of considerable size and native craft of from 10 to 20 tons weight as necessary to the operation. But any expedition involving the use of large craft made high Nile an indispensable factor to the success of the undertaking, and high water in the Nile could only be depended upon during the months of August and September. For the work proposed to be done by the small boats of the American type high Nile was altogether unnecessary, and so long as the river had 20 inches of water in its shallowest places so long could these boats make good their way. These different points of view from which the question of the Nile route was regarded at home and in Egypt caused some loss of time in the preliminary stages of decision, and it was only in the

middle of August that orders for the construction of the boats and the preparation of supplies could be given and the work of organization could really begin."

The boats—called "whaler-gigs"—deserve some little notice. They are built of white pine, and weigh each from 920 lbs. to 1,100 lbs. without the gear, and are supposed to carry four tons of provisions, ammunition, and camp appliances; the length is from 30 ft. to 32 ft.; beam 6 ft. to 7 ft.; and they draw only 20 inches when loaded. The crew consists of twelve men, soldiers and sailors, the former rowing, the latter (two) attending the helm. Each boat is fitted with two lug sails, which can be worked reefed, so as to permit of an awning being fitted underneath for protection from the sun. On approaching the cataracts they are transported on wooden rollers over the sand to the next level for re-launching. The ration for the boat service is a special one, resembling more a ship ration than a field ration. It was based

WHALER-GIG, WITH AWNING.

on the assumption that for a considerable period the troops would be entirely dependent on the supplies contained in the boats. Each boat carries 75 packages of food supplies, weighing, roughly, about 48 cwt., including weight of packing cases. This provided 100 days' supplies for the 12 men. The ration consisted of preserved meats of various sorts, including specially prepared bacon, biscuit, cheese, pickles, preserves, flour, tea, sugar, salt, pepper, preserved vegetables, limejuice, erbswurst, rice, tobacco, etc. Each boat also carried a box of medical comforts for the sick, and was fitted to exist as a separate unit during the period for which it was supplied.

These boats, piloted by the now famed Canadian voyageurs, together with an accompanying troop of mounted infantry—mounted on the "ship of the desert," solved the problem of "How to Get There."

The voyageurs and the camel corps each deserve a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER XX.

THE VOYAGEURS.

THE intelligence and ability of Canadian boatmen, as displayed in the Red River expedition, had so inspired Lord Wolseley with the fact of their value, that he determined to make use of a Canadian contingent to aid in transporting his troops up the river Nile.

He therefore telegraphed to Lord Melgund who forthwith communica ed with authorities throughout Canada, and in a short space of time between 400 and 500 voyageurs—some from the Ottawa valley, some from Winnipeg, many from Lower Canada, including Caughnawaga Indians—were got together under the command of Major Denison.

After being inspected by Lord Lansdowne they left Canada for Alexandria on September 15 in the Ocean King, arriving at their destination on the 8th of October.

Perhaps the best possible way of presenting a picture of the kind of work done by the voyageurs will be to quote from a letter, written in diary form, from one of themselves.*

Speaking of the passage of the Hannek cataract, Mr. J. A. Sherlock writes:—

"It looked almost an impossible thing to take a heavy loaded boat up, yet it was done with strained muscles helped by strong will, many a heavy dip we met where the craft hung for five minutes or more, every effort to propel her useless until a favourable gust of wind would come and give its welcome aid, and then slowly but surely the obstacle would be overcome and the oarsmen get a short breathing and resting spell. By good steering and management combined with the efforts of brawny arms we came to a place where neither oars nor sails availed, and where we could not land to use the tow rope, but with the exercise of a little judgment and ingenuity, we made a bold effort to surmount the difficulty. A rope was attached to some osier bushes above the fall and bound to some poles and then dropped down towards us,

* By kind permission of Mr. Lucius Sherlock, of Peterborough, I am permitted to publish extracts from the letters of his late son, John Andrew Sherlock, one of the most intrepid of the Canadian voyageurs. Mr. J. A. Sherlock was one of the 86 who from their ability were chosen to remain with the expedition when the services of the remainder of the contingent were dispensed with. His death was telegraphed to this country in the interval between the printing of the letter on pages 25, 26, 27 and the one here quoted.

and as the boats pulled up in the slack water below, the poles were picked up and all hands clinched the rope (leaving the poles in the water) and pull hand over hand to the bush above.

"My boat was unlucky in the first attempt. I caught the rope and told the crew to catch and pull. Hesitation was worse than folly, as the boat was running swiftly up into an eddy. But the men were too slow, and when the boat struck the heavy water only one man and myself had hold. Round she swung, broadside in the rushing torrent. The rope was torn out of our hands as if a runaway locomotive was hitched on to it, and somehow Sergeant Carey

('Twas in the town of nate Cloghem
That Seargeant Snap met Paddy Carey, &c.')

got tangled in the line and jammed hard against the side of the boat. This (at his expense) broke the first shock we got when we hit the rock below, and as the boat rebounded off the rock, the rope was slacked for a moment, only two or three seconds, just long enough to permit one of the crew to take a hitch round a rowlock, thus swinging us round straight into the stream, saving us from drifting into sure destruction, and enabling all on board to take a firm hold on the rope, you may bet your life it was a firm grip this time, and we try the upward movement again and with greater success. Heavens, but the strain was a terror, inch by inch we crept up to the top, hung there for a moment, touch and go, then slowly forge ahead and out of danger, for a moment and but a moment only, out fly the oars, and pull, my hearties, for your lives! pull! pull! is the word. Four oars scraping the bank, and four moving the boat around a sharp turn just about thirty feet from the head of the heavy pitch, where if we failed to connect it was all over with us. Boat and men would have run their last trip, and my place would be known no more, except in the memory of the home ones.

"This was the worst place on the cataract. We arrived at Abbafatma just at dark. Here we could see, from a small eminence, miles upon miles of river above and below, and far off in the east the sky and desert meeting. The horizon broken here and there by great conical hills, table topped, standing out of the dreary waste of the sandy desert in sullen, solitary grandeur, while aloft a few stars glimmered faintly here and there, now showing a dim light and anon holding themselves from the eye as if afraid even to look upon so barren, so dreary, so heaven-cursed a scene.

"We left Abbafatma on the evening of the 14th and made seven miles against nightfall.

"15th. A fine day's sailing and no accident.

"16th. Passed New Dongola with a grand wind blowing. Our orders were against stopping here as the small-pox has been raging here for some time past and we kept the eastern bank of the river.

"17th. Steady wind and good time made.

"18th. Head wind and tow along the banks nearly all day. We passed the old town of Handak. It is very compact looking, is situated on a hill close to the river bank, and has every appearance of being well fortified.

"Coming on towards the evening the captain and six boats got ahead of us, and at sunset we fancied we could see their camp on the east bank a long way off. The sergeant in charge of the men in my boat was anxious to catch up with the rest, so we concluded to push on, but while towing away in the dusk we got stuck in a shallow muddy place, and all hands had to wade out, shove the boat off and row along the east bank in the heavy current. Here the bank was so steep we could not land. The men were getting quite wearied out towing and rowing. We made two or three attempts to land, but did not succeed. There was no moon and not even a dog to bay at it. No sound broke the air, the night was close, heavy and gloomy, and the men were silent and low spirited. A phosphoric glimmering every now and then in the stream had rather a startling effect, the men fancying that it was a boat drifting down with someone in it with a light, which he was trying to hide, and I rather fancy that some of them had a sort of superstitious feeling, and on the whole they were not very 'comfortable.' We rowed on until we managed to reach a landing place. I wanted them to pitch camp, but no, they concluded to send one of the lads ahead to see if the light we had been steering for was the advanced party's camp fire. Well, he was gone about twenty minutes, when he came back on the run, with no more puff in him than there would be in a slit bellows, and as frightened as a man could well be I believe. He alarmed all hands by telling them to get out their rifles and ammunition, as there were 500 natives encamped near the light we had been moving on and that they had two Gatling guns with them he was sure as he had seen the brass shining in the fire light. To make matters worse while he was gone we had noticed camp fires on the west bank, an unusual thing, as it was against orders. Well, I think that I may safely boast that I had the smartest crew that ever manned a boat for the time being,—in boat, out oars, off shore, and pulling like the 'deil mon,' in less time than I can describe it for the 'lights along the other shore' until the bowman gave warning that the water was shoaling fast, and soon we were stuck on a sand-bank in the middle of the river. Then they all agreed to let their voyageur have his way and get them out of the scrape their foolish conduct had got them into. The boat was shoved off and we ran down stream for about half a mile, pitched camp on a small island, lighted our fires and had our kettles 'singing songs of harmony glee' in double quick time. A good supper soon drove all gloomy forebodings away, the laugh, the jest, the song went round for an hour, our tent spread out on the ground and one man detailed for guard while the rest lay down,

clothes on, rifle at side, fully worn out with the day's toil. Many a night I am so weary I cannot even eat, but the morn sees me up and at work as fresh as ever.

"I can make pretty shrewd guess as to the water we are in from the different shades of sand, rock or pebbles where a boat may float, and where she cannot, sometimes so close that the keel will grate on the pebble or sand. But I would shout 'pull away boys, pull away, we'll get over it all safe'—and the feat was accomplished. You would hear one of them say 'sure Duke but you're the divil—how do you tell at all, at all, the way of it. Why any one would think when we are scraping and scratching over the ground we'd never get through, but here we are safe and sound, and more power to your elbow.'"

On the whole it will appear that the decision of Lord Wolseley to employ Canadian voyageurs was a wise one. The Government, too, by their liberal treatment of the boatmen on their return from active service, endorsed this view.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAMEL CORPS.

What the ocean would be without ships, Egypt would be without its "ship of the desert." Vast areas would be absolutely impassable; merchandise could not pass from one productive spot to another; whole regions would be isolated; news could only with extreme difficulty cross from one locality to another by long and circuitous paths; trade would be confined; tribes dwelling in habitable localities separated by sterile and waterless wastes would learn little if anything of each other; and the country at large would probably be made up of a number of isolated peoples knowing little of each other and nothing of the outside world.

All this the camel obviates. It is truly a most wonderful animal. It scorns the terribleness of the desert. It can go for ten days without drinking, and for twenty days without eating. It will travel twenty-five miles a day with a weight of four hundred or five hundred pounds on its back. It will set out for a ten days' march in which not a drop of water or a morsel of food can be obtained without fear of the results. The rider must have his three meals and his proportionate supply of water daily,—the animal that carries him will plod on for a week and half and cover two hundred and fifty miles without either.

It was on these animals that Lord Wolseley proposed to mount 1,100 men, to form a corps made up of detachments from the three Household Cavalry regiments, seven battalions of the Guards, 16 cavalry regiments, and a part of the naval brigade. They were to travel along the west bank of the Nile, and to form one of the principal parts of the expedition.

This important branch of the army was not without its ludicrous side. The gigantic heavy dragoon mounted as he would be on horse-back* on the restless, ill-contented, and altogether astonished camel was a sight not easily to be forgotten. The rider knew not what to make of his beast, and the beast could less easily comprehend the nature of his rider. The ordinary riding-school words of command fell at first unheeded upon his ears, accustomed only to Arabic persuasives and Arabic expletives. The blue-jackets got on better. Jack Tar takes kindly to animals and was soon on the best of terms with his "ship of the desert," to which he had of course given an

*The saddles supplied were quite different from those ordinarily used in Egypt, and allowed the rider to ride astride just as on a horse.

FIRST PARADE OF THE CAMEL CORPS.

appropriate pet name—often a highly amusing one. One old salt, before his first mount, was very anxious to know which end of his beast got up first—no useless query, for the process by which a camel rises to his feet is a complicated and an uncomfortable one. His question was answered before his eyes, for one of his messmates who had neglected to inform himself on this point, or who had, perhaps, been misinformed by some flippant landsman, was sent head over heels over the neck of his animal when it made the first move in rising.

He is an extraordinary brute, the camel; save when worn out by fatigue he is never quiet. He is never at any time happy; he will bite at the hand that tends and feeds him with the same animosity that he exhibits towards the hand that loads and bridles him. He knows nought of gratitude, is bereft of any of the softer passions, and looks on whomsoever approaches him for whatever purpose as his bitterest enemy. In spite, however, of the waywardness of the brute, the men sought by care and attention to improve his health and appearance by every means in their power. They even went so far as to groom him, an attention to which the camel is altogether unaccustomed, and which at first so filled him with astonishment as to deprive him of the power to protest. Soon, however, it dawned upon him that he was being cleaned, and, his resentment quickly roused, he at once filled the air with hideous roars and groans, which he never failed to renew each time the process was repeated.

Laughable above all things was the sight of Lord Charles Beresford, who, mounted on a donkey, led the naval brigade towering above him on their camels. This celebrated animal of Lord Charles's was by name, "The County of Waterford," so called by his lordship because the second time he contested him he lost his seat.

In their long march and frequent stoppages at the towns on the river bank, there was time for an occasional letting off of the high spirits of the men which had by no means been damped by the difficulties of the road. At Dongola, especially, a few festivities were indulged in while awaiting the arrival of the main body. Amongst other things a camel race was arranged for. It has been well described by an onlooker:

"The scene at the starting post was quaint in the extreme. Camels were there of every size and hue, bellowing one and all as though in direst agony; some of them bestridden by English soldiers on their red leather saddles, some by officers who preferred the comfortable Soudan saddle, some by naked Bischari or Ababdeh, sons of the desert, who not unfrequently disdaining saddles of any kind, sat perched on the rump of the animal as on a jackass, and guided their beasts by the nostril string alone. Here and there among the crowd were Bashi Bazouks on slim-necked, slender-legged animals,

whose rich accoutrements showed that their owners found war a paying trade, and townsfolk who, perched on their high wooden saddles, their long robes bound closely round their waists, intended evidently to make a desperate struggle for victory. At last, profiting by a moment when all the competitors seemed to be in line—a result to obtain which had taken some three-quarters of an hour—the signal was given to go, and the camels started. Then some trotted, some galloped, some turned themselves round and round seeking to tie themselves in knots and refusing to move forward, others threw themselves on the ground and rolled their riders off, and one or two, disengaging themselves from the crowd, started off in a mad breakneck gallop towards the hills, their riders, albeit wild sons of the desert, unable to do more than cling to the beasts for dear life. Every now and then occurred a terrific collision between two eager competitors, which flung both camels and riders to the ground. As the beasts rounded the turning post the confusion became proportionate to the excitement. Many camels never got round the post at all, but fell to fighting one with another on the far side of it, in which conflicts their riders, when natives, soon took part with right good will. Others sought to cheat, diminishing the distance by a hundred yards or so, but these defaulters were promptly 'spotted' and hounded off the course by the watchful stewards. The winner was greeted as he passed the post by such cheers as completely disconcerted the poor brute, and had not his rider warily forestalled him he would have turned back in flight from before the crowd of spectators. The race was a good one, and one of the most interesting features about it was the fact that, although the winning camel was ridden by a native, the English soldiers, whose acquaintance with camels dated from but a fortnight, seemed to hold their own very fairly against the natives, who were, so to speak, born and bred camel-riders. As to knowledge of the habits of the brute and adaptability to a long journey, the superiority of the native is, of course, incontestible; but at this short trial of speed the Englishmen showed themselves not much his inferiors."

