

THIRTIETH THOUSAND.

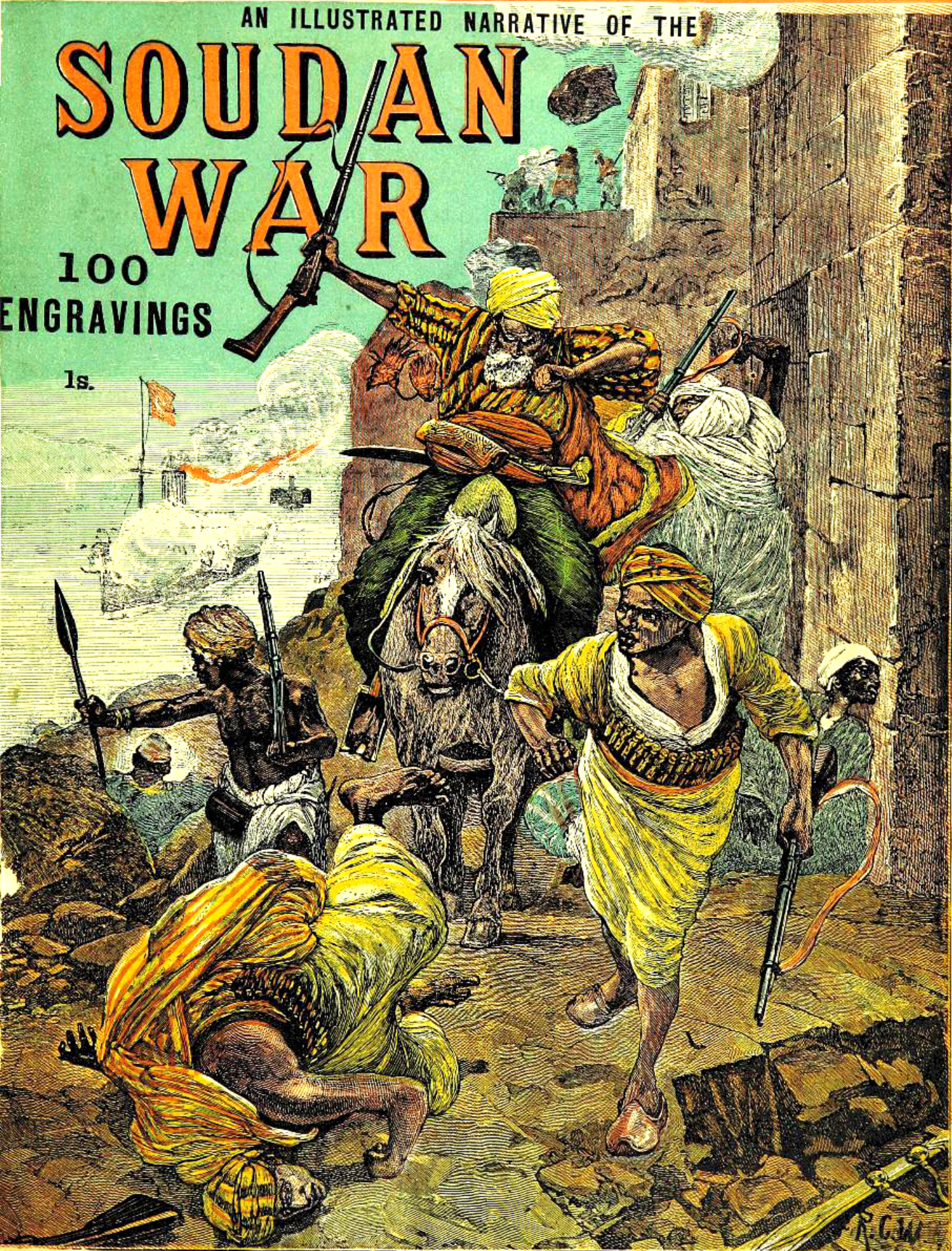
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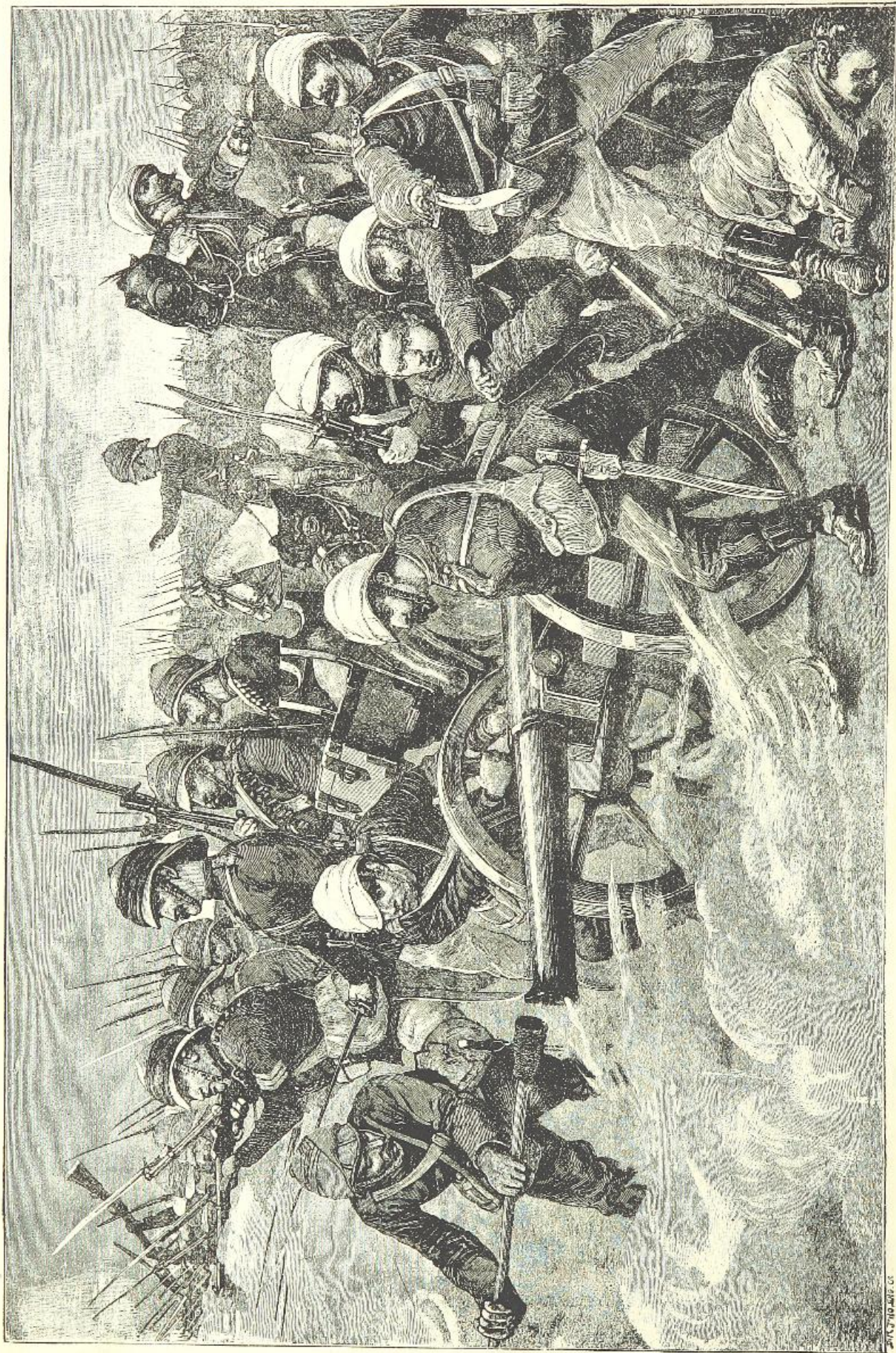
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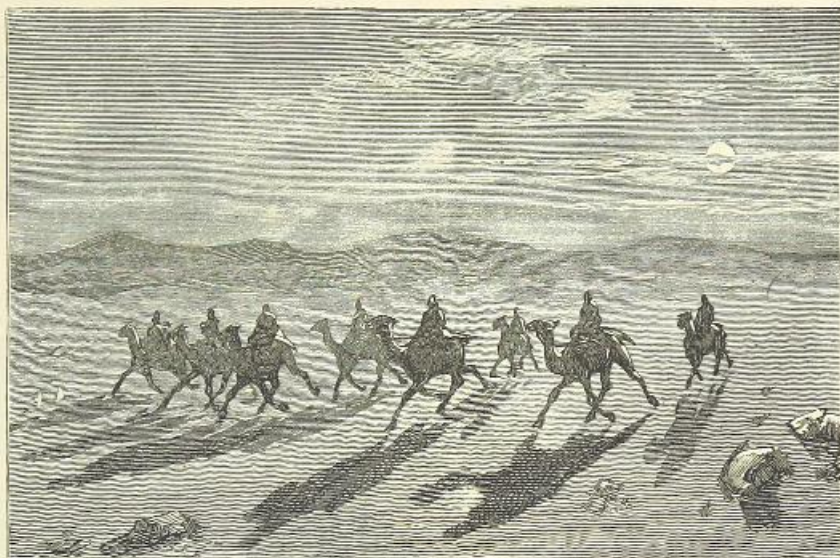
THE CORNER OF A BRITISH SQUARE IN THE SOUDAN.