Lord Wolseley has not found himself free from criticism in the manner in which he organized this camel corps. Major-General Sir Henry Green, K.C.S.I., C.B., advocated the sending of a camel corps from India,—"a proper camel corps," he said, "not that nondescript force with a heavy dragoon perched on the top of the hump of a camel which Lord Wolseley has improvised on the Nile, but a camel corps such as was raised by the late Sir C. Napier in Scinde, and the organization of which has been elaborated ever since. The proper camel corps is based upon one fundamental principle, which is essential to success in dealing with camels, and that is that each camel must be under the control of a man who understands it. There is no more delicate brute in the world than a camel unless it is properly looked

after and well cared for by a man who understands its habits, its temperament, etc., and hence in every camel corps that is raised upon proper principles you must have one man to drive and another man to fight. The driver, a light-weight, carrying a light carbine, sits in the front of the camel's hump. Your fighting man, equipped complete, sits behind the hump. When necessary the camel kneels down, the soldier alights, the driver takes his beast to the rear, and you have at once an infantry force ready to resist or attack without being burdened with any sense of responsibility for the camels, which are left in the hands of their drivers, who constitute an efficient force for their defence. In the nondescript corps which has been careering across the Bahiuda desert, who takes charge of the camels when the riders dismount in order to go into action? It is an axiom in all camel corps that if you don't take care of your camel you lose him—that is to say, he will die. But with proper care your camel will go through almost incredible hardships. In one campaign on the Indian frontier I had 6,000 camels under me and did not lose one of them. In the Afghan campaign we lost 60,000—and why? Because in the former case the camels were in charge of men who understood them, whereas in Afghanistan the camels were handed over in most cases to the tender mercies of those who had no more idea of a camel than they had of an ostrich. The result was that the poor brutes were often shamefully ill-used and died by thousands. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that the excessive consumption of what you may call transport camels in Afghanistan has in any way diminished the number of camels required for a camel corps. The camels used up in Afghanistan were small beasts of burden, costing from £5 to £10 each. The camels with which the camel corps was formed were the finest camels in the world, bred in Jesulmere, and trained as riding camels, costing from £25 to £35 each. Of these you can get plenty, if you pay for them. The difficulty of shipping camels is absurdly exaggerated. We carried shiploads of them to the Persian Gulf without any difficulty. The great thing is to entrust the job to the hands of men who know their business."

Nevertheless there are some splendid achievements yet to be recorded of General Wolseley's camel corps.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BELEAGUERED CITY AND ITS THREE DEFENDERS.

While we have been calmly talking about votes of censure, routes to Khartoum, white pine boats, and camels, what of the three Englishmen and their loyal band shut up in the besieged city in the midst of a hostile land two thousand miles from help? Ah! what of them? "The count of mighty Poets is made up," sings Keats, "the scroll is folded by the Muses." Not so the count of heroes. Brightest on the scroll of Mars will shine the names of Gordon, Stewart, Power. Heroism the world has witnessed before; but heroism that never yet excelled that displayed by these brave men. It was magnificent, and it *was* war, that defence of theirs—war every day, every night; fighting hourly for their lives, and for the lives of thousands of men, and women and children. "Old Homer's Helicon! that thou wouldst spout a little streamlet o'er these sorry pages." I will do my best, my reader, to tell you what they did, these splendid men: forgive me if I fail.

On the seventeenth of April all communication between Gordon and his country was cut off. From then till October the 1st no news came at all. England at home went on its usual way: eating and drinking, talking and dancing, making money and losing it, and speculating how to make more. England at Khartoum—her three representatives there—how are they spending the time? Enjoying themselves? Yes; they say they are happy, they say they are hopeful, they say they are well. What are they doing? Round them on every side are hosts of watchful savages becoming bolder every day. They incessantly attack them, first on this side, then on that; build forts along the river, place in them powerful cannon and daily push the siege. Now we hear of a heavy attack from the west, now of a strong force in a contiguous village. They fight well, these savages. For whole days they will contest a single position, and armed only with spears will rush boldly upon twenty times their number. But so do the Englishmen fight—fight right well. The town is fortified to the last extent. Broken glass, crowsfeet, tangled wire, chevaux-de-frise, and three lines of percussion mines line the walls. The ammunition is all safely housed; steamers are made bullet-proof by plates of iron; towers, 20 feet high, are built on the barges; and from these the enemy is daily shelled. Up and down the river they go, driving the opponents from this fort, blowing up that magazine, capturing cattle,

capturing corn, killing hundreds the while. Listen to the account of these exploits.

"April 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20.—Attacks by the rebels on the Palace from the villages opposite. Fearful loss of life to the Arabs from mines put down by General Gordon.

"May 6.—Heavy attack from the Arabs at the Blue Nile end of the works; great loss of life from mines.

"May 7.—Great attack from a village opposite; nine mines were exploded, 115 rebels killed. The Arabs kept up a fire all day. Colonel Stewart, with two splendidly directed shots from a Krupp 20-pounder at the Palace, drove them out of their principal position. During the night the Arabs loopholed the walls, but on the 9th we drove them out. They had held the place for three days.

"May 25.—Colonel Stewart, while working a mitrailleuse at the Palace, was wounded by the rebel fire, but he is now quite well.

"May 26.—During an expedition up the White Nile Saati Bey put a shell into an Arab magazine. There was a great explosion. Sixty shells going off.

"During May and June steamer expeditions were made daily. Our loss was slight, and much cattle were captured.

"June 30.—Saati Bey captured 40 ardebs of corn from the rebels, killing 200 of them.

"July 10.—Saati Bey having burnt Kalakla and three villages, attacked Gatarneb, but, with three of his officers, was killed. Colonel Stewart had a narrow escape.

"July 29.—We beat the rebels out of Buri, on the Blue Nile, killing numbers of them and capturing munitions and eighty rifles. The steamers advanced to El Fan, clearing thirteen rebel forts and breaking two cannon. Since the siege began our loss has been 700 killed.

"For the last five months the siege has been very close, the Arab bullets from all sides being able to fall into the Palace.

"Since March 17 no day has passed without firing."*

And inside the city—what is the scene?—All through the streets are seen poor black frightened people crouching in terror of the bullets. Young mothers with children; some sick, some weak with wounds; yet all with firm faith in the kind and brave three who are doing the best they can for them. Food is frightfully dear. Everything has gone up 3,000 per cent. Meat—when it can be bought—after the capture of a few cattle, perhaps,—is ruinously expensive. There are some stores of food, but they consist of corn and biscuits only, and of these only enough for a few months at most. Yet every-

* Telegraphic despatches from Mr. Power, dated July 30.

one works with a will. Colonel Stewart, with arms bared, like a gunner, himself points with good effect the guns; General Gordon is up before dawn —often all night—overlooking and ordering. He is as kind as he is great, this wonderful general. And the beauty of it all is he does not know he is either. Like Carlyle's truly great man he is perfectly unconscious of his greatness. Let him tell you himself what he is doing :—

"April 23.—Thunderstorms in all directions at night. The rising of the Nile will enable steamers to destroy irrigating machines along river banks, and thus prevent any cultivation.

"April 24.—Rain during night. Thermometer 90 deg.

"April 27.—Usual Friday church parade. Not many rebels in south front. Yesterday Steamers went up White Nile and captured four cows, two donkeys, 25 sheep and three prisoners.

"April 27.—We are all well and strong.

"July 30.—The people refuse to let me go out on expeditions, owing to the bother which would arise if anything happened, so I sit on tenter-hooks of anxiety. To show you the Arabs fire well, two of our steamers which are blinded received 970 and 860 hits in their hulls respectively. I should think we have fired half a million cartridges. It may be bad taste to say it, but if we get out of this give Stewart a K. C. M. G., and spare me at all costs. You will thus save me the disagreeableness of having to refuse, but I hate these things. If we get out it is in answer to prayer, and not by our might, and it is a true pleasure to have been here, though painful enough at times. We have a decoration with three degrees—silver, silver gilt, and pewter, with inscription "Siege of Khartoum," with a grenade in centre. School children and women have also received one; consequently I am very popular with the black ladies of Khartoum. We must fight it out with our own means; if blessed by God we shall succeed; if not His will, so be it. All is for the best. I will conclude in saying we will defend ourselves to the last; that I will not leave Khartoum; that I will try and persuade all Europeans to escape, and that I am still sanguine that, by some means not clear, God will give us an issue."*

Let us say as was said of a great man once: "For ourselves, we feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth."

And is no army coming from England after all? the blacks are asking. We have trusted you, lent you money, fought for you, and you have promised to succour us. When is help coming?—When indeed? An English army is certainly on the road, but it is a long road, and before they can travel it—!—

* Telegraphic despatches from General Gordon to Sir Evelyn Baring.

Worse than all, before this a telegram comes all the way from England to say that no help will be sent. Whether the three Englishmen tell this sad news to the poor hoping blacks or not we cannot say. Let us hope not. But they themselves? Do they despair? Listen again:—

"Since the despatch which arrived the day before yesterday all hope of relief by our Government is at an end, so when our provisions, which we have at a stretch for two months, are eaten we must fall, nor is there any chance, with the soldiers we have, and the great crowd of women, children, etc., of our being able to cut our way through the Arabs." Then some news about successes quietly stated, and then the sentence—"General Gordon is quite well, and Colonel Stewart has quite recovered from his wound. I am quite well and happy."*

No; they did not despair. They were "happy;" it was a "true pleasure to have been there," they say. Was there ever in all history greater devotion to duty? What was the Soudan to them or they to the Soudan that they should die for it? For they *died*. There was no compensation; nothing to make death easy but the sense of having done what they ought to have done. Ah! reader, does not your heart ache for them? Three thousand miles from all they loved; not even a kind message from home, from a wife, or a sister, not even a "well done"—not in this world—to cheer them. Yet they are "happy." Thank God for that.—

Let us return to the "relief" expedition.

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*Telegraphic despatches from Mr. Power, dated July 31.

KHARTOUM FROM THE RIVER.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RELATIVE DISTANCES OF IMPORTANT PLACES.

Before we commence the account of the ascent of the Nile it will be well to obtain as clear a view as possible of the various distances to be covered by our troops both by river and desert. The following table gives fairly accurately the relative positions of the chief towns through which they passed, together with short accounts of the more dangerous cataracts :—

From Cairo to Benisooef, 73 miles.

Benisooef is a large and important town, seventy-three miles from Cairo. It is the capital of the province, and the residence of the Mudir, or Governor. There is a railway station and a good bazaar. The population is about 5,000. The chief industry is the manufacture of woollen carpets and warm linen stuffs.

From Cairo to Minieh, 160 miles.

Minieh is a flourishing town, the capital of the province of the same name, and is situated on the left bank of the Nile. The great industry is that of sugar, the first sugar factory in Egypt having been built there. During the sugar cane harvest, and when the mills are in full activity the town presents a very lively appearance.

From Cairo to Assiout, 247½ miles.

Assiout is nominally within eighteen hours (336 miles of Alexandria) and from this point steamers will, without difficulty, convey the troops 320 miles up stream to Assouan. Assiout is the capital of Upper Egypt, contains the residence of the governor, and has a population of 25,000 souls, of whom about 10,000 are Christians. Its trade in linen, cloth, earthenware, woollen, and opium is considerable, and it is the starting-point of the caravans to Darfur and Nubia. The pipe-bowls of Assiout are renowned throughout Egypt.

From Cairo to Girgeh, 341 miles.

Girgeh is chiefly interesting from the fact that it contains a large Christian population, and that the town is manifestly of Christian origin. Formerly Girgeh was the capital of the province, but the town is now of small importance. It contains a Latin monastery—the oldest Roman Catholic monastery now in Egypt.

From Cairo to Thebes, 450 miles.

From Cairo to Esneh, 484 miles.

Esneh is a great place for marketing. One of the chief features of Esneh is the colony of Ghawázee, or dancing girls, who inhabit a separate hamlet.

From Cairo to Edf u, 514 miles.

From Cairo to Assouan, 583 miles.

At Assouan is the first cataract. There is a general impression that the Nile cataracts are species of miniature Niagaras, whereas they are really little more than a succession of rapids, whirlpools and eddies caused by rocks and islets. At High Nile all but the tallest rocks are covered with water, and then it is possible for boats to sail up what is practically little more than a very powerful stream. As the river falls, however, it becomes divided into numerous narrow channels, which necessitate the boats being towed through the rapids and falls which are then produced. The First Cataract, or Cataract of Assouan, is from two to three miles long Both Dahabeahs and Nuggars (smaller Nile boats) pass with their cargoes at High Nile. At Low Nile, when ascending and descending, they usually discharge cargo. The gradient is not more than one in fifteen. Up to this point navigation is perfectly easy. Seven or eight steamers go up and down the Nile from Assouan to Cairo (twelve days). Seven postal steamers ply between Assiout and Assouan (four days), and then from Philæ, above the First Cataract, to Wady Halfa (forty-two hours). Nile steamers can pass the First Cataract from August until January, and boats of not more than sixty tons can pass at all seasons. The river bank has always a lively appearance as the large vessels unship their cargo, which is transported on camel-back or by rail six miles up the river beyond the Cataract. For this purpose there is a short railway, and by this our men and stores, as they arrive from Siout at Assouan, are transhipped and forwarded to Philæ, where steamers will take them to Wady Halfa, a distance of 200 miles.

From Cairo to Korosko, 705 miles.

At Korosko the river makes a rapid and beautiful reverse curve. From Korosko the direct route strikes across the Nubian Desert to Abu Hamad, the Upper Nile, Shendy, Sennaar, and Khartoum. To Abu Hamad is a distance of 227 miles, and a large bend in the river is thus avoided. But the desert is almost waterless, and offers a tremendous obstacle to the movement of a force of any size. It was from Korosko that General Gordon and Colonel Stewart started on their adventurous journey across the desert to Khartoum. Though a place of considerable traffic as the point of departure for the Upper Nile and Khartoum, Korosko is in itself scarcely a village. A few scattered huts lie along the foot of the mountain, and the bank is generally lined with the tents and merchandise of traders.

From Cairo to Wady Halfa, 793 miles.

Wady Halfa is a large village lying scattered amongst a thick belt of

palms. It is a place of much importance in connection with the Expedition for the relief of General Gordon, as it practically forms the base of operations. From Philæ to Wady Halfa the troops will be transported by boats. From Wady Halfa a railway about thirty miles long turns a portion of the Second Cataract, and strikes the Nile at Sarass. The town is somewhat picturesque, but the surrounding country is drear and desolate. Wady Halfa is, however, often enlivened by encampments of traders on their way to or returning from the Soudan. Here the merchandise is transferred from camels to boats, or *vice versa*. Lord Wolseley arrived at Wady Halfa on October 5th in a Nile steamer. He took up his head-quarters in a dahabeah, and at once began to make short tours of inspection.

The Cataract of Wady Halfa, or the Second Cataract, is from nine to fourteen miles long. Dahabeahs cannot as a rule ascend above the Cataract. The boat used above this is the nuggar. Four miles north of Wady Halfa is the north terminus of the proposed Soudan Railway, of which thirty-three miles of rails are laid, the permanent way being completed some twenty-two miles further on. At Sarass the boats of Lord Wolseley's Expedition took the water, and the real difficulties began.

From Cairo to Semneh, 828 miles.

The Cataract of Semneh is not difficult, and with a fair wind nuggars can pass with their cargoes. The part of the river about Semneh is called by the Arabs Batu en Hogar, or "the Belly of Rock." On either bank are interesting temples of the third Thothmes. That on the east bank consists of a portico, a hall parallel to it, and some minor chambers. It stands in an extensive enclosure. The river can be crossed on frail rafts, made of logs lashed together, and pushed forward by men who swim behind it. The temple on the west side consists of only one chamber. At Semneh north winds are prevalent.

From Cairo to Hannek, (?)

Proceeding up the Nile from Wady Halfa the following minor cataracts are passed :—Semneh, Ambigole, Okmeh, Dal and Kaibar. The last-named is seven or eight miles in length. It is impassable at Low Nile, but only passable at High Nile. This difficulty surmounted, the next important obstruction is the Third Cataract, or Cataract of Hannek, which is impassable at Low Nile, but passable at High Nile. From Wady Halfa to this point the Nile is practically one series of rapids extending over a distance of 130 miles, the passage of three of the cataracts being very difficult. From the Cataract of Hannek onwards there is clear water for about 220 miles.

From Cairo to Abu Hamad, 1,297 miles.

From the Third Cataract to Abu Hamad the Nile makes a large right-angle bend. Proceeding up stream, the Island of Argo is first passed, and

then the town of Ordee, or New Dongola, is reached. It is the capital of Lower Nubia and the residence of the Mudir, whose loyalty to the British during the Soudan rebellion has been so repeatedly questioned. New Dongola is an insignificant place ; and the traveller next reaches Old Dongola and Debbeh. From Debbeh is a direct road across the desert to Khartoum, a ten days' journey. After Debbeh the next important place is Ambukol, whence a desert route to Shendy cuts off another bend in the Nile. After Ambukol comes Merawi, whence there is a direct route to Berber. Soon after passing Merawi there is a stretch of 140 miles, impassable at Low Nile, and only passable for small boats at High Nile. There are in this district some seven distinct cataracts, sometimes known as the Cataracts of Shakoujeh.

From Cairo to El Umas, (?)

The Fifth Cataract, or Cataract of El Umas, is impracticable at Low Nile. It lies on the stretch of river between Abu Hamad and Berber. There are here no mountains or even hil's, and the falls at a little distance are scarcely perceptible. The boats used on this part of the Nile are mainly "nuggars."

From Cairo to Berber, 1,400 miles.

Berber (204 miles from Khartoum) is one of the most important towns of the Upper Nile. Once at Berber, the main difficulties of Lord Wolseley's River Expedition are at an end, for from Berber to Khartoum there are but 204 miles of river, which offer no great difficulties to navigation. Berber itself is an insignificant and unattractive Nubian town. It is the limit of the southern flight of the quail, and between it and Khartoum crocodiles and hippopotami abound. About twenty miles above Berber is the mouth of the Atbara River. The male population is about 3,000. The streets are dirty and unpaved, the houses are of sun-dried bricks. There is a small bazaar, government buildings and a telegraph office. The town is protected by earthworks, 4,500 yards in extent.

From Cairo to Shendy, 1,515 miles.

Shendy is the next town of importance after leaving Berber. In 1872 it had a population of 3,000. There is a bazaar and market. It is the terminus of the desert route from Ambukol. Around Shendy the scenery is flat and uninteresting.

From Cairo to Khartoum, 1,900.

At Khartoum, Half Nile occurs in the middle of July, High Nile about the beginning of September, lasting about a month, and falling early in October. Half Nile occurs again about the end of October. It is High Nile at Khartoum forty days sooner than at Cairo.

From Cairo to Dongola, 960 miles.

From Dongola to Debbeh, 105 miles.

From Debbeh to Korti, 45 miles.
From Korti to Metamneh (across desert), 185 miles.
From Suakim to Berber (across desert), 260 miles.
From Merawi to Berber (across desert), 160 miles.

A LETTER HOME.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TOILERS OF THE NILE.

On August the 14th the Nile route was adopted ; on November the 4th it was telegraphed, "The expedition may now be said to be fairly under way." During this interval little of any interest touching the relieving force occurred. On August 28th Lord Wolseley was appointed to command; on the 10th of the following month he arrived at Cairo. There was a very great deal to be done : 800 boats to be built; the preparation and transport of immense quantities of stores; steamers, nuggars, and Nile craft of all kinds to be collected or repaired; coal to be stored; camels to be purchased; and the million and one other things that are required between Aldershot and the battlefield. There was bustle everwhere, from Pimlico to Cairo, from Cairo to Assiout, and from Assiout on to Wady Halfa. Thousands of packages of stores, arms, ammunition, accoutrements, rations, medical appliances, and what not, were daily being landed and sent on towards the front; steamers were hauled over cataracts ; detachments of troops arrived one after the other ; and altogether it seemed to one at Cairo that England had shaken off her apathy, and with her heart in the work was setting out in real earnest to achieve success. Delays of course occurred. Lord Wolseley was summoned to England before his final departure south; supplies failed to arrive as punctually as expected ; coal ran short at certain stations ; and unforeseen obstacles occasionally thwarted the eager desire for haste. Meanwhile the railways were all but succumbing beneath the unprecedented amount of traffic, and the Nile from Assiout to Dongola was alive with boats, all with their prows turned southwards. Voyageurs, Kroomen, blue-jackets, heavy dragoons, infantry, and camel corps, officers and privates, not to mention Arabs and Soudanese, Egyptian soldiers, negro bearers and Dongolese pilots, all had their share of work, and toiled beneath blazing sun or chilly moon with an energy worthy of the aim in view. Detachments go off as soon as means of transit can be prepared for them in steamers, launches, nuggars, whaler-gigs, or on camels and horses.

Life on the nuggars,* though toilsome, was by no means unrelieved by pleasure, excitement, and adventure. It has been graphically described by one who took part in it :—

*The nuggar is a rough but strongly built boat, some 40 ft. in length, and in shape to be compared to the half of a walnut shell. It is open in the middle with a few feet of deck fore and aft. One heavy mast, 30 ft. high, rises from the centre.

THE CHIEF IN A REVERIE.

"The frequent stoppages and the necessity of towing the boats for distances varying from 400 yards to three miles afforded excellent exercise for the men, and were looked on by them as constituting quite one of the pleasant features of the excursion. On these occasions the different boat parties displayed great spirit of rivalry and some most exciting struggles for best place animated each band of trackers. The officers were quite as interested in the result as were their men, and it was amusing at more than one difficult point in the latter part of the voyage to see Colonel Stewart, the new Commandant of Dongola, and the various members of his staff, with coats off and shoes full of black mud, hauling, in the midst of the soldiers and the native crews, on to a grass hawser, which almost invariably snapped suddenly and overthrew the whole party. The struggle over, the first boat round the difficult point would sail triumphantly away, the soldiers on board cheering and railing at the less fortunate occupants of the other boats still plodding wearily on the bank. The labour ended, and all the boats save some one laggard, well under way again, the soldiers would sit, as Tommy Atkins will always sit when he gets a chance, with their pipes upside down in their mouths and their legs hanging over the sides of the boats and almost touching the water, and as one nuggar now and again over-hauled another a volley of chaff would be exchanged between the occupants of the two crafts. Shortly before dusk the halt would be signalled from the Major's boat, and all the crafts would, if possible, join and moor up to the bank. Then, as soon as guards were placed, all the men were allowed on shore with, however, strict orders to keep out of the village if there happened to be one near. Orders were also given to spare the date palms, but strict compliance with such a mandate was hardly to be expected, and the punishment to poor Tommy Atkins was sufficiently heavy, when, after laboriously clambering to the top of a palm to fill his pockets at ease, he discovered that an officer or a sergeant was awaiting his descent at the foot of the tree in order to take his name and number. Sometimes when the wind failed altogether, or was so adverse as to render towing absolutely unpracticable, the halt was necessarily called quite early in the afternoon. Then was Thomas Atkins in his element. He bathed in some shallow part of the stream, took his tea comfortably and at his ease reclining on the bank, and then, attired in his favourite off-duty undress, lounged about the bank enjoying the inevitable pipe and the jokes and conversation of his friends. Comfort in costume to the British soldier is represented as follows. His jacket and shirt are replaced by his great coat, the cuffs of which are turned back. His trousers, unbraced, are rolled up to his knees. His boots are unlaced, his pipe, of course, upside down, and his helmet is put on wrongside before. Has he been able to obtain some particularly uncouth head-dress—such as an old and mangy rabbit or rat skin cap, a battered tarboosch, or broken-down and brimless felt hat—he dons

it with pride and satisfaction, provided always it be thoroughly disreputable —for otherwise where would be the merit—but failing this he is content with the helmet worn as I have described. In this attire, and with a convenient post or tree to lean against, or with a rail or a bank to sit on, he enjoys the assertion of his dress of his momentary freedom from restraint, and feels that he has for the time being retired into private life where care cannot reach him till the next bugle call.

"Despite the good-will and spirits of officers and men, however, the voyage was not wholly enjoyable. Throughout the day all were exposed, without hope of cover, to the scorching glare of the sun. No movement among the men on board could be permitted, for when any man stood up for a moment, the reis or native captain called upon his gods, danced upon the tiller, and vowed that wreck was inevitable if his view should be obstructed. These wily natives soon discovered that implicit reliance was likely to be placed on them, and that they would be humoured in any little whims they chose to display regarding their own particular province. This being the case, they lost no opportunity of harassing the men whenever occasion offered.

"After the great heat of the day the change of temperature at night was most appreciable. The men were provided with but one blanket, which was quite insufficient to protect them from the night air. The night can hardly be said to be cold here, but between 4 p.m. and 4 a.m., there is a fall in the thermometer of never less than 50 degrees, and the effect of this change of temperature, combined with the absence of any stimulant for the men, was a considerable amount of coughing and huskiness in the early morning, which continued until the men's throats had been thawed by the sun.

"The absence of all stimulant is a very serious matter to the English soldier. In time of peace, where his strength and endurance are not tasked in any way, he has at hand the regimental canteen, where he can purchase a moderate supply of liquor. But here he has no canteen, and even if he were allowed to do so can purchase no stimulant but the horrible native beer, a most undesirable beverage.

"When the boats were within two days of their journey's end, a mishap occurred which, though fortunately without serious result, entailed the loss of one boat. The matter happened thus. All the difficult rapids had been passed, and over 200 miles of river covered without mishap of any kind. The boats had reached a place on the west bank named Kassikon, some ten miles below the cataracts of Hannek. At Kassikon the river takes an awkward turn and is much broken by sunken rocks and one or two small islets. The channel runs under the west bank, and as a strong head wind was blowing it was necessary to tow the boats for about a mile. This operation had been satisfactorily performed by all the boats save one, under command of Lieut.

Tudway, which was momentarily piled up on a sunken rock close into the bank. Most of the men were on shore with a hawser, and the few who remained on board were labouring to pole the obstinate craft out into the stream. Suddenly and without further warning than a fierce roar and a savage crackling of dry twigs, the mimosa bushes and rank growth of shrubs that lined the bank became enveloped in a mass of flame, which speedily communicated itself to the sail and rigging of the nuggar. The native captain and his satellites, after one glance at the bushes and another at the blazing sail, promptly seized their little sleeping mats and a bag or two of dourra, which constituted their whole interest in the concern, and disappeared over the stern with an invocation to the prophet and the Seyd el Bedawee—a saint of great renown on the Nile. In this climate everything is so dry and so hot as to be ready to burn on the smallest provocation. Thus, wherever a spark fell, and sparks fell in plentiful showers, a little fire promptly declared itself, and although all on board worked manfully to extinguish these ever incessant flames, it soon became apparent that the only chance of saving the ammunition, the men's kits and other objects on board, would be to clear the boat of all she contained. This was promptly done. The men formed a line from the ship to the shore, and the bales and boxes were handed to them by those on board, whose position was rendered disagreeable by the imminence of the fall of the two huge spars from aloft. The spars fell, and were soon followed by the heavy mast, but, as all were prepared for the event, no one was injured.