GORDON AND THE MAHDI,

AN

Illustrated Narrative of the War in the Soudan ;

INCLUDING THE STORY OF ITS ORIGINAL CONQUEST BY MEHEMET ALI, AND
ITS PROGRESS UNDER GENERAL GORDON'S ENERGETIC RULE.



GORDON'S RIDE ACROSS THE DESERT TO BERBER.

" O awful Presence of the lovely Nile,
O awful Presence of the starry sky,
Lo, in this little while
Unto the mind's true-seeing inward eye
There hath arisen there
Another haunting Presence, as sublime,
As great, as sternly fair—
Yea, rather, fairer far
Than stream, or sky, or star,—
To live while star shall burn or river roll,
Unmarred by marring Time,
The crown of Being, a heroic soul."
" IN MEMORIAM," BY ERNEST MYERS.

THIRTIETH THOUSAND.

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THE GREAT WAR

"In the presence of the holy Nile,
O awful presence of the stars above,
In this little while
Unto the world's truest eye
There hath arisen there
Another haunting presence, as subtle,
As great, as sternly fair—
Yes, rather fairer,
Than stream, or sky, or star—
To live while earth shall roll or time shall roll,
Illustrated by Henry Jones,
The crown of being, a heroic soul."
"In the presence," or Henry Jones.

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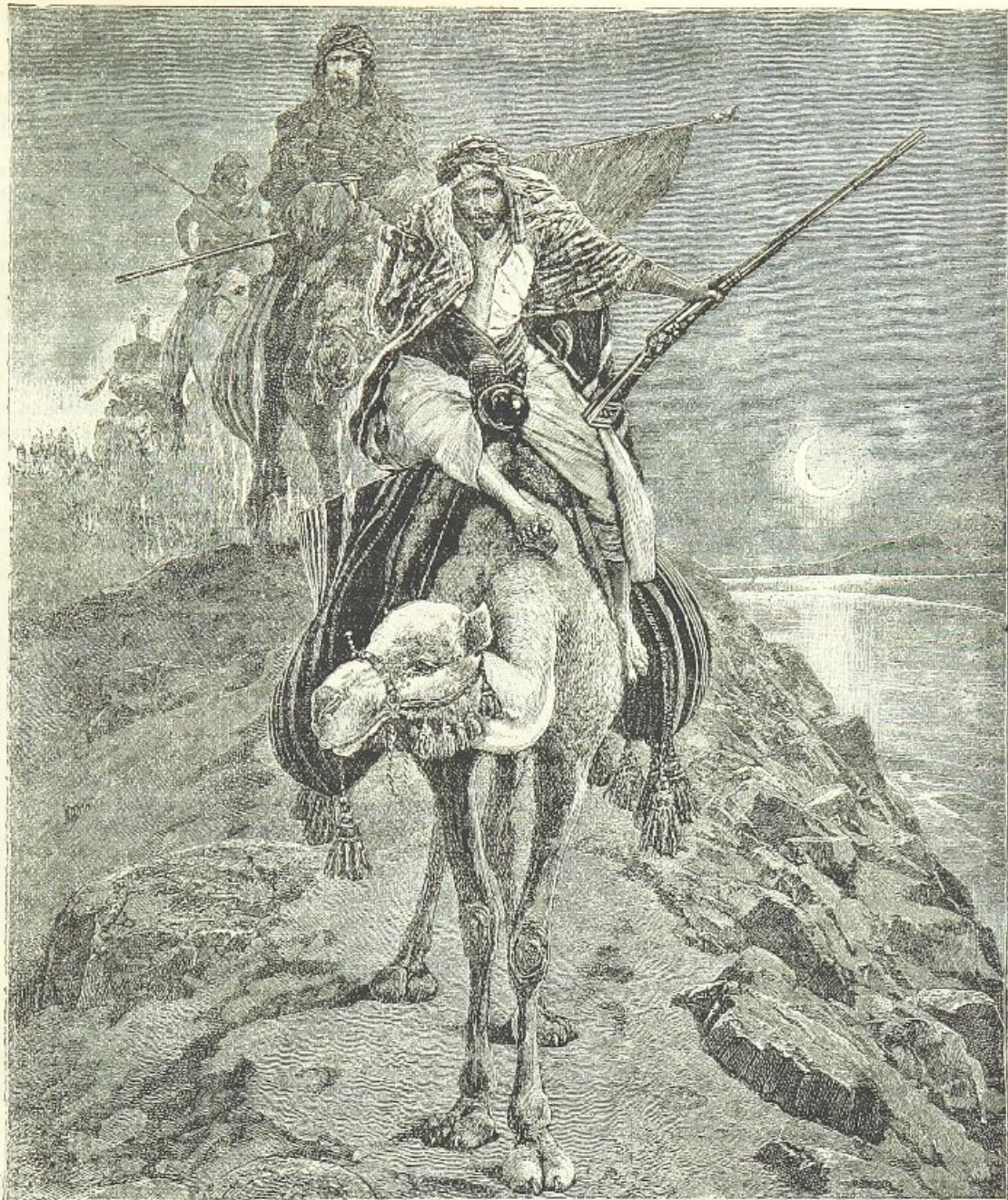
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A SLAVE CARAVAN IN THE SOUDAN.

GORDON AND THE MAHDI.

AN ILLUSTRATED NARRATIVE OF THE WAR IN THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER I.

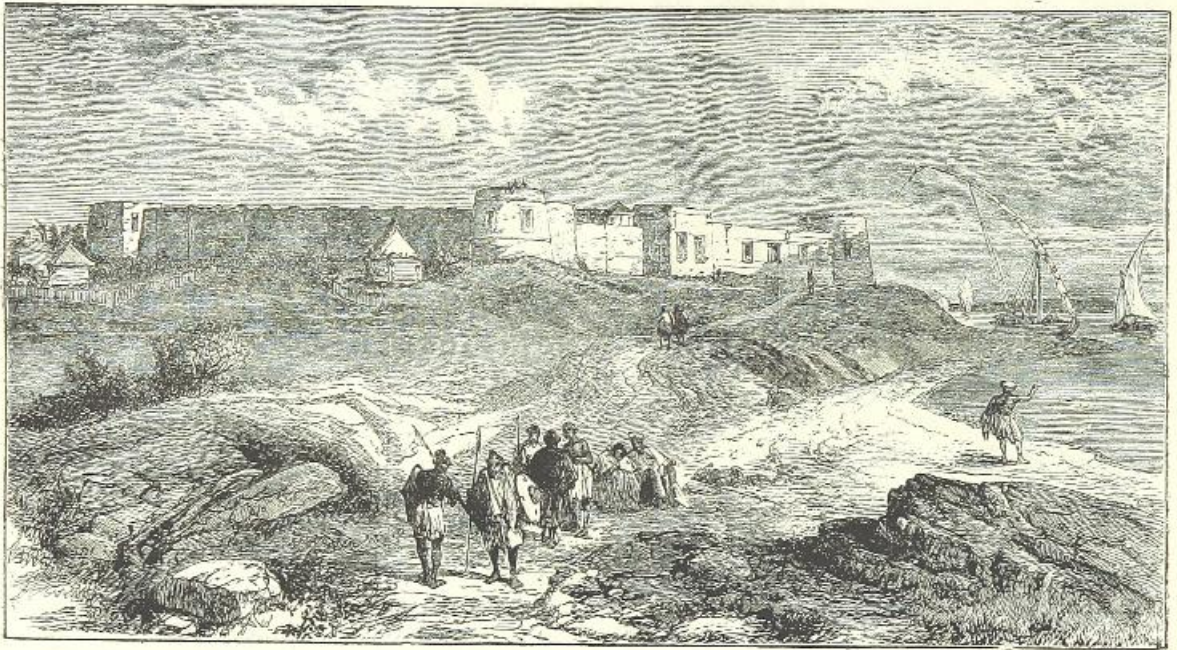
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"THE Soudan is a woman who, until the present, has been married to Egypt; they are now divorced. If this

woman wishes to be married to another she may be, and then something can be made out of the Soudan." Such was General Gordon's summary, to a high Egyptian official, of the state of things that he had undertaken to assist in remedying. The wooing to which he referred was certainly a rough one. It was Mehemet Ali, a ruler of great genius and iron will, and the originator of all those reforms, both civil and military, which place Egypt far in advance of other Mahommedan countries, who in 1819, first conceived the idea of stretching out his hand across the sandy desert to the south of Cairo, and clutching the fertile lands beyond, where the cotton, styled by Pliny

"Ethiopia's wealth-bearing tree" was indigenous, and where corn and dhurra grew in profusion. The utilization at a convenient distance of the restless Turkish and Albanian mercenaries who had been his instruments in the destruction of the Mamelukes, the annihilation of the remnant of these established at Dongola, the seizure of the gold mines of Senaar, fabulous accounts of which had reached Cairo, and the procuring of black recruits for his new troops, formed part of his plan. Its political excuse was the reinstatement of the family of Wolled Atlan, who had been driven from the throne of Senaar, the capital of the Fung kingdom. Ismail Pasha, one of Mehemet Ali's sons, commanded the expedition. He drove the Mamelukes out of Dongola, won Nubia by his victory at Korti in November, 1820, and pushed on to Khartoum, where a fortified camp was formed at a spot chosen on account of its strategical position between the White and Blue Niles. While returning to Cairo, in

his sway over Fashoda, and taught the people of Khartoum to substitute brick houses for their huts of skin and thatch. Egyptian rule in the Soudan continued without serious disturbance until 1841, when a rebellion broke out in Kassala, which was temporarily quelled, but only to break out again the following year, when it was finally suppressed. By this time the Soudan had been mapped out into seven provinces, Fazaglou, Senaar, Khartoum, Taka, Berber, Dongola, and Kordofan. In 1856 the Viceroy Said Pasha visited the Soudan, and, as a result, almost decided upon abandoning it, but yielded to the representations of the sheikhs and notables that anarchy would inevitably follow such a step. He decreed reforms, which were punctually neglected. One Governor-General succeeded another, their chief duties being the suppression of the periodical rebellions, and the maintenance of a border warfare with Abyssinia. In 1865, some 8,000 negro troops, whose pay was in arrear,



FORTIFIED RESIDENCE OF THE ANCIENT KINGS OF SHENDY.

1822, Ismail halted at Shendy, between Khartoum and Berber, at the house of Melek-en-Nimr, a native ruler, of whom he demanded a boat-load of gold and a thousand slaves. Melek feigned compliance, but, after making Ismail and his staff drunk, piled faggots round the building, and, setting light to these, burned the inmates alive. Terrible was the vengeance taken by Ismail's brother-in-law, Mehemet Bey, Deftardar of Kordofan. Shendy was burnt, its inhabitants slaughtered, and Egyptian sovereignty was established over Senaar and Kordofan.

Mehemet Bey afterwards ruled over the Soudan, and then came Osman Bey at the head of a regiment of regular troops. He at once gave the unfortunate Soudanese to understand that his mission was not one of organization, but of plunder and oppression. He had a cannon in his camp which he termed the Cadi, or judge, and all who appealed for protection against the exactions of his soldiery were conducted to the Cadi, bound to the mouth, and blown to pieces. This was Osman's mode of administering justice, as he derisively expressed it.

In 1830, Khurshed Pasha was appointed Governor General of the Soudan, and ruled eleven years. He established

revolted at Taka. This revolt was only quelled with difficulty, and the negroes were withdrawn from the Soudan, and replaced by Egyptian troops. The Red Sea coast, including Suakim and Massowah, was ceded by the Sultan in 1866 to the Khedive Ismail, who the year following visited England as the guest of the Queen, by whom he was created a Knight Commander of the Bath, in return for the invaluable services he had rendered to this country. In 1869 Bogos and Gualabat, till then in the possession of Abyssinia, were incorporated as part of the Egyptian territory, and shortly afterwards Sir Samuel Baker, as the only means of suppressing the slave trade, conquered the Equatorial Provinces, thereby extending the southern boundary of the Soudan up to 1° north of the Equator.