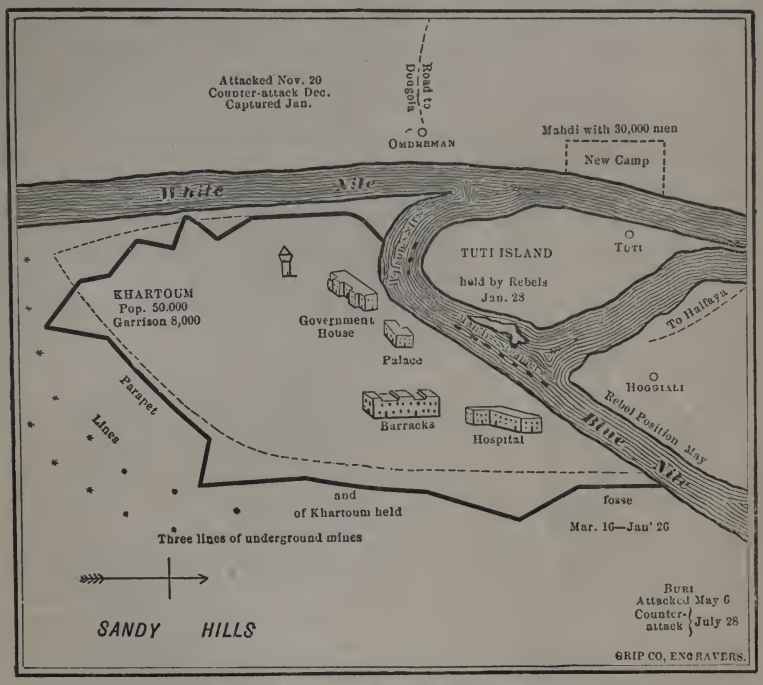
"The fire on the bank soon burned itself out; it extended for about half-a-mile and was stopped by a barren nullah, the tempting trees on the other side of which were wholly beyond its reach.

"The natives came back when all was over and renewed their occupations as though nothing had happened, being utterly indifferent to the scornful epithets showered on them by the soldiers, which, indeed, they did not understand."

As will be seen, it was no pleasure trip this: the labour was toilsome and excessive, the dangers extreme. The heat and glaring sun by day and the cold and sleeplessness by night had told a good deal on the men. All superfluous fat was worked off, and they were described as being hard as nails and fit for anything. But indeed their clothes suffered more than their wearers. The constant rowing, hauling, portaging, shoving, and wading, had reduced the former to mere rags; "the trousers," writes a correspondent, "as might have been expected, fared the worst. I saw a man rowing the other day who had none left, not even the waistband."

To give a succinct and detailed account of the passage up the Nile is impossible. The various regiments and parts of regiments started at different times, and owing to the offer of a prize of £100 by Lord Wolseley, made the

best possible time up the river irrespective of each other. The exigencies of the various parts of the journey also called forth all sorts of contrivances by which to overcome obstacles. Each cataract had to be passed in a peculiar manner, and each vessel required different handling. The skill of the engineers was taxed to the utmost, and many ingenious devices were suggested to aid in hauling boats and steamers round difficult bends or through powerful currents. Not seldom a boat with all its stores and many of its crew would be totally lost, and the narrow escapes which, without exception, one and all experienced would of themselves make a thrilling narrative. But all worked with a will. Their hearts were in their work. Was not Khartoum and Gordon their goal?



PLAN OF KHARTOUM.

CHAPTER XXV.

LEFT ALONE.

We have seen the army hurrying on to reach the three Englishmen shut up in Khartoum. Strong arms pull vigorously at the oars. The boats are dragged through the surging rapids. The mounted corps ride along day by day and often far into the night. Khartoum must be reached and its defenders delivered. Not an hour is needlessly wasted. Yet meanwhile what is happening? They do not know at Khartoum that help is on the way. They are fighting hard as well as they can by themselves. The Nile is now high and General Gordon sends his steamers out daily on excursions. They go up stream as far south as Senaar, shelling the enemy and obtaining provisions; they go north too with the same errands and come back victorious—except on one sad occasion, and it is this occasion that must now be chronicled.

No news from the outside world reaches the invested town. There is an opportunity now to obtain some: it is high Nile; the steamers have shown their ability to pass up and down comparatively unscathed; why should they not go all the way to Berber and from thence to Merawi? Major Kitchener, they know, is at Debbeh, not far from Merawi; he will know if an army is on its way; he will link the exiles once more with their friends; they will find out from him for certain what is being done for them. It is running a desperate risk; but it shall be attempted.

Had they counted the cost, these three brave men? Did they know all the dangers that surrounded such an expedition? An open enemy they need not fear. But behind these there lurked that ever-present spectre—treachery. It dogged our General like a shadow. He could not free himself from it. Wherever he went it followed him. Stealthy, silent, unseen. Working in the dark. Unapproachable. Not to be grappled with. Never revealing itself till its cold deathly grip was on the throats of its victims. Now appearing as a peaceful ally; now stalking unnoticed amongst the ranks of apparently friendly soldiers. A powerful foe. Much to be dreaded. Always to be watched for. Already it had slain its thousands, and none could tell where its blow would next be dealt. It was quiet in its way of working; it waited patiently for an opportunity to lure on its enemies to destruction, and when the opportunity came it was remorseless. If this spectre treachery could have been annihilated, the history of the Soudan war would have been different.

Fearlessly, however, the expedition to Berber is commenced. It is no ordinary excursion this. Berber is more than two hundred miles from Khartoum, Merawi is nearly another two hundred further. Luckily it is down stream, they have good pilots, and the steamers are well armed. It shall be done. Ammunition in abundance is placed on board, provisions are packed, the men are told off, and Colonel Stewart and Mr. Power undertake to bring back news, if nothing else.

This is the boldest venture yet made. It looks as though release were possible. An expedition that has for its goal a point four-hundred miles from the place of imprisonment is a sort of communication with all that is going on outside. Those who accompany it will see another English face perhaps, will be greeted with English greetings, and will hear words of encouragement and hope. They will be able to tell all about their hardships, their battles, the bravery of the loyal little garrison that has stood firm all these months, but also of the longing for help, and of the hope that, so long deferred, was making sick the hearts of the poor blacks. What may not be the results of such a journey? They will be able to telegraph to England itself. The men who have for so long been fighting for their lives will be able now to tell the true state of affairs, will show how urgently help is needed to extricate those poor forlorn men and women shut up at Khartoum, and perhaps will bring back strong, brave, white soldiers to fight for them. Truly a noble expedition.

The people come down to the river bank to see them start. Surely they will be successful. They have done wonders heretofore. They will do wonders again.—Ah! treachery, treachery was on their path.

The rest of the story is short. Down the river they bravely fought their way, undaunted by the numbers that sought to stop them. Behind them they left a town which patiently but anxiously awaited their return. Before them lay unknown help. Nothing will stop them. Day and night they travel, overcoming every obstacle. Berber is reached in safety. No friends here, only more enemies. There is nothing for it but to push on for the next two hundred miles. But first they shell the town and thoroughly intimidate their foes. Here too it is determined that all the steamers cannot be spared to go so far from Khartoum. So all are sent back but one. This one with Colonel Stewart, Mr. Power, and forty men, will accomplish the rest of the journey. Fatal error. The rescuers thought more of those they were to rescue than they did of themselves. All too brave a band. Not far from Berber the solitary steamer struck upon a rock. Here indeed was a dilemma. There was no going back, and there was no going forward. Still there is a ray of hope. A friendly man of the name of Suleiman Wad Gamr comes on board, and generously offers to aid the party as much as is in his power to

reach their friends. He points out that they can cross the desert direct to Merawi, and promises to provide camels to transport the whole forty-two men. It is a tempting offer. True, it is a terrible ride. A hundred and sixty miles lie between them and Merawi, and it is through that terrible Bahiuda desert. Still it can be traversed in a week by hard riding. And Suleiman is friendly. They accept the offer. The whole party disembark and are escorted to the tent of the Sheikh, a blind old man named Fakrietman, who receives them cordially.

The rest is sad news. They all go unarmed except Colonel Stewart who carries a small revolver in his belt. Presently Suleiman makes a sign, and immediately those standing by divide into two parties and fall upon the strangers. Swords, spears, and muskets are used. Colonel Stewart is one of the first killed. A few throw themselves into the river and escape. The rest are shot or drown.

So ended this little expedition. Gordon is now left quite alone. Unfriended by his country, bereft of his friends, he has now single-handed to renew the conflict with his foes.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KHARTOUM.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE HORRORS OF THE DESERT.

At last Korti is reached. (December 16th, 1884.) For ninety-seven days the toilers of the Nile have literally dragged themselves along this almost unnavigable stream. But now they are within reasonable distance of their goal. From Khartoum to Korti a messenger can travel within a week. Surely Gordon is now to be saved. Only a month ago his letters told that he could hold out till the expedition arrived. Still, between him and Wolseley lay unknown and untold dangers. Within the walls of Khartoum itself every body knew that treachery was lurking. Hardly one could be depended on, and "the one supremely capable Englishman" must be reached at once—*at once.*

From Korti to Khartoum there are two routes. The Nile here takes a long bend to the left and contains many rapids. Directly south stretches the desert. What shall be done? Once more General Wolseley's thoroughness comes to the front. Both routes shall be used. Orders are issued (Dec. 29th) that General Stewart shall make a desperate dash across the terrible Bahiuda desert. There are only 180 miles of it, and there are reported to be wells here and there. The next day the march begins, and the resolute band set their faces for Metemneh.

This little force, composed only of some fifteen hundred men, was destined to witness the hardest fighting that was experienced throughout the campaign. It fought on the open field in the desert wastes, against reckless hordes that outnumbered it by twelve to one. It lost its leader, and it lost many of its highest officers. It was more than once totally surrounded by the enemy; and was not seldom on the brink of complete annihilation.

Let us regard closely this brave band.

The object was to establish at Gakdul a dêpot of stores and ammunition, and so to fortify these wells as that they might serve as an auxiliary base between Korti and Metemneh. Accordingly, the following force was despatched:—1,000 baggage camels, each three led by camel-men; 1,000 troops mounted on camels; a detachment of heavy and light cavalry; a rocket battery; commissariat camels; mounted infantry, and hussars. They were led by Major Kitchener and half-a-dozen Bedouin guides, and flanked and headed by scouts. The formation was in column of companies, so formed that in two minutes three squares could be formed in échelon to resist any attack. The

first halt of any length was made at Gakdul. How the little army performed this march, and the almost indescribable sufferings they endured, has been told by almost the last despatch penned by the well-known Mr. Cameron, correspondent of the London *Standard*. We give his words in full:

GAKDUL, January 13.

"At three o'clock in the afternoon of the 8th inst., we were all paraded in the Desert outside Korti, ready at last to open the campaign. General Stewart's previous march to Gakdul and back was more of the nature of a successful reconnaissance made in search of water. We were now in grim earnest bound on a dash straight across, to plunge unsupported into the heart of the enemy's country, and amidst a population all of them avowed disciples of the Crescentade against infidels everywhere, inaugurated by Mahomed Achmet, the Mahdi of the Soudan. No wonder that the natives who watched looked upon us as men doomed to destruction, for had not three large armies more numerous than ours, and as well equipped, already passed over the same road, bound on a similar errand to ours, and had they not all perished to a man? But what the natives did not realize, although some among them were beginning to have a glimmering of the fact, was that these great white soldiers, although they did not bully and kick and tyrannise over them, were still a very different kind of fighting material to the white-livered, despicable Egyptian and murdering Bashi-Bazouk, to whom they had hitherto been accustomed. Only Greeks, Copts, and blacks—chiefly runaway slaves—would accompany us as servants. In the desert, water is the great thing. Food we can do without for a period, and not suffer much, but never water. And so the first thing to do on halting was to examine the skins that contained our precious supply; and then by the friendly bivouac of the Mounted Infantry detachment on rear guard, we lay on the sand to try and snatch some sleep ere the bugles sounded. For the waning moon would rise at half-past one, and at that hour General Stewart had ordered the start to be made. Apparently the last fire to remain alight had only flickered out and silence had but reigned for a few minutes, when the beautiful but weirdlike réveillé of the British army startled us unwillingly into life again. Once or twice only during my campaigning experiences have I heard the réveillé sound with feelings of satisfaction. The last occasion was the morning of the battle of Tamai. All night we had lain silent while the enemy cracked volleys of musketry into us from the bush outside our zeribah. But with the first note of the réveillé we sprang to our feet as one man, glad all of us to think that now our turn had come. And before the bugles ceased the Arabs, too, had stopped their firing and retired to the ambush from where they subsequently sprang upon us. With very different disposition do we listen here in the desert to the morning call;

for it is the signal to jump up with unwilling energy and load our moaning camels, and prepare to jog on again wearily in the dark To load a camel properly, even in daylight, is a work of art. The cargc must be balanced exactly, one half on either side of his back, otherwise it will inevitably, sooner or later, tumble off, and there is nothing more heartbreaking than to see one's baggage tumble off on the line of march—particularly when in an enemy's country. The last rope had hardly been fastened when the 'fall in' sounded, and then for an hour men and camels grouped into their places in the dark ; and at half-past two we moved off our ground, the pebble-strewed desert glistening in the dim moonlight as if it were covered with a coat of yellow shining varnish. Frequently would the bugles sound the halt in rear, to allow time for stragglers to close up, for the officer commanding the rear guard had the usual orders to leave nothing behind. With him were the spare camels, and if a loaded one tumbled, or lay down to die, as they frequently did, a fresh beast at once took his place, and so wearily until morning we silently marched—few cared to converse—gliding across the desert like one long shadow. At half-past five what looked like the reflection of a huge conflagration appeared on the horizon. It signalled the approach of day ; and when it was light the bugles sounded a merry march, the men shouted and talked cheerily, and even the camels looked mildly contented. At ten we halted for breakfast, and tried to get a little sleep until two, when we were away again, striding on sometimes across stretches of sand, sometimes over stony ground, and anon through mimosa country ; but ever the sun shone fiercely overhead. A peculiarity of the deserts that border the Nile is that the mouths of men and beasts who traverse them are always parched. Those who have experience know that it is no use to drink continuously. That only increases the torture, but it is difficult to resist the temptation. There was scarcity of water with all. Lucky was he who, having ventured to bring with him a horse, could give that horse a drink ; and never shall I forget the blank look of despair with which one journalist announced that he 'had no water for his horse and none for himself.' But it was not always the skins that had leaked ; sometimes, too, had the honesty of the servants in charge, for soldiers were foraging about, offering any price, even a dollar for as much as would make a single drink.