Sir Samuel Baker was appointed Governor of the subjugated provinces by the Khedive Ismail, and continued to administer them until the year 1873, when he resigned his post. The Khedive may well have been perplexed by Sir Samuel Baker's resignation, for whom could he appoint to continue the task of suppressing the infamous slave raids, and establishing legitimate commerce in their place, as he was bent upon doing. The Prince of Wales is



HIS HIGHNESS ISMAIL PASHA (From a Photograph taken in 1867).

stated to have recommended Colonel Gordon to his Highness, and there certainly could not have been a better choice. The Khedive and his new representative in the Soudan were well coupled. Ismail Pasha was unquestionably a vigorous Sovereign. As Mr. J. C. McCoan, M.P., has remarked in his recent pamphlet on "The Egyptian Problem,"—"he was absolutely the only man in the country with the strong head and the firm hand indispensable to its government. During nearly seventeen years he had ruled it as a colonel rules his regiment, making his personal influence felt through every branch of the public service, and giving at least order and strength to the whole. His thinly-veiled ambition was to realize the grand idea of Mehemet Ali—the re-erection of Egypt into an independent Arab kingdom—not, indeed, by force of arms, but of European civilization grafted on such elements of national life as had survived the revolutions and the oppression of more than a thousand years."

The Soudan was never so well governed as it was under the Khedive Ismail, who was born in Cairo in 1830, and after receiving a sound education at Paris, and acquiring

considerable administrative experience in Egypt, succeeded his uncle Said Pasha in 1863. Admitted to be the ablest son of Ibrahim Pasha, Ismail was essentially a firm ruler both of his Egyptian dominions and of the Soudan; added to which he possessed the valuable faculty of selecting able instruments of his policy, as was evidenced by his choosing for proconsuls in the Soudan two such remarkable men as Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon.

Sir Samuel Baker has more than once expressed the opinion that had the Khedive Ismail remained in power all the Soudan provinces would have been developed by degrees under his energetic rule, and with this result, that Egypt, instead of having, as at present, a weak frontier at Wady Halfa and Assouan, could have secured a strong one in the line of the White Nile. The annual pecuniary sacrifice which the administration of the Soudan involved, and which need have been only temporary, is now seen to have been of insignificant consequence in comparison with so manifest an advantage.

"The slave trade is ingrained in the bones of the

people; slavery is the A. B. C. of life in the Soudan to rich and poor," was a sentence penned by General Gordon three years ago. "No one," continued he, "is uninterested in the matter, and there is no one who wishes for emancipation or would aid it even by advice." Seven-eighths of the population of the towns of the Soudan are slaves, but their condition is incomparably better than was that of the negro in the West Indies. They are kept either for slave servants or slave soldiers, and one never hears of gangs of them being employed merely in field labour. Compulsory and immediate emancipation Gordon denounced as being unjust and out of the question, and he stated that more than once the slaves refused to be freed when he offered them their liberty. It was against the cruel slave raids beyond the frontier that his energetic efforts were mainly directed.

There were two authorities in the Soudan, the first that of the Egyptian Government, the second that of the slave dealers. The former had the monopoly of ivory, the latter the still more important one of human flesh. The whole country bristled with their fortified camps, which were far more formidable and imposing than the stations of the Government. Ever since 1860, they had been growing in power, until they seriously threatened the connection between Egypt and its Central African provinces. It is in the territory that belongs to no one, where there is no constituted authority and no organization to defend the population, that the slave trader reaps his harvest. When a country has been conquered, no matter how roughly, in these regions, each man finds an owner whose interest it is to defend his property. The slave trader had therefore to go beyond the confines of an organized Government in order to find unappropriated human chattels. It was around Khartoum that this work began, but it soon spread along the route to Darfour.

Its greatest centre in 1869 was at Shakka in the Bahr Ghazal, where Zebehr-Rahama-Gyimme-Abel, chief of the great band of armed slave hunters, who, spreading southward from Khartoum, established their zerebas or fortified stations far down in the heart of the Niam-Niam country, had his head-quarters. Zebehr, who possessed some thirty of these stations, dwelt in almost princely state at Shakka, with armed sentries at his doors, chained lions in his halls of audience, and a host of richly dressed slaves and praying fakirs in attendance. He had an organized army of slave hunters, whom he furnished with arms and despatched on raiding expeditions. They attacked villages, plundered peaceful tribes, and brought in convoys of slaves. Tracts of country, that had been thickly populated and well cultivated, were turned into barren uninhabited wildernesses by the capture, the slaughter, and the flight of the people. All the roads to Shakka were marked by the bones and skulls of the captives who had perished on their way. One-half never reached their destination. Of those who did, some were enrolled by Zebehr for use in future raids amongst the "smart dapper-looking fellows like antelopes, fierce, unsparing, the terror of Central Africa," who thronged his courts. The rest were destined for the market.

Zebehr's industry was such that Shakka became the head-quarters of the wholesale slave trade. The small dealers who purchased these human wares, and dragged them along the Nile to Egypt, flocked to him annually in thousands. His name was a terror throughout the Soudan, and his influence waxed daily. In 1869 Ismail, alive to this growing power, despatched Bellali, an Egyptian general, at the head of a body of troops to the Soudan nominally to act against Darfour, then an independent state, but in reality to check Zebehr. Zebehr, guessing this, collected his forces, took advantage of a dispute to engage the Government troops, and ended by slaying almost the whole of them including their commander. His excuses for this proceeding were accepted, and he became virtually sovereign of the Soudan. In 1875 he quarrelled with the Sultan of Darfour and invaded that province. The Egyptian Government, unable to hinder him, made a virtue of necessity and invited his co-operation in an enterprise he

had himself originated. They entered Darfour from the north, and Zebehr from the south, but the brunt of the fighting and the merit of success were his. With grim superstition, he had melted down 250,000 dollars into bullets for the campaign, since no charm can stay a silver bullet. Struck by one of these through his helmet the Sultan fell and his two sons were slaughtered beside his dead body.

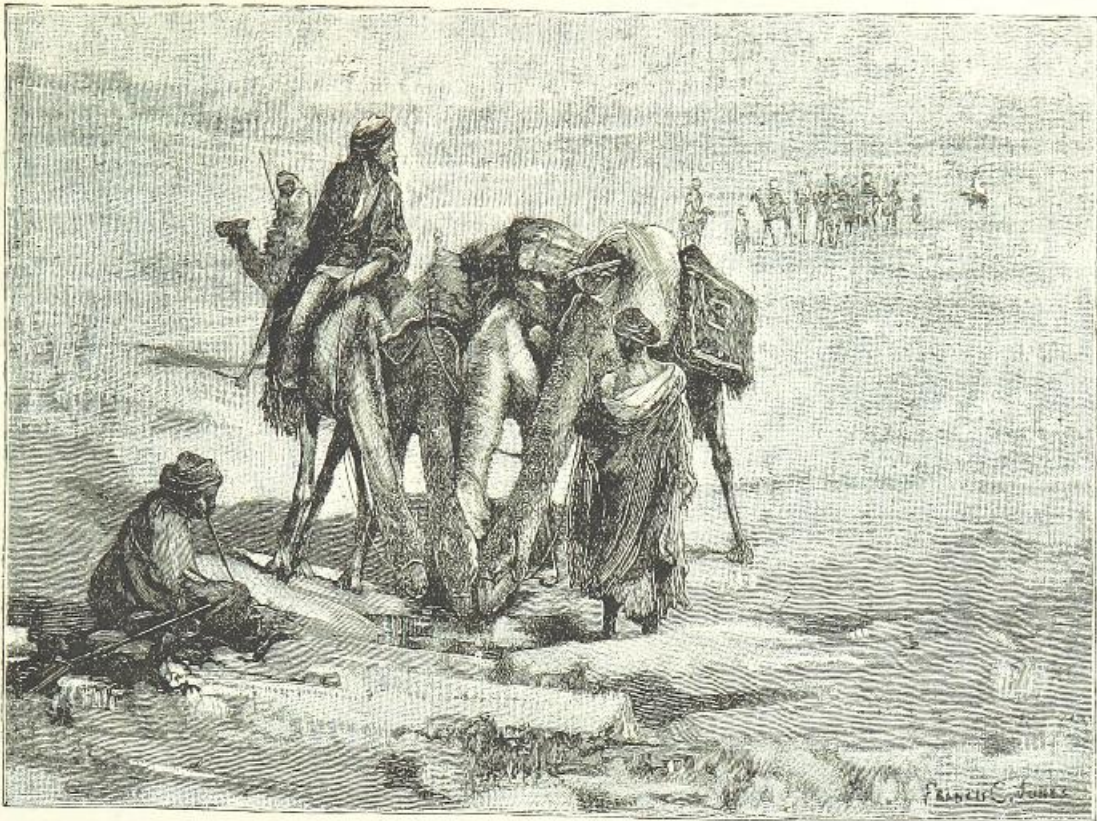
In return for his services, Zebehr asked to be made Governor-General of Darfour. The Khedive refused him this post, but bestowed upon him the title of Pasha. Zebehr thereupon assembled his numerous allies at a tree on the roadside between Shakka and El Obeid, and made one and all swear upon the Koran to do his bidding whenever called upon. He then collected something like £100,000, and started with it for Cairo, hoping to convince the Khedive by his

eloquence, and the Council of State by bribery, if not of the justice, at any rate of the policy of acceding to his demands. He was received with every honour, but soon found that all hopes of a return to the Soudan had to be abandoned. Nemesis had overtaken him, and the enslaver of countless thousands was himself virtually a captive, though living in the apparent enjoyment of liberty at Cairo, where he received his Pasha's allowance of £100 a month, and continued at a distance to pull the wires of every rebellion that has since broken out in the Soudan.

It was plain to the Khedive that Zebehr and his allies, aware of their strength, had conceived the idea of establishing their independence. Ismail found it necessary vigorously to suppress the slave trade in the Soudan, and at the same time to crush in the bud an incipient revolt. An effective instrument was needed for this double purpose, and was found in the person of General, at that time Colonel, Gordon. Before, however, we refer more particularly to the brave soldier and able administrator on whom the Khedive's choice had fallen, we have something to say about the Soudan itself and the different races by which it is peopled.



ZEBEHR PASHA.



IN THE DESERT.

CHAPTER II.

Geographical position of the Soudan.—Natural features.—Its various provinces and extent.—Its principal towns.—Its semitertile and barren deserts.—The various races inhabiting the Soudan.—Its settled and nomadic tribes.—Their more striking characteristics and warlike propensities.

"THE Soudan," says Sir Samuel Baker, "is a name that conveys no idea of defined frontier, or of civilized territory; it is a vague term, signifying 'a country of blacks,' which might include any portion of Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic." It is commonly applied to that vast tract comprising, from Egypt on the north to the Nyanza lakes on the south, upwards of twenty degrees of latitude, and extending on the east from the Red Sea to the boundaries of Darfour on the west. Its shape is irregular, and the districts into which it is divided present some marked differences in their natural features, whilst their boundaries are, as Said Pasha observed of those of Egypt, "very elastic." Independent of the 530,000 square miles of Nubian desert lying south of the first cataract of the Nile, the Soudan, including the provinces of Kordofan and Darfour in the west, Senaar, Taka, Sanheit, and the coast districts of Suakim and Mas-sowah in the east, and the Mudirates of Fashoda, Bahr Ghazal, and the Equatorial Provinces in the south, has an extent of some 516,000 square miles, of which 67,000 belong to Kordofan and 280,000 to Darfour.

The Nile, issuing from the lakes near the Equator, is the only source of life to the entire region. It is not surprising that the ancient Egyptians worshipped this river as a god, for without it their country, which had been created by the deposit of mud brought down by the river Atbara (one of the tributaries of the Nile) from

Abyssinia and the Soudan, would have been a desolate sandy waste like the vast deserts still existing east and west of the river. The drainage of the Nile basin is from the south-east to the north-west, and the richly-watered tracts on the river's eastern bank are much more fertile than the dry provinces of Kordofan and Darfour on its western. Between the Atbara, which flows into the Nile a short distance above Berber, and the Rahat, a tributary of the Blue Nile, there extends a magnificent stretch of fertile country, the ancient land of Meroë. This, with the entire province of Taka, the tracts watered by the Rahat and the Dender, and the district between the Blue and White Niles, possesses a soil and climate favourable to the cultivation of all kinds of tropical produce, and more especially of cotton. Kordofan, on the western bank of the White Nile, remains for the most part uncultivated and barren, on account of the scarcity of water in its northern half. Its north and west form a monotonous desert, the highest point of which is El Obeid, the capital. In the south, where the rains last longer, the soil is richer, and extensive forests are to be found.

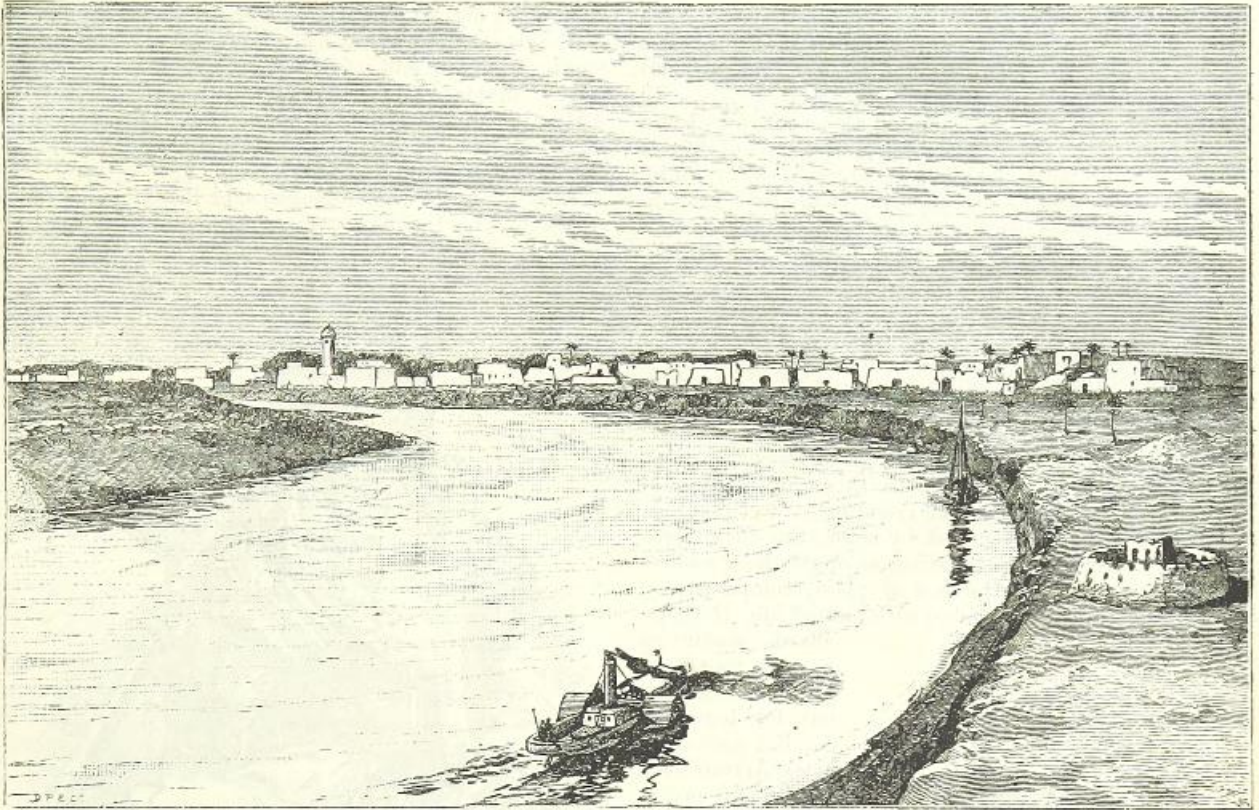
The principal towns of the Soudan are situate on the Nile. Khartoum, at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles, is about equidistant from the northern boundary of Egypt, the Mediterranean, and the southern limit of the Khedive's equatorial dominions, the Victoria Nyanza. It is the capital of the Soudan, and was founded by Mehemet Ali, who, when he had completed the conquest of Kordofan, and the submission of the Bedouin tribes in 1820, at once recognized the commercial and strategic importance of the site whereon Khartoum now stands. A palace for its governor, barracks for a garrison, an arsenal, and a shipyard were constructed in