"Again, early in the morning, we started, but there was now no unwillingness to get on ; for with many delay meant torture—perhaps death—while progress meant water and life. The Wells of Hambok, forty-seven miles out from Korti, were found empty. Only a bucketful of the precious fluid was there, and that was given to a couple of horses that otherwise would have died. The column did not even halt at Hambok, but pushed on to El Howeyet, eight miles further, where a better supply was expected. But

there, too, ill-luck awaited us. The convoy that started from Korti the day before had only left El Howeyet half an hour previous to our arrival—so quickly had we travelled—and they had drunk all the water. But we halted at El Howeyet until evening, and by that time enough water—if that name may be given to a fluid of the color and consistency of pea-soup—had accumulated to allow every man to have a slight drink. So wild were some of the soldiers with thirst, that for some time it seemed as if a tumult might set in; but Major Wardroper ordered all to fall in as they stood, and so one by one, and in order, were they supplied with their share. On again we went until dark, the camels striding at their quickest pace, as anxious as their riders that water in plenty should be reached; and on again in the morning too we went, making for the Wells of Abu Halfa, which, although some distance off the main track, were eight or ten miles nearer than Gakdul. There the guides assured us would water be found in plenty. In front the squadron of the 19th Hussars pushed on, for the horses had only drunk a quart a piece during the previous twenty-four hours. They were much distressed, of course, and, if not watered that day, would many of them assuredly die. At first the Well of Abu Halfa looked anything but promising. A shallow pool of water, green on the top, we saw, which was well nigh emptied before even the horses had satisfied their thirst. But then a clear, bubbling spring, was discovered at the bottom, which, when cleared, afforded sufficient for everybody; only the wretched camels went without. For a period the scene at the Abu Halfa Well was exciting in the extreme. Chattering Somalies, wild with thirst, barred from the main pool until the fighting men had drunk their full, grubbed frantically in the sand, and in an inconceivably short period dug holes, at the bottom of which a little water collected, that was promptly lapped up. The soldiers, too, could hardly be restrained from throwing discipline aside and thronged in on all sides, while in the background were plunging horses and camels broken loose and fighting desperately with their human masters for a place.

"At present we know not whether our road is to be barred by thousands, or whether we shall reach the Nile without firing a shot. In camp parlance it is 'even betting' on either contingency. We only know that if we fight at all it will not be for victory, but for very existence; for behind us there will be no retreat."

Poor fellow; for him there was no retreat. Within a few hours—at the battle of Abu Klea, he was killed, doing his duty as bravely as the bravest fighting man.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ABU KLEA AND ABU KRU.

Gakdul was reached and passed, and the troops pressed on for Metemneh. On the road to this town lay the wells of Abu Klea.

Abu Klea;—the name has become known wherever English pluck has become known, for here occurred the first and perhaps the greatest of the battles fought by the soldiers of the Nile expedition.

At noon on January the 16th as the troops were bivouacking in sight of the ridge leading to the wells, news was brought that the enemy were holding Abu Klea in force. At once dispositions were made for attack, and in compact square of column the brigade moved forward as steadily as if on parade. In this formation they came within four hundred yards from the foot of the ridge, when General Stewart determined to rest where he was for the night and attack the enemy in the morning. A zariba was formed, strong pickets posted, and the men lay down under arms to gain what rest they could.

And this was not much.

All night bullets kept falling in and around the square, and three times the alarm was sounded with the expectation of a general assault.

However, breakfast was comparatively quietly enjoyed after sunrise, and at 10 o'clock General Stewart ordered a general advance. "We advanced two miles," says Mr. Pearse of the *Daily News*, "exposed to a heavy fire on all sides. We moved out to the attack under a hail of bullets. Men dropped from the ranks right and left, but none of the wounded were left on the field. It was nearly an hour before we sighted the enemy's main body, and realised that at least 7,000 or 8,000 men were against us. We halted and closed square. The concealed enemy sprang up, twenty banners waving, and came on in a splendid line. The troops on the right were led by Abu Saleh, Emir of Metemneh. On the left they were under Mahommed Khair, Emir of Berber. The latter was wounded, and retired early; but Saleh came desperately on at the head of a hundred fanatics, escaping the withering fire of the Martinis marvellously until shot down in the square. The rear face, composed of the heavy cavalry, broke forward in the endeavour to fire on the rebels, who swept round the flank and broke into us. Then came the shock of the Arabs' impulsive charge against our square. For a moment, there was much confusion, and the fate of the whole force trembled in the balance, until the steadiness of the Guards, Marines, and Mounted Infantry prevailed. The

ON THE ROAD TO METEMNEH—REPULSE OF ARAB ATTACK ON A BRITISH SQUARE.

Sussex Regiment, though taken in rear, rallied and fought desperately. The men fell back, re-formed in good order, and poured volleys into the enemy, everyone in the leading division falling dead in our midst. The Guards moved not an inch, even when the rear was threatened simultaneously with the front. Among the first of our officers mortally wounded was Colonel Burnaby, who fell gallantly in fight close to his old comrades the Blues."

Mr. Burleigh, of *The Telegraph*, thus describes Burnaby's death :—

"Still down upon us the dark Arab wave rolled. It had arrived within three hundred yards undiminished in volume, unbroken in strength—a rush of spearsmen and swordsmen. Their rifle fire had ceased. Other Arab forces surrounding us—the Mahdi's troops, plundering Bedouins and pillaging villagers from the river side—stood eager on the hill side watching the charge upon the British square. In wild excitement, their white teeth glistening and the sheen of their brandished weapons flashing like thousands of mirrors, onward they came charging straight into our ranks. I was at that instant inside the square, not far from Gardner gun, when I saw the left face move somewhat backward. Col. Burnaby himself, whose every action I saw from a distance of about thirty yards, rode out in front of the rear left face, apparently to assist two or three skirmishers running in hard pressed. All but one man succeeded in reaching our lines. Col. Burnaby went forward to his assistance sword in hand. As the dauntless Colonel rode forward he put himself in the way of a sheikh charging down on horseback. Ere the Arab closed with him a bullet from some one in our ranks brought the sheikh headlong to the ground. The enemy's spearsmen were close behind, and one of them suddenly dashed at Colonel Burnaby, pointing the long blade of his spear at his throat. Checking his horse and pulling it backward, Burnaby leapt forward in his saddle and parried the Moslem's rapid and ferocious thrusts. But the length of the man's weapon—eight feet—put it out of his power to return with interest the Arab's murderous intent. Once or twice Colonel Burnaby just touched his man, only to make him more wary and eager. Affray was the work of seconds only, for the savage horde of swarthy negroes from Kordofan and straight-haired tawny-complexioned Arabs of the Bahiuda stripe were fast closing in on our square. Colonel Burnaby fenced the swarthy Arab as if he were playing in an assault-at-arms, and there was a smile upon his features as he drove off the man's awkward points. The scene was taken in at a glance. With that lightning instinct which I have seen desert warriors before now display in battle while coming to one another's aid, an Arab, who was pursuing a soldier and had passed five paces to Burnaby's right and rear, turned with a sudden spring, and this second Arab ran his spear into the Colonel's right shoulder. It was but a slight wound. Enough, though, to cause Burnaby to twist around in his saddle and defend himself from this

unexpected attack. Before the savage could repeat his unlooked for blow, so near the ranks of the square was the scene now being enacted, a soldier ran out and drove his sword bayonet through the second assailant. Brief as was Burnaby's glance backward at this fatal episode it was long enough to enable the first Arab to deliver his spear full in the brave officer's throat. The blow drove Burnaby out of the saddle, but it required a second one before he let go his grip of the reins and tumbled upon the ground. Half a dozen Arabs were now about him. With blood gushing in streams from his gashed throat the dauntless guardsmen leaped to his feet sword in hand and slashed at the ferocious group. They were the wild strokes of a proud, brave man dying hard, and he was quickly overborne and left helpless and dying."

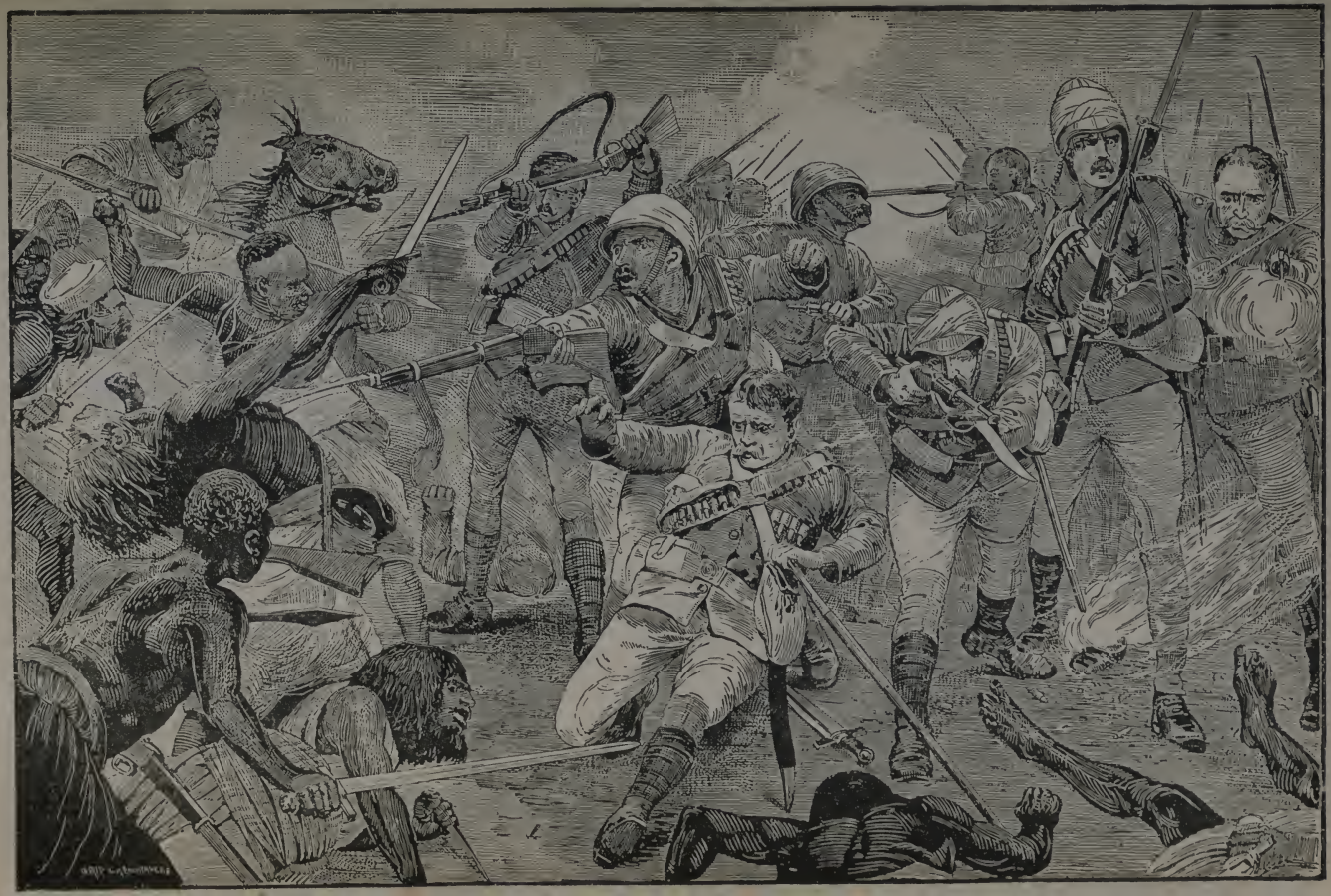
This victory gave us possession of the wells, and of these the troops were sorely in need.

Here they bivouacked unmolested by the enemy that night. But hard fighting was yet in store for them.

On the following day they again pressed forward, making a forced march in order to reach the river and escape the horrors of the desert. At daylight on the 19th the column found itself but six miles from the green and fertile banks, within reach of inexhaustible clear, sweet water, and approaching their goal. But the enemy was on the alert. Let Mr. Burleigh tell the story of what now took place.

"Streams of men on horseback and on foot came from Metammeh, interposing themselves between the column and the water we longed to gain. For a short time, Sir Herbert Stewart deliberated whether to push on two miles nearer the Nile. As the Arabs mustered in sufficient force seriously to threaten our advance, he decided to halt upon a ridge of desert covered with sparkling pebbles, four miles from the river. To our right and rear lay a few low black hills, one mile to two miles distant; on our front, the Desert rolled downward, towards the green flats bordering the Nile; for here, as at Dongola, the belt of cultivation is rich and wide.

"Turning with a light smile to his staff, General Stewart said, 'Tell the officers and men we will have breakfast first, and then go out and fight.' The column was closed up, with the baggage animals to the centre, as usual · the boxes and pack-saddles being taken off, to make an inclosure to protect the square from rifle fire. In less than ten minutes the Arabs were not only all over our front and flanks, but had drawn a line around our rear. Groups bearing the fantastic Koran-inscribed banners of the False Prophet, similar to those of which we had taken two or three score at Abou Klea, could be seen occupying vantage points all around. The enemy's fire grew hotter and more deadly every minute. Evidently their Remingtons were in the hands of Kordofan hunters. Mimosa bushes were cut, and breakfast preparations were



suspended for an hour, whilst most of the troops lay flat. Fatigue parties strengthened our position. In going towards a low mound, a hundred yards on our right front, where we had a few skirmishers, General Stewart was shot in the groin. The command devolved upon Lord Charles Beresford by seniority, but he, being a naval officer, declined it, and Sir Charles Wilson took it over. One of the most touching incidents in the zariba was the wounded General tended by his friends, two or three of whom wept like men, silently. Poor St. Leger Herbert, the *Morning Post* correspondent, one of these, was himself shot dead shortly afterwards.

"The mound on our front was quickly turned into a detached work, forty volunteers, carrying boxes and pack-saddles, rushing out, and, in a short space of time, converting it into a strongly defensible post. Gradually, the enemy's riflemen crept nearer, and our skirmishers were sent out to engage them. They were too numerous to drive away; and the nature of the ground, and the high trajectory of their Remingtons, enabled the Arabs to drop their bullets into the square at all points. Soldiers lying behind camels and saddle-packs were shot in the head by dropping bullets. Mr. Cameron, the *Standard* correspondent, was hit in the back and killed whilst sitting behind a camel, just as he was going to have lunch. The enemy were firing at ranges of from 700 to 2000 yards, and their practice was excellent. The zip, ping, and thud of the leaden hail was continuous; and, while the camels were killed in numbers, our soldiers did not escape, over forty having to be carried to the hospital, sheltered as well as possible in the centre of the square behind a wall of saddles, bags, and boxes. As a precaution against stampede, the poor camels were tied down, their knees and necks securely bound by ropes to prevent their getting upon their legs. The enemy's fire increased in intensity; and, as stretcher after stretcher with its gory load was taken to the hospital, the space was found too little, and the wounded had to be laid outside. Surgeon-Major Ferguson, Dr. Briggs, and their colleagues had their skill and time taxed to the utmost. Want of water hampered their operations; doctors and patients were alike exposed to the enemy's fire.

"Our situation had become unbearable. We were being fired at without a chance of returning blows with or without interest. The ten thousand warriors whom the Mahdi had sent from Omdurman to annihilate us were blocking our road to the Nile; and over a hundred Baggara, the horsemen of the Soudan, and crowds of villagers, who had joined Mohamed Ahmed's crusade, hung like famished wolves on our rear and flanks, awaiting an opportunity to slay. Apparently, they were emboldened by our defensive preparations.

"There were three courses open to us—to sally forth and fight our way to the Nile; to fight for the river, advancing stage by stage, with the help of zaribas and temporary works; or to strengthen our position, and try to with-

stand the Arabs and endure the lack of water, till Lord Wolseley should send a force to our assistance ; we, meanwhile, sending a messenger or two back to Korti with the news. It was bravely decided to go out and engage the enemy at close quarters. At two p.m. the force was to march out in square, carrying nothing except ammunition and stretchers. Each man was to take a hundred rounds and to have his water-bottle full. Everything was put into thorough readiness for this enterprise. Lord Charles Beresford, with Major Barrow, remained in command of the inclosure, or zariba, containing the animals and stores. They had under them the Naval Contingent, the 19th Hussars, a party of Royal Engineers, and Captain Norton's detachment of Royal Artillery, with three screw-guns, and details from regiments and men of the Commissariat and Transport Corps.

"It was nearly three o'clock before the square started, Sir Charles Wilson in command, and Colonel Boscawen acting as Executive Officer. Lord Airlie, who had been slightly wounded at Abou Klea, and again on the 19th, together with Major Wardroper, served upon Sir Charles's staff, as they had done upon General Stewart's. The square was formed to the east of our inclosed defence, the troops lying down as they were assigned their stations. The Guards formed the front, with the Marines on the right front corner, the Heavies on the right and right rear, the Sussex in the rear, and the Mounted Infantry on the left rear and left flank. Colonel Talbot led the Heavies ; Major Barrow, the Hussars ; Colonel Rowley, the Guards ; Major Pöe, the Marines, and Major Sunderland, the Sussex Regiment. Captain Verner, of the Rifle Brigade, was told off to direct the square in its march towards the river. When the order was given for the square to rise and advance, it moved off to the west to clear the outlying work.

"The instant the Arabs detected the forward movement on our part, they opened a terrific rifle-fire upon the square from the scrub on all sides. In the first few minutes many of our men were hit and fell. The wounded were with difficulty picked up and carried. When the square slowly marched, as if upon parade, down into the grass and scrub-covered hollow, intervening between the works we had constructed and the line of bare rising desert that bounded our view towards the south and east—shutting out of sight the river and the fertile border slopes—all felt the critical movement had come.

"Steadily the square descended into the valley. Gaps were made in our force by the enemy's fire. As man after man staggered and fell, these gaps were doggedly closed ; and, without quickening the pace by one beat, onward our soldiers went. All were resolved to sell their lives dearly. Every now and again the square would halt, and the men would lie down, firing at their foes hidden in the valley. Those sheltered behind the desert crest were too safely screened to waste ammunition upon at that stage. Wheeling to the

right and swinging to the left our men fought like gladiators, without unnecessarily wasting strength or dealing a blow too many. A more glorious spectacle was never seen than this little band in broad daylight, on an open plain, seeking hand-to-hand conflict with the courageous, savage, and fanatical foe, who outnumbered us by twelve to one.

"As the square moved over the rolling ground, keeping its best fighting side—or rather its firing side—towards the great on-rushes of the Arabs, the soldiers swung around, as though the square pivoted on its centre. Once it entered ground too thickly covered by grass and scrub, halted, and coolly swung round and marched out upon the more open ground, with the Arabs to the right front, their tom-toms beating, and their sacred battle-flags of red, white, and green flying in the air.

"Bearing banners lettered with verses from the Koran, a host of fanatic Arabs was the first to hurl its swordsmen and spearsmen upon the square. The column wheeled to receive them, and the men, by their officers' direction, fired volleys by companies, scarcely any independent firing being permitted. The wild dervishes and fanatics who led the charge went down in scores before our fire, which was opened on them at 700 yards, and none of the enemy got within some yards of the square. This checked their ardour, which had been excited by seeing the gaps in our ranks. Three more charges were attempted by the enemy at other points along the line of the square's advance.

"At half-past four, after nearly two hours' incessant fighting, as the column neared the south-easterly edge of the valley to pass out of it, the Arabs made their final grand rush. Nearly 10,000 of them swept down from three sides towards the square, their main body—numbering not fewer than 5000—coming upon our left face. It was a critical moment. Their fire had made fresh gaps in our ranks, and fierce human waves were rolling in on every side to overwhelm our force. Down the Arabs came from behind the ridge at a trot, and not at the top of their speed, as the Hadendowas charge. Gallant horsemen and wild dervishes led them, and shouted to their followers to rush on in Allah's name and destroy us. Firm as a rock, the square stood steadily, aimed deliberately, and fired. Again and again had volleys to be sent into the yelling hordes as down they poured. The feeling was—Could they be stopped before closing with us? Their fleetest and luckiest, however, did not get within twenty-five yards before death overtook them; while the bulk of the enemy were still a hundred yards away. At last—God be thanked!—they hesitate, stop, turn, and run back. Victory is ours, and the British column is safe! The broken lines of Arabs sullenly retreated towards Metemneh; but our square had to gain the ridge before escaping from their sharpshooters' fire, or getting a chance of punishing the daring foe. Without further opposition, the British advanced to the river, and encamped for the night."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TOO LATE.

You know well enough, my reader, that we have now reached the catastrophe of the whole play. You know how tragically it ends. How a sombre curtain falls on a gloomy scene—a hero dead, a city lost, an army powerless, a country in tears. A year ago that hero left his country to save another; and from that date to this he has thought of naught else. Many have died for their country, many for their creed, many for their friends; but few alone unaided, single-handed, for friends united to them by no ties but such as bind a weak and trusting nation to a strong and worthy heart. "Greater love," said the most loving Man that ever the world saw, "hath no man than this: that a man should lay down his life for his friends." Let us be glad that we have on this earth those who can reach this divine ideal.

Not without dimly-shaped fears did England see her great pro-consul venture forth alone to quiet an unruly nation. From then till now unceasingly the clouds gathered thick around him. At no time did the sky seem altogether bright. And now the thunders that muttered on the horizon remorsely crash over his head.—It needs not to spin out the tale.

General Gordon cannot communicate with Wolseley, so Wolseley will communicate with General Gordon. Everything is prepared: there are troops at Korti, there are troops at Gakdul, there are steamers at Metemneh. These last shall go up the river and greet him—greet him in the name of England's army which has at last reached him.

What a thrill of pleasure must have gone through the ranks when the orders are issued. They are actually there; they will see him; shake hands with him; glory over him; rescue him. What mattered the hardships of the journey now: the worn-out limbs, the burning thirst, the painful wounds? They scorned them before; they jest at them now. Besides, has not the great general they are about to save gone through the same? Yes; and ten times more. And what a man to save.—The fate of twelve million people hang on his words. All Europe—nay, Asia and the chief part of Africa, are guided by his acts.

To return. Let us trace, step by step, the course of this little expedition.

At eight o'clock on the morning of January the 24th of the present year, two steamers, the Bordein and the Tall-Haweiya left Metemneh for Khar-

toum, having on board General Sir Charles Wilson, Major Gascoine, Captain Trafford, Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley, and detachments of the Sussex Regiment. Three hours later, at eleven o'clock, they received a word of encouragement. Stopping at the village of Gandatu a powerful Sheikh of the name of Hussein sends a messenger on board to say that his tribe, the Shagiyeh, would join the English when their power was established, remarking also that the British troops were held in much dread, and that their victories had produced a great effect. That night the steamers stopped at Bewena. On the following day they pushed on, not without a brisk fire from the enemy. Indeed, this soon became so hot that it was determined to travel by night.

It was a strange little expedition this, and a notable one. Two little steamers, manned by a small number of men, linking the great army that had come from England to the great general that army came to save. Well might they be proud of their post. And they were. It was no trivial duty, this allotted to them, and bravely did they undertake it. All along the banks at short intervals were the enemy and the enemy's guns, and as the two vessels steamed past them a deadly fire from cannon and rifle sought to stay their progress. Even in the darkness of night, as was echoed the noise of the passing vessels, the enemy could be heard calling to arms, and the dark and dimly seen banks were lit up with the flare of hostile torches and the flash of discharging musketry.

Now they near the invested city—the prison of their comrade, the object of all their hopes, and all their fears. At once a fierce fire breaks out upon them from every side. Shells burst on the very decks; bullets fly over them and around them till it seems scarcely possible that even now they can reach the goal.

On the morning of the 28th Khartoum is sighted, but here the enemy crowd thick. A battery of four Krupp guns opens upon them from Halfiyeh; then the battery from the island of Tuti; then the guns from Omdurman; finally even the Krupps in the city itself pour upon them a great hail of iron. Smoke and flashes of fire line the banks beside them, the banks before them. Seven thousand rifles and sixteen cannon are doing their utmost to annihilate them. Will there be aught left of this relieving band to perform the work for which they set out?

The thought comes over them: is it thus our general has been attacked all along? Do those at home image to themselves this infuriate crowd of savages gathered round this one man, all bent on taking his life? willing, nay glad, to lose their own, so that their hated foe shall not escape. And this is what the great Gordon has been fighting against! This is the warfare he has kept up, month after month, so quietly mentioned in those simply-written,

self-forgetful despatches of his! He shall be saved, come what may. But those guns from the city are ominous, ominous.

Undaunted, through the din, calmly they press on. But it is hard work. The water is shallow and the course difficult. At noon Tuti is reached. A frightful fusilade ensues, and is kept up for four hours. Many shells burst on board, and many are wounded. Still they keep on; push their way to Khartoum itself; come within six hundred feet of the city; and see clear into its very streets.

What do they see? It can be told in a few words. The guns still blazing at them from the heights; the streets one mass of howling savages, exultingly shouting defiance at the two little steamers peering at them from the water; on every side signs of victorious hostility; hatred open and blatant; rage run riot; the Palace gutted; the flag-staff flying the Mahdi's flag; and—General Gordon?—what of him?—who knows? Who can tell? No one. The one man in that city they came to see; the man whom ten thousand fighting men came three thousand miles to save; the man England is waiting daily to welcome back—is not there. Disappointment unutterable. Success at the moment of achievement turned into bitterest disaster. All these long months of pain and toil utterly thrown away. The object of their search irretrievably lost. The bravest of brave warriors gone.

Now truly did their hearts sink within them. Dangers they can face; difficulties they can overcome; but to be the bearers of this so sad news; to return having accomplished nothing; to be the first to tell England her all was lost;—this was terrible.

Yet there was naught else to do. To land and oppose those shrieking hordes; to hew their way through these exulting foes; to wreak vengeance in their blood;—this were tempting. But duty demands that they shall calmly retreat and report to the relieving force the fate of the man for whom they sought.

So it is done. The boats are turned northwards, and the journey back is commenced.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE JOURNEY BACK.

THE hero of the war in the Soudan is dead. We need not now dwell on the comparatively unimportant after-events.

The two steamers fared ill on their way back. The firing was vigorously kept up against them, and they had hard work slipping past the guns which lined the banks. On the 29th one steamer went aground sixty miles above Gubat. The remaining steamer, having rescued the crew, kept on its solitary way. But only for another twenty miles. Then it too struck a rock and sank in deep water. All the guns, stores, and ammunition of both steamers were lost. Sir Charles Wilson escaped with the members of his party and the crew from the wreck of his steamer in a small nuggar to the island, where they entrenched themselves. At three in the morning of the 6th of February the troops at Gubat were thrown into a state of intense excitement by the appearance of a small row-boat coming down the Nile. It contained Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley, with two men (another report says with three English soldiers and natives from Khartoum), who had rowed forty miles down stream—a most perilous venture—fortunately, they were not molested. The camp was horror-stricken. No tongue or pen can adequately describe, says the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, the effect produced in all hearts by the fatal announcement. It was so little expected that the men had been comforting themselves with the prospect of being able to relieve the long beleaguered city, and cheer its heroic defender within a few weeks at latest. The news fell like a thunderbolt in our camp, and has saddened and depressed the stoutest hearts. Eager inquiries were made on all sides about Gordon, but it could only be replied that the steamers could not get close enough in shore to ascertain anything positively.

At two o'clock Lord Charles Beresford left on a steamer flying the British ensign to rescue Sir Charles Wilson and his party on the island. He took with him twenty picked marksmen of the Royal Rifles attached to the Mounted Infantry. The Mahdi's irregular followers were gathering round that point, and this the third relief expedition it almost seemed was to share the fate of its predecessors. But not quite. Still it was a daring exploit and the dangers were great. The gauntlet had to be run between crowds of rebels, and under a heavy fire. One steamer was shot through the boiler and

disabled for hours. Finally, however, success shone on them and both rescuing parties returned in safety.

Meanwhile authentic news of Gordon's death was received.

At early morning on the 27th of January, Farag Pasha, a black slave whom Gordon had freed and advanced, and who had been implicitly trusted throughout, opened the gates in the southern wall to the enemy. The bulk of the Mahdi's fighting men were close at hand and at once rushed into the town. General Gordon, hearing the confusion, seized a sword in one hand and an axe in the other, and hurried to the scene. He was accompanied by Ibrahim Bey, the chief clerk, and twenty men. On his way to the Austrian consulate he met a party of the Mahdi's men. These fired a volley, and General Gordon fell dead. The Arabs then rushed on with their spears, killed the chief clerk and nine of the men; the rest escaped. One consul (Nicola) was made prisoner; all the rest of the Europeans were killed, also most of the notables. The majority of the inhabitants fraternized with the enemy.