substantial style, and the new city soon became the centre of a vast trade in ivory, gum arabic, ostrich feathers, grain, cattle, and slaves. Khartoum in fact had always been the point where the slave-traders fitted out their expeditions, stored their captives, and found a market for their human cattle.

Khartoum, prior to the uprising of the Mahdi, had a mixed population of some fifty to sixty thousand, more than half of whom were slaves. Several European consuls used to be resident there, the city being the commercial centre of the Soudan trade, which is estimated to have amounted to thirteen millions sterling per annum. Many of the houses of Khartoum are more substantially built

destruction of 800 Turkish Bashi-Bazouks, surprised there in 1820 by the Bishareen, when all who escaped the Bedouin swords and spears were driven into the river and drowned in the cataracts below. The other caravan route is to Suakim on the Red Sea, some two hundred and eighty miles distant, and the chief port of the Soudan, whence most of the captured slaves used to be shipped.

Suakim, or Sowagin, as it is called by the natives, signifies "together with the gin, or fairy." According to tradition, there was an island in the Red Sea, inhabited by seven virgins only. One day, some fishermen visiting the place were surprised to find all the women *enceinte*. The latter ascribed their condition to the genii, and their



THE CITY OF KHARTOUM.

than those of other Soudan towns, a certain number being constructed of stone, while the residences of the richer merchants are alike spacious and comfortable. The small colony of Europeans congregated at Khartoum used to be continually changing, as the city, which is proverbially unhealthy, especially during the rainy season, proved a perfect graveyard to European residents.

Descending the Nile from Khartoum, in the direction of Egypt, the first place of importance is Berber, some two hundred miles distant, with a population variously estimated at from five to ten thousand. The houses of Berber, like those of most of the Soudan towns, are built of sun-dried bricks; and, like Khartoum, Berber owes its importance entirely to its position. It is the Nile port at which goods are shipped up the river to Khartoum, and is the great entrepôt of nearly the whole of the Soudan export trade, which at this point leaves the no longer navigable upper river, and finds an outlet by the two great caravan routes, the one to Korosko on the Nile (which thence becomes the only highway), by way of Abou Hamed, a miserable town, memorable for the

mysteriously begotten offspring are said to have been the original colonists of the mainland, and to have founded the town of Suakim. The entrance to the harbour of Suakim is narrow and long, and outside there are dangerous reefs. The town, which is built of white coral, stands on an island united to the mainland by a causeway, which Colonel Gordon had constructed while Governor-General of the Soudan. The population numbers about eight thousand. Nearly two hundred miles northwest of Berber is old Dongola, a half-deserted ruined town on the Eastern bank of the Nile, and some fifty or sixty miles lower down on the opposite side of the stream is new Dongola, known by the Arabs as Ordeh.

Kassala, which next to Khartoum is the largest town in the Soudan, having a population of about fifteen thousand, stands on a hill, almost mid-way—some two hundred miles distant from each—between Khartoum and Massowah, a Red Sea port nigh the Abyssinian frontier. Kassala has long been the head-quarters of collectors of wild animals for the zoological societies and menageries of Europe and America. Hyænas abound in

the immediate neighbourhood, and like the dogs of Constantinople act as the scavengers of the place. Taka, the province of which Kassala is the capital, is one of the richest in the Soudan. Massowah, like Suakim, is built upon an island joined by a long causeway to another island whereon stand the residence of the Governor and the barracks, and which is connected in turn with a third and smaller island. A few Europeans engaged in trade are resident there, as well as some Banians from India, who make a living out of the pearl fisheries off the coast.

Senaar, the capital of the province of the same name, is situated on the Blue Nile, three hundred miles above Khartoum. Following the course of the White Nile southward from Khartoum towards the Equator, the principal places are El Duem, Fashoda, and Gondokoro, distant as the crow flies one hundred, five hundred, and eight hundred miles respectively from Khartoum. El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan, and about a hundred and fifty miles from the White Nile, is a city of fifteen thousand inhabitants, with extensive government buildings and a few substantial well-built houses belonging to Greek and Egyptian merchants, and having a telegraph connecting it with Khartoum and Cairo.

East and west of the Nile valley, between the fourteenth degree of latitude and the Mediterranean, extends that strange and marvellous region, the Desert—a land without springs or rivers, where wells are few and far between, and water at times all but priceless. Once away from the Nile, the only supply is derived from the wells, which in many instances lie five days' journey apart. Even as heathen mythologists figure a series of hells each worse than the one above it, so there are degrees of barrenness in the desert. The tracts called "el jibel," or "el barreyeh," are diversified by mountains, themselves bare of all vegetation, but having amongst them wadies, or valleys, and even stretches of plain, comparatively rich in vegetation and teeming with animal life. Herbage

affords pasture not only for sheep, goats, and camels, but for herds of gazelles and antelopes. Acres of wild flowers and sweet-scented shrubs impart brightness and fragrance to the scene. Clumps of trees and bushes, for the most part of the acacia tribe, shelter an abundance of game, and yield the gum-arabic that is one of the chief exports of the Soudan, the rest being mainly hides, ivory, ostrich feathers, and the senna that



ARAB SHEPHERD OF THE SOUDAN.

covers hundreds of square miles in Kordofan and Senaar, and derives its name from the latter province.

Very different from the foregoing is the "atmoor," the utterly barren desert, mainly consisting of hard gravel plains diversified by zones of deep sand, rocky ridges sometimes of considerable altitude, and rugged defiles. Save in occasional clefts and crannies it is absolutely

destitute of vegetation, and consequently of animal life. Not a tree, not a bush, not even a blade of grass relieves the glare of the sunlight on the yellow sand, whilst the air seems as though it had passed over a brick kiln, and quivers visibly in the sun as though rising from a heated furnace. Within the limits of Egypt and the Soudan, these desolate atmoores cover upwards of three-quarters of a million of square miles. Only a few trading caravan tracks, with wells at long intervals, cross them, and they would be absolutely impassable to man but for the camel, whose broad flat feet enable him to traverse deep sands in which the horse would sink up to his knees, who can pick up a living on dry rushes and the twigs of the thorny mimosa, and can travel five days at a stretch during the fiercest heat of summer without drinking.