In the words of Schiller: "So died a hero, right worthy to be worshipped."

CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT NOW?

THE protagonist dead, little interest attaches to the fate of the deuteragonist: General Gordon no more, the public cares not much what is left to his would-be rescuers to do. At first indeed was raised a great hue and cry. The Mahdi, every one cried out, must be "smashed," and Gordon avenged; and for a time all read eagerly of what was being done in Egypt and the Soudan. We need not here, however, linger over the details of this phase of the war. Suffice it to say that new problems sprang up, and the news of what England was doing in Egypt varied from day to day.

The fighting around Suakim and against Osman's hordes now became more fierce, one battle in particular, when, because of the omission to advance with scouts, the enemy dashed unawares upon the troops and many of our soldiers' lives were sacrificed, creating a large amount of notice not unmixed with severe criticism. The Suakim-Berber railway, too, was vigorously pushed forward, and as late as the middle of April large sums were voted for the railway lines to be built along the banks of the Nile.

Soon, however, Russia's advance towards Herat absorbed all attention, and the Soudan problem was for the time left unsolved.

In this state it now exists; and it must be left to a future edition to complete the story of THE WAR IN THE SOUDAN AND THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO IT.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

GENERAL GORDON.

It will be unnecessary here to sketch at length the life of the soldier, statesman, and hero around whom has centred the chief interest of the war in the Soudan, and of whom the world has long ere this computed the worth. It is the peculiar property of the warrior to be early appreciated. His deeds are patent to all, and their results are in general so soon accomplished that they become rapidly universally perceived and commented on. Gordon is no exception to this. During his lifetime he was everywhere known, and after his death probably not a paper in the civilized world did not frequently contain his name. And, perhaps, of all the characters of history, not one has been entitled to so much praise and so little blame.

Major-General Charles George Gordon was born on the 28th of January, 1833, at Woolwich, in the very cradle of that branch of the service in which he was destined to pass a career of more than usual distinction, even if his own proper career as an English officer be alone taken into consideration. He was the fourth son of an artillery officer, Henry William Gordon, who attained the rank of Lieutenant-General. He was educated at different private schools, having as his companion and mentor at one of these in Somersetshire his elder brother, the late Major-General Enderby Gordon, but when he was little more 15 he was entered at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He passed his examinations successfully, and obtained the much-coveted distinction of a Commission in the Royal Engineers. His first station in 1854 was at Pembroke Dock. At the end of 1854 he was ordered to proceed with some huts to the Crimea. On his arrival in January, 1855, he was at once placed under the officer in command of a portion of the trenches, and during the remaining nine months of the siege he took a prominent part in the engineering operations in front of the Russian stronghold. At the close of the Crimean War, General (then Captain) Gordon was employed in Bessarabia, Armenia, the Caucasus, and lastly China. On the outbreak of the Taeping rebellion he was appointed to the command of the foreign drilled force, to which the Chinese authorities mainly trusted to bring the rebels into subjection, and was given the brevet rank of Major. This force had been styled the "ever-victorious army," and Gordon soon vindicated its claim to this high-sounding title. He had to organize the simplest details in person. He was always the first man in attacks. It was he who showed the way to victory as well as how to prepare for it; but he never carried any weapon save a small cane, which the Chinese soon regarded with almost superstitious reverence, and named his "wand of victory." The successful termination of the long struggle which had brought such misery upon China and her people was generally and rightly attributed to the young officer, who refused to profit in any worldly sense by his remarkable achievement. He accepted a few unmeaning honours at the hands of the Chinese Government, eager to express its gratitude, but he refused all offers of a more solid character. He also took every measure in his power to avoid the ovation with which his countrymen were prepared to welcome him on his return; but his

modesty could not stifle the general admiration felt towards him for what he had accomplished, nor prevent his receiving the name by which he will perhaps be best remembered among his contemporaries, of Chinese Gordon.

The Taeping rebellion crushed, he returned to England, and was appointed to a post at Gravesend. Many anecdotes have been preserved of his life here during six years to show that he devoted himself with the same thoroughness

General Gordon

to the question of dealing with the impoverished classes of the London outskirts as he had done to the suppression of the rebellion among the Taepings.

In 1871 Colonel Gordon was appointed British Consul at Galatz, in which corner of Europe he remained buried from public view for three years, until he volunteered at the end of 1873 his services for any work in Egypt. At that moment Sir Samuel Baker had just resigned his command under the Khedive,

and Colonel Gordon was appointed in his place, at first as Governor of the the tribes on the Upper Nile, and later on with the higher title of Governor-General of the Soudan. From the beginning of 1874 until 1879 he governed the vast region of the Blacks with satisfaction to the Cairo administration, which was extremely hard to please, and with credit to himself. He gained at the same time a high reputation among the people by his justice and courage. He had that great merit in the eyes of an Eastern people of being always accessible ; and he inspired his soldiers with something of his own inexhaustible ardour and confidence. His rule in the Soudan was glorious to himself, satisfactory even to the Khedive, and gratifying to Englishmen as a practical demonstration of the qualities which they must wish to see most common among their countrymen.

On his return from the Soudan he accepted the post of private secretary to Lord Ripon, Governor-General of India, but resigned it a few months later. From India he went to China in response to a summons from his former colleague Li Hung Chang, and he is credited with having inspired the Chinese with peaceful views at the most critical period of one of their disputes with Russia. He returned to England, and soon afterwards commanded the Engineers in the Mauritius for a year. He then visited South Africa and Palestine. Returning to England in December, 1883, it became known that he had accepted a command from the King of the Belgians to proceed to the Congo. How that plan was suddenly changed and how the remainder of his life was spent till his death on January 27th, 1885, has been already told.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT STEWART, K.C.B.

Major-General Sir Herbert Stewart, K.C.B., was born on June 30, 1843, the eldest son of the Rev. Edward Stewart, rector of Sparsholt, Hampshire, and was a great-grandson of the seventh Earl of Galloway. His mother was daughter of the late Charles John Herbert, of Muckross, county Kerry. He was educated at Winchester College, and entered the Army as ensign in the 37th Regiment (now the Hampshire) in 1863. It is not generally known that Stewart was at one time intended for the Bar, that he kept all his terms and ate all his dinners, but in the end abandoned that life for a military career. He was gazetted Lieutenant in 1865 and Captain in 1868. For two years from this time he acted as Aide-de-Camp to the Major-General Commanding the Bengal Presidency, and the year following as Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General in Bengal. In 1873 he joined the 3rd Dragoon Guards, on the lists of which regiment his name now stands as Major. In 1878 he passed the Staff College and served as Brigade Major in the Zulu War of 1879, and was present at the affair of Erzungayan. He was specially employed on the lines of communication after the breaking up of the Cavalry Brigade, and for his services here he was mentioned in Colonel Russell's report with brevet rank as Major, which rank he gained substantively in 1882. He served as principal Staff officer to the Transvaal field force in the operations against Secocoeni, and as Military Secretary and Chief of the Staff to Sir Garnet Wolseley, and in this capacity he gained further mention in despatches and his brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel, together with a medal and clasp. In 1881 he went to South Africa on special service, and was Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General in the Boer war, for which he was again mentioned. In the early part of 1882 he was appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and later in the year he again saw active service as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General for the cavalry division

in the operations in Egypt. Here he was present at all the minor engagements of that campaign, as well as at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir and the capture of Cairo. For these services he was mentioned in despatches, appointed Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, made a Companion of the Bath, gained a medal

GENERAL STEWART.

with clasp, and was decorated with the Third Class of the Osmanieh and the Khedive's Star. In the same year he gained the rank of Colonel. Last year, again, he served in Egypt. Under Sir Gerald Graham he commanded the Cavalry Brigade, and was present at the battles of El Teb and Tamai, for

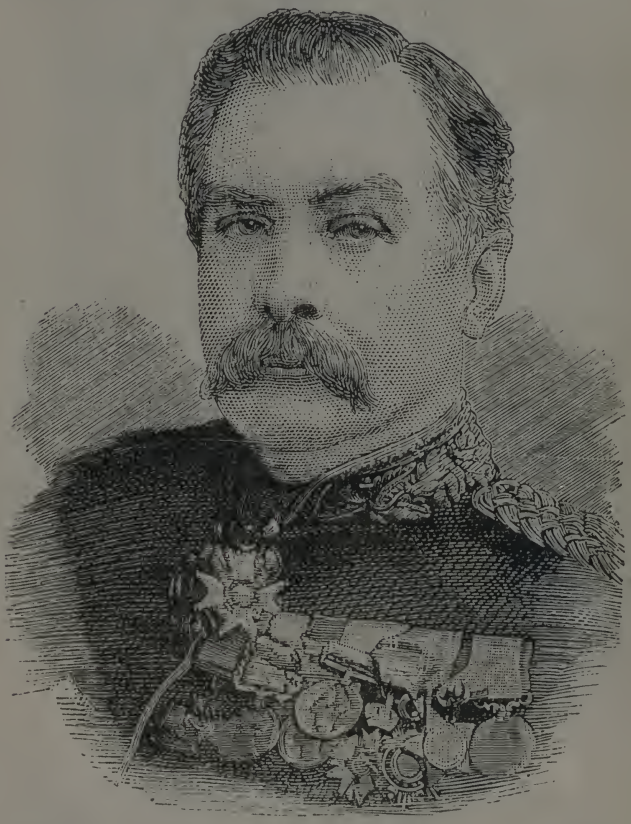
which he was promoted to the rank of K.C.B. and gained additional distinctions.

When General Stewart started across the desert for Metemneh Lord Wolseley regarded the temporary deprivation of his services as a national loss. General Stewart, he said, was one of the ablest soldiers and most dashing commanders he had ever known. Lord Wolseley recommended him to the Queen's most favourable consideration, and not in vain ; the Queen promoted him at once to the rank of Major-General, the youngest of that rank in the British Army. While engaged in a severe fight near Metemneh on January 19 he was so badly wounded that he was at once incapacitated, and the command devolved on Sir Charles Wilson, and afterwards on Sir Redvers Buller, After the arrival of the column at Gubat he was placed on board a steamer for a time, and was carried in safety to Gakdul. On February the 19th he succumbed to the fever induced by his wound.

CAPTAIN LORD CHAS. BERESFORD.

Captain Lord Charles Beresford belongs to a fighting race. He wears upon his left breast two medals. While a midshipman, on two occasions he sprang overboard and saved life. On one occasion his own life was very nearly sacrificed—he, as well as the seaman he saved, being insensible when rescued.

For each of these acts the Royal Humane Society of Great Britain voted him a medal. He was the commander of the Thunderer when she blew up, but fortunately at that time was enjoying a leave of absence. After that he commanded the Queen's yacht Osborne for a time, but finding that there was fighting possible in Egypt, at once obtained an appointment there. Lord Charles is well known in the clubs in Dublin and London as a noted athlete, being one of the finest boxers that ever put on the gloves.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GERALD GRAHAM, V.C., K.C.B.

Major-General Sir Gerald Graham, who was appointed to the command of the Suakim-Berber expedition, joined the army in June, 1850, as second lieutenant of Royal Engineers. He became captain in October, 1858, Major in the following year, and in October, 1881, was created Major-General. Some eighteen years ago General Graham was a resident of Montreal. He was then a lieutenant-colonel and district commanding engineer, under Colonel

Forde, R.E, and was very popular, not only in military circles, where from his immense size and strength he bore the *sobriquet* of "Long Tom."

At Sebastopol he was twice severely wounded. In the assault of the Redan he bravely led a ladder party, a most daring duty, and for his heroism in bringing in wounded on several occasions under a terrific fire he was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was also engaged in the battles of Alma and Inkerman, and in 1860 went to China, where he took part in numerous engagements, being present at the assault of Tangku and the Taku forts. He was also present at the surrender of Pekin and in this war was wounded by a jingal ball. In the summer of 1882 he was appointed to the command of the second brigade in the British expedition to Egypt, and was actively engaged in the preliminary movements of the campaign against Arabi Pasha, and took a prominent part in the battle of Tel-el-Kebir.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER, V.C.

Major-General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., Lord Wolseley's Chief of Staff, has seen much honourable service before the present campaign. He was gazetted 2nd lieutenant in 1858, lieutenant in 1862, captain in 1870, major in 1874, lieutenant-colonel in 1878, and colonel in 1879. He is also aide-de-camp to the Queen, and D. A. & Q. M. General of South Africa, with the rank of

major-general. He was one of General Wolseley's companions-in-arms in the Red River Expedition, and also accompanied him to Ashantee. He fought valiantly in the Zulu War when Lord Chelmsford came to grief, and materially aided Lord Wolseley in the last Egyptian campaign, taking a prominent part in the battles of El Teb and Tamai. Of the General, Mr. Archibald Forbes says : "Redvers Buller has seen more war than any of our soldiers who are not yet veterans. The Red River Expedition was not war, but it had its merits as a preparatory lesson. He accompanied Wolseley to Ashantee, and soon took his place there as a man who might be trusted to organize, to lead, and to fight. In South Africa his name was bracketed with Sir Evelyn Wood. Men who were in the field with him in the Zulu campaign will not soon forget what dominance he swayed, what a power he wielded both of restraint and of encouragement over the wild, mixed, irregular horsemen with whom he did service, so constant, so active, and so enterprising. They recognized in him, with his taciturnity, varied by a rare sudden flash of speech that stirred men's blood—in the subtle something that made his men love him while they feared him, a born leader of men."

General Buller obtained the Victoria Cross for his gallant conduct at the retreat at Inhlobana, on the 28th March, 1879, in having assisted, whilst hotly pursued by Zulus, in rescuing Capt. C. D'Arcy, of the Frontier Light Horse, who was retiring on foot, and carrying him on his horse until he overtook the rear guard ; also for having, on the same date and under the same circumstances, conveyed Lieut. C. Everitt, of the Frontier Light Horse, whose horse had been killed under him, to a place of safety.