The Soudan is peopled by various races. The inhabitants of Nubia and of the Northern Soudan may be mainly divided into the descendants of the original African population, and those of the Arabs who made their way into the country from Hedjaz, either through Egypt or across the Red Sea.

The type of the native Nubians, or Barabra. They are styled by the Egyptians, from the country of Berber,



A BARABRA WARRIOR.

approaches that of the Ethiopians depicted on the monuments of ancient Egypt. They are middle-sized, well-built men, with rather long and oval faces, hook noses slightly rounded at the tip, thick lips, scanty beards, dark sparkling eyes, curly hair, and skin of the colour of dark bronze. Akin to them are the numerous Bedja tribes, who though classed as Bedouins from their nomadic habits, and confounded by some writers with the Arabs, speak a unique African language, and are thought to be the direct descendants of the Cushites or Ethiopians inhabiting the land of Meroë. The men are distinguished by their classical proportions, and the women resemble those of Abyssinia, but are taller and darker. In the Southern Soudan the Nuba negroes are numerous, and the Dinkas and other black tribes occupy the Equatorial Provinces.

With some rare exceptions the Arab tribes peopling

the Soudan—which Gordon described as being “the pulse in the Arab body, the centre so to speak of the Arab world”—still speak only Arabic. They have as a rule adhered to a nomadic life, and proud of their descent and religion, have shunned any intermingling with their Nubian neighbours. So far as regards the mere colour of the skin there is not much difference between the two races, but there all resemblance ends. The Arabs are of taller stature, and have handsomer features. Their foreheads are more prominent, and their mouths better shaped. They cultivate rather bushy beards, and have scanty lank instead of thick curly hair.

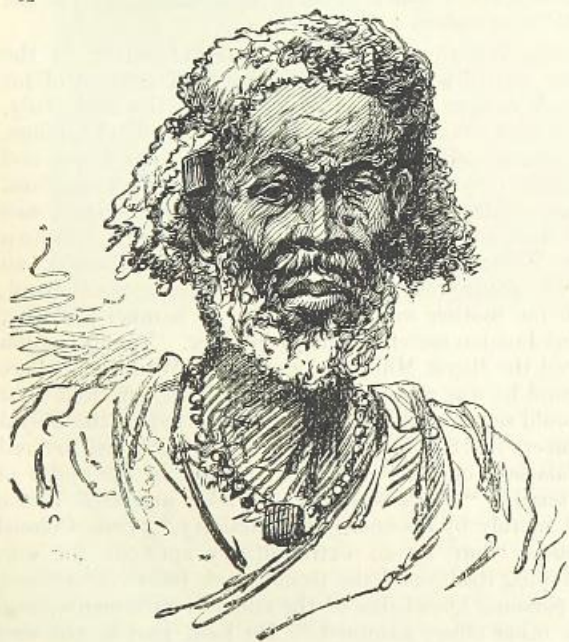
In the Nile valley and on the banks of the streams flowing from the Abyssinian mountains, several Arab tribes have settled down as agriculturists. Amongst these are the erst warlike Shaiquies, who dwell on both sides of the Nile, from Ambukol to the Bajuda steppes, and to some extent the Ababdeh who have their homes and pasturage between Assouan and the Red Sea, in the hills of the Nile Valley, and in the Nubian desert between Korosko and Berber. The majority, however, with several Bedja tribes, are nomads, and are classed together as Bedouins. These dwellers in the desert, though divided into numerous sub-tribes, have almost identical customs, and differ in little save their dialect and manner of wearing their hair, which is a matter of pride with all of them. They are governed in true patriarchal fashion by their sheikhs, and though there is no individual ownership of land, the territorial limits of each tribe are well defined; encroachment on the wells or pastures of a neighbour being a frequent source of feud. Their wealth consists of sheep, goats, and camels, those who inhabit the more favoured regions breeding horses and cattle as well. The necessity of finding fresh pasture obliges them to dwell in tents constructed of



BEDOUINS OF THE SOUDAN.

mats made from the plaited fibres of the inner bark of the palm tree, or woven of desert grasses.

One of the most important nomadic tribes is that of the Bishari, Bishareen or Bisharaba, who are Bedjas or



SHEIKHS OF TRIBES OF THE EASTERN SOUDAN.

descendants of the ancient Cushites, and dwell in the mountains along the Red Sea and in the deserts between Suakim and Berber. To the east and south are their kindred the Hadendawas, a numerous and warlike race, whose pasture lands lie west of the Atbara river. This tribe furnishes most of the camel drivers belonging to the caravans that are constantly traversing the different desert routes. In conjunction with their neighbours the Beni Amer, one of the largest and most powerful tribes of East Africa, thousands of them are to-day enrolled under the banner of Osman Digna. Taka is mainly peopled by Bedja tribes, including the quarrelsome Basé, whose negro features partake very much of the baboon type, and who, while inspiring terror in their neighbours, live themselves in constant dread of the latter. The Shukwie, another Bedja tribe, whose sheikh has played an important part in the present rebellion, inhabit the tract of country stretching from Gos Regeb to Khartoum, between the Atbara and the Blue Nile, and extending southwards as far as Suk Abu Sin. The inhabitants of Northern Senaar are descendants of the Fung, another branch of the huge Bedja family, while Southern Senaar is peopled by the Abu Roof. Other neighbouring tribes are the Dabaina and the Hamadab.

The population of the province of Kordofan is made up, first, of Nuba negroes, who were the original inhabitants; secondly of Dongolawis, immigrants from the east, and who are the principal husbandmen and traders; and thirdly, of nomadic Bedouins from Hedjaz. Chief amongst these are the mighty Kababeesh in the north-east, the Hassanieyeh and their kindred the Beni Gerar in the south-west, and the fierce and warlike Baggaras. These last, who inhabit southern Kordofan near the Nile, derive their name from baquare, a cow, cattle-breeding being their principal occupation. They possess great herds of oxen, mounted on which, and armed with four or five lances apiece, they flock in hundreds to the market at El Obeid. From these Arab tribes the bulk of the Mahdi's warriors were recruited, the Hassanieyeh and the Baggaras having followed the False Prophet from the very first. Their mode of warfare is of the most daring character. "They never wait to be attacked. Their onslaught is furious. They sweep down on their foe in one sudden rush, and their plan of battle is invariably to throw their enemy into confusion by the rapidity of the attack, which always takes place in the open."*

The wild tribes of the Soudan mostly go naked to the waist, with a scrap of cotton cloth wrapped round their loins, and occasionally an undergarment of leather. Those who study personal appearance run skewers through their hair, and wear necklaces and bracelets of beads and dried palm leaves. It is a point of honour with them all never to be without their arms, which consist of lances, long, straight, broad-bladed, double-edged swords, and round or oval shields of hippopotamus or giraffe hide. Only a few of them possess guns. The women and girls, who often have handsome faces and graceful forms, wear no other clothing than a few yards of cotton cloth swathed round the waist and hanging to the knee. When they can procure them, they delight in bedecking themselves with beads and cowrie shells, and with anklets made of the skin of some animal. Earrings and noserings are also favourite adornments. The food of the Soudanese, who are abstemious, rather from necessity than choice, consists in the case of the nomadic tribes mainly of "dhurra," or maize, obtained from the settlements in exchange for skins, charcoal, and the surplus of

their flocks. The wilder southern tribes chiefly live on the fruit of the dhoum palm and the baobab tree, though some of them cultivate a little dhurra. When they can obtain animal food, it is a matter of indifference to them whether they devour it raw or cooked, and they are said to polish a skeleton as cleanly as any pack of hyenas or jackals; this accomplished, they are apt to express their satisfaction in wild picturesque dances.