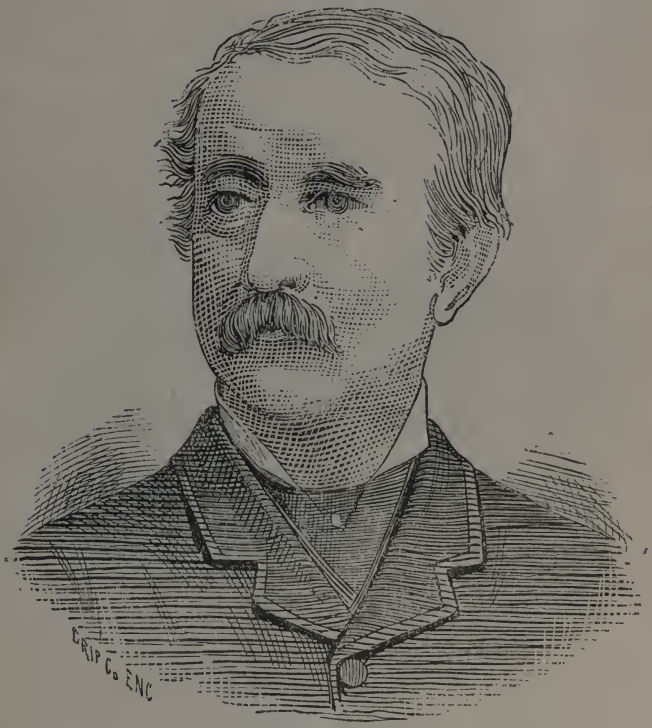
GENERAL WOLSELEY.

THE life of Lord Wolseley is too well known to need any lengthened account.

Lieutenant-General Garnet Joseph Wolseley, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., LL.D., D.C.L., is a son of Major G. J. Wolseley, and was born in 1833. He entered the army as Ensign in the 12th Foot at the age of 19. His first service was in the Burmese War ; after this in the Crimea, where he was severely wounded, and frequently mentioned in despatches. He next served in the Indian campaigns of 1857-59, again being brought before the notice of the authorities at home. The mutiny over, he next saw active service in China. Ten years later he conducted the Red River Expedition, for the success of which he was created Knight of St. Michael and St. George. His next achievements were in the Ashantee War, for which he was publicly thanked by the Houses of Parliament, and was nominated a G.C.M.G., and K.C.B. For the following years he administered the Government of Natal, and afterwards was appoin ed High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of the island of Cyprus. In June, 1879, Lord Wolseley was sent to South Africa again as Governor and High Commissioner of Natal and the Transvaal, to re-organize the affairs of Zululand, and conducted the operations against Secocoeni, whose stronghold he destroyed. Returning in 1880, he was appointed Quartermaster-General at headquarters, and afterwards became Adjutant-General. His brilliant achievements against Arabi Pasha—for which he was raised to the peerage, and his subsequent leadership of the "relief expedition," has been given in detail in these pages.

The above brief account of Lord Wolseley's career will show that he is a general of no little experience in the art of war. He has fought in Burmah, in Russia, in India, in China, in Canada, on the west coast of Africa, in the south of that continent, and in Egypt ; and everywhere, we may say, with

success. He has filled the important posts of Quartermaster-General and Adjutant-General of the army. He has studied the theory of military organization, and has not left out of view the practical details of a soldier's life in peace and war. He has attempted bold strategies, and has succeeded. Has led armies through countries utterly unknown before to British troops, and has led them not only without extraordinary loss and hardship, but with ease and comparative safety. This experience, gained in a thoroughly active military life of many years, he has used to excellent advantage in the Soudan war.



GENERAL WOLSELEY.

Whatever view we may take of his choice of routes by which to reach Khartoum we must allow that he has undertaken the expedition which travelled along that difficult and circuitous river, the Nile, not only with skill but with a forethought and with an attention to details that are more than admirable.

Lord Wolseley places implicit confidence in the officers and men under his command, and these return the feeling with interest. He possesses in a high degree the quality of evoking obedience linked with the assurance of success, and than such combination perhaps few are more advantageous to a General commanding an army in the field.

SIR CHARLES WILSON, C.B., K.C.M.G.

This distinguished Colonel of the Royal Engineers, who took the command as senior officer of the advanced force of the Khartoum Expedition when General Sir Herbert Stewart was wounded, and who afterwards went up in a steamboat to Khartoum, has seen much staff service, and his previous experience had specially qualified him for the duty in which he has just been engaged. As a subaltern, he acted as secretary to Sir J. Hawkins in the delimitation of the boundary between British North America and the United States territory, and served for several years on the Ordnance Survey in Ireland and Scotland. From 1869 to 1876 he acted as Assistant Quartermaster-General on the Intelligence Branch of the Head-quarters' Staff. In 1879 he was employed under the Foreign Office in Turkey and Asia Minor, and later on, while officiating as Consul-General of Anatolia was ordered to Egypt for special duty, gaining the medal with clasp and bronze star, for his services in the Egyptian

campaign of 1882. During the present campaign, he has acted as head of the Intelligence Department with the expeditionary force, and was acting in this capacity with the Staff of Brigadier-General Sir Herbert Stewart in the advance from Korti to Metemmeh. He was in temporary command of the troops at Gubat, until the arrival of Major-General Sir Redvers Buller. Sir Charles William Wilson was born in 1836, being a son of the late Mr. Edward Wilson; he was educated at Cheltenham, and entered the Royal Engineers, in which he became Lieutenant in 1855, Captain in 1864, Major in 1873, and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel in 1879. He was created a Knight of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1881, having been made a Companion of the Bath in 1877 for civil services. He rendered valuable services to the Palestine Exploration Committee from 1864 to 1868, in the earlier topographical surveys of the Holy Land and adjacent countries, and in editing their reports for publication.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FREDERICK C. DENISON.

Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick C. Denison was born at Rusholme, Toronto, on the 22nd November, 1846. He is the second son of the late Colonel George T. Denison, of Rusholme, and grandson of the late Colonel George T. Denison, of Bellevue, Toronto, his great-grandfather, Captain John Denison of the 2nd West York Regiment, in England, came to Canada in 1792, and settled in Toronto in 1796.

Lieut.-Colonel F. C. Denison, who commands the Canadian contingent of boatmen in the Nile Expedition, is Captain of the "A" troop of the Governor-General's Body Guard. He was educated at the Upper Canada College. He studied law in the office of his brother, Lieut.-Colonel George T. Denison, Police Magistrate.

His first commission in the Canadian Militia was as Lieutenant in the Administrative Battalion, which was placed on active service on the Niagara Frontier in 1865 to preserve the neutrality during the closing scenes of the American civil war. He served there for four months. On the 25th August, 1865, he was gazetted Cornet in the Governor-General's Body Guard, and in the September following he attended the camp of instruction at La Prairie, where he served for the first time under Lord Wolseley. In the Fenian Raid of 1866 Cornet Denison was with the Body Guard in Colonel Peacock's column on the march from New Germany to Fort Erie, and on the morning of the 3rd June was with his corps, when being sent on to reconnoitre, they entered and took possession of the place. In the month of August, 1866, a second raid was threatened and the Body Guard was again ordered to the frontier to form a chain of posts along the Niagara River to cover a camp of observation which was formed at Thorold under the command of Colonel Wolseley. During this period Cornet Denison was continually used by Colonel Wolseley as an aide-de-camp in the reviews and field days which often took place. In August, 1868, Cornet Denison was gazetted Lieutenant, and when the Red River Expedition was organized by Colonel Wolseley, he appointed Lieutenant Denison as his aide-de-camp. In this expedition he was several times employed by Colonel Wolseley to do special services of a difficult and arduous character. On arriving near Fort Garry Lieutenant Denison was sent on alone by Colonel Wolseley to reconnoitre, and rode into the gate of the Fort as Riel's followers were running out, being the first man in Fort Garry, as he and his two brother officers of the Body Guard were the first in Fort Erie.

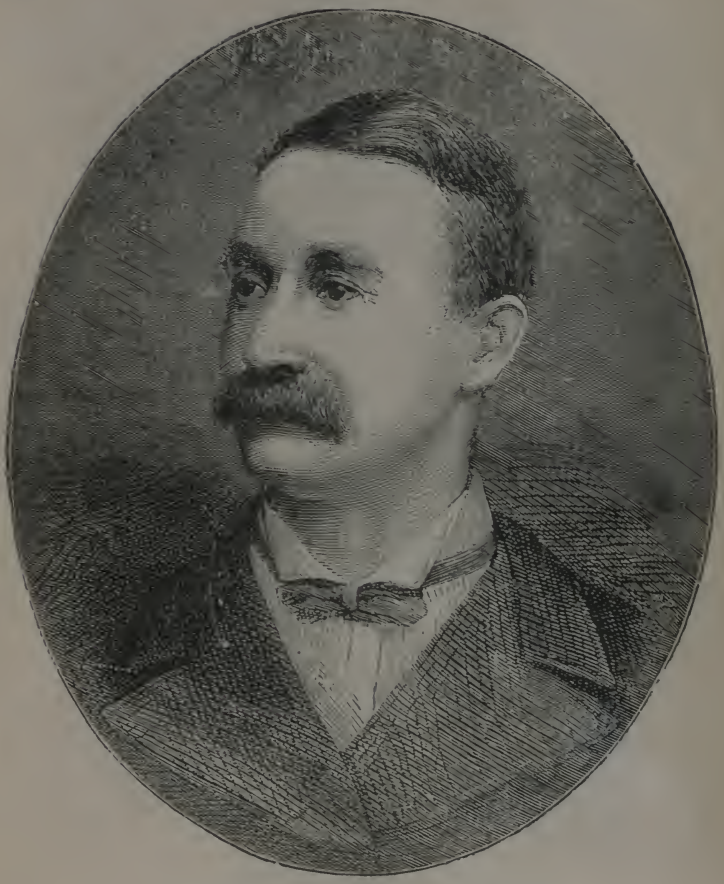
Colonel Wolseley mentioned him in his despatches as a "most promising and zealous soldier." He was gazetted Captain in 1872, Brevet Major in 1876, and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel, 9th September, 1884, and on the occasion of the Imperial authorities requiring a contingent of Canadian boatmen, the command was offered to Colonel Denison, who at once obeyed the call of his old

LIEUT.-COL. F. C. DENISON.

Chief. When the greater proportion of the Canadians came home, Lieut.-Colonel Denison and some eighty voyageurs and three officers remained, and General Brackenbury, on the conclusion of his movements, issued a general order thanking Colonel Denison and the Canadians for their courage and energy in sharing the trials and dangers of the campaign. Lieut.-Colonel Denison was for several years alderman for St. Stephen's Ward, Toronto, and twice Chairman of the Executive Committee, which positions he resigned on leaving for the Soudan.

OLIVIER PAIN.

PAIN'S career has been one of extraordinary adventure. During the Commune he was made Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs, and escaped with Rochefort, whose acquaintance he first made when the latter was in prison under the Empire. During the Russo-Turkish war Pain joined Osman Pasha, and fought against Russia. He was captured by the Roumanians, and cast into a Russian prison, whence he was liberated through the intervention of the Swiss Government, which was influenced by his friend Rochefort. Pain was stated to be a Swiss and a journalist, and thus the Emperor Alexander II. was constrained to give the ex-Communist his liberty. After the amnesty Pain returned to Paris, and left for the Soudan and joined the Mahdi.



COLONEL FREDERICK BURNABY.

Colonel Frederick Gustavus Burnaby, or, as he is best known, "Fred" Burnaby, was by no means the least of those who made for themselves a name in the Soudan war. He was born at Bedford in 1842, and was educated at Harrow. His chief achievements here were his excellence in all athletics, his mastery of French, and his ability to fight. From Harrow, too, he wrote for *Punch* on the subject of fagging. At seventeen he was gazetted Cornet in the Royal Horse Guards (Blue). At twenty-two he made his first balloon trip. In 1868 he travelled through France, Spain, Russia and Turkey. After this he was Gordon's companion in the Soudan, and it was here that he made up his mind to make his celebrated journey to Khiva After accomplishing this, he visited Asia Minor. In 1878 he was returned member for Birmingham, and, strange to say, attacked Radicalism vigorously. In 1882

he accomplished the feat of crossing the channel in a balloon alone. On the out-break of the Soudan war he joined Baker Pasha, and later on was severely wounded at El Teb. After this, failing to obtain an appointment which would bring him into active service with General Wolseley, he left for Africa, but the next that was heard of him was that he was at Korti, doing excellent service for the relief expedition. How his career was brought to an end at the battle of Abu Klea has been narrated.

MAJOR-GENERAL EARLE, C.B.

General Earle was born May 18, 1833. He, like Burnaby, was educated at Harrow. His first services were in the Crimea, and afterwards served in India and in Canada. In 1882 he was appointed Brigadier-General to the expeditionary forces sent to Egypt. On the commencement of the Soudan war, General Earle was at first designated for the supreme command, Lord Wolseley, however, being ultimately chosen. He was killed on the 10th of February in a successful engagement of the force which he led at Kerbekan, near Dulka Island, on the Nile, seventy-five miles above Merawi.


F. Villiers Wilson

THE MUDIR OF DONGOLA.

The devout Mudir of Dongola, whose name has so often been heard in connexion with the Soudan war, deserves a short notice. This oriental old gentleman is a peculiar character. When not in uniform, he dons the dress of a dervish, and is indeed a dervish of the most fanatical description. His faithfulness to the Khedive has frequently been mistrusted, but his attacks against the rebels, and his vigorous repudiation of the divine mission of the Madhi, has at last convinced the British public that he is in truth their ally. For his services he has been decorated with the ensignia of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

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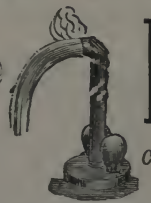

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Centralia, April 28th, 1885.

C. W. DENNIS, Toronto.

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JAMES C. ABBOTT, Centralia, Ont.

Brantford, April 20, 1885.

Dear Sir,—I received the half doz. Washers all right, and was well pleased with them, and I am satisfied they are a splendid article. You will find inclosed payment for half dozen more. Which please forward immediately and oblige.

D. EATON, Brantford, Ont.

Lifford, April 21, 1885.

C. W. DENNIS,

Dear Sir,—I received the Model Washer and Bleacher, which you sent me, and after giving it a fair trial am well pleased with it. I am going to lend it to some of my neighbors to wash with it, so that they may see how well it works. I am, yours respectfully,

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