When feeding, remarks the author of "The Wild Tribes of the Soudan," these people present anything but a pretty sight; and he goes on to describe how a party of Basé with shouts and yells precipitated themselves upon the carcass of a buffalo, "struggling for the possession of what they looked upon as tit-bits. The entrails and all parts that could not conveniently be transported were devoured raw on the spot, and the black hides of the Basé soon became dyed in gore as they wallowed in the horrible mess." As though by way of a corrective of their gormandising propensities, they have a singular partiality for medicine, delighting in a good strong emetic, or a powerful aperient, the latter more especially in the form of pills.

All the tribes have their particular form of oath when making friends or sealing contracts, which afterwards they dare neither break nor infringe. Some tribes lay a naked sword on the ground, and after drawing their feet along it, place the palms of their hands on the blade; others will simply throw a stone, or extinguish a flame, while horsemen frequently swear by the bridles of their steeds. The tribes of the White Nile have a peculiar way of reposing themselves while preserving an erect position. This consists in placing the sole of their right foot against their left knee, in which almost impossible attitude they will remain for a considerable length of time.

CHAPTER III.

Charles George Gordon.—Comes of a family of soldiers.—Is gazetted to the Royal Engineers.—His services in the Crimea and in China.—Is appointed to the command of the "Ever Victorious Army."—Crushes the Taiping rebellion.—Is decorated with the Yellow Jacket and the Peacock's Feather, and made a C.B.—Superintends the construction of the Thames defences.—His philanthropic efforts at Gravesend.—Proceeds to the Soudan as Governor-General of the Equator.—His energetic and beneficent rule.—Gives a deadly blow to the slave trade.—Resigns his post and returns to England.

BEFORE describing Gordon's course of action in the Soudan, it will be desirable to give a brief account of his previous career. Born at Woolwich on the 28th July, 1833, Charles George Gordon came of a family of soldiers. His great-grandfather served under Sir John Cope, and was taken prisoner by the Highlanders at Preston Pans. His grandfather, a godson of Butcher Cumberland, saw much hard service, and fought on the plains of Abraham under Wolfe. His father, Henry William Gordon, an artillery officer, rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General, whilst his mother was the daughter of Samuel Enderby, a great London merchant and shipowner. Young Gordon entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, where it is said he was rebuked for incompetence, and told that he would never make an officer. Gazetted to the Royal Engineers in 1852, he sailed for the Crimea, and arrived at Balaklava on New Year's Day, 1855, in the midst of the terrible "black winter." He soon attracted notice "not merely by his energy and activity," writes Colonel Chesney, "but by an extraordinary aptitude for war, developing itself amid the trench work before Sebastopol, in a personal knowledge of the enemy's movements, such as no other officer attained." He took part in the first assault on the Redan, and in the capture of the quarries,

* "With Hicks Pasha in the Soudan," by Col. the Hon. J. Colborne.



GENERAL GORDON.

accompanied the expedition to Kinburn, and was later on engaged in demolishing the fortifications of Sebastopol.

In the summer of the last-named year Gordon served on the commission appointed to survey the frontier line of Moldavia, and subsequently held a like position in Armenia. At the close of 1859 he returned home, and, after a year of "duty soldiering" at Chatham, sailed in 1860 for China. Too late to take part in the capture of the Taku forts, he shared in the advance on Peking and witnessed the pillage and burning of the Summer Palace. He remained at Tientsin for a year, making excursions

into the surrounding districts where no "foreign devil" had before penetrated, and exploring in company with a brother officer a considerable section of the Great Wall of China. In the spring of 1862 he was summoned to Shanghai to aid in checking the threatened advance of the Taepings, and made a survey of the neighbouring country that afterwards proved invaluable to him in his coming campaign. Ward, the original commander of the "Ever-Victorious Army" was killed in 1862, his successor Burgevine was dismissed, and, at the request of Li Hung Chang, the Imperialist Governor-General, Gordon, now a

major, was appointed to the vacant command in March, 1863. The theatre of war was the low-lying and well-watered district of Kiangnan, between the lower Yantsze and the bay of Hangchow. Gordon's first feat was the capture of Fushan and the relief of Chanzu. His next was the storming of Taitan. He then assailed Quinsan, a strongly fortified town of great strategic importance, containing a garrison far outnumbering his command. The capture of the city was virtually effected by a little river steamboat, the *Hyson*, mounting two guns. In her he steamed up a canal, seized on a causeway leading into Quinsan and created such a panic that the Imperialist troops were able to march in without opposition.

A dangerous mutiny, one of many, of the Ever-Victorious Army, had next to be quelled. Kahpoo, Wokong, and Patachow were then taken as a preliminary to assailing Soochow, the City of Pagodas, one of the most important of the Taeping strongholds. The thorough investment occupied considerable time, and a night attack on November 27th, which Gordon headed, was beaten back with some loss. Two days later, after some desperate fighting, he effected a lodgment that rendered Soochow untenable. The city surrendered and, to Gordon's horror and rage, the Taeping Wangs, for whose safety he had expressly stipulated, were slaughtered by the Imperialist commander Li. Enraged beyond all bounds, for the first time in the war he took weapon in hand. Armed with a revolver, he sought out Li and, had he found him, would have assuredly slain him. Failing in this, he led his forces back to Quinsan, and till the end of February, 1864, remained inactive, refusing in his indignation to accept either the decoration or the monetary gift offered by the Imperial Government.

During Gordon's inaction, the rebellion again made head, and he at length consented to take the field again. He captured Yising and Liyang, advancing through a district in which the roads were strewn with the corpses of people who had died of starvation, and the few yet alive watched their comrades dying in order to feed on their yet warm bodies. He next assailed Kintang. Up to this he had headed assault after assault exposed to the hottest fire, and never carrying any weapon save a little cane with which he used to direct his soldiers and which they had dubbed his magic wand of victory. His Chinese soldiers, seeing him always in front, concluded that he bore a charmed life, and that this wand afforded him protection, but now the spell was to be broken. Two successive assaults were repulsed, and Gordon was shot through the leg, but stood giving orders till he all but fainted from loss of blood. Finally he had to draw off his forces. Meanwhile the Taipings had seized Fushan and threatened Wuzieh. Prostrate on the deck of his steamer, he yet could plan and fight, and with a few hundred men plunged on into a region occupied by unknown thousands of enemies and struck at Waisso. Again his plan miscarried, and he was driven back with far heavier loss than he had yet sustained in any encounter. He however effected a junction with the Imperialists, cleared Waisso, and after more than one repulse joined Li in storming Chancufu on May 11.

This was the last service of the Ever Victorious Army; the rebellion was all but crushed, and the army was no longer needed. During sixteen months' campaigning under Gordon's guidance, it had taken four cities and a dozen minor strongholds, fought numerous combats, and put fifteen times its own number of the enemy *hors de combat*. The Emperor of China bestowed on Gordon, now a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British army, the highest military title of Ti Tu, or Commander in Chief, with

the decorations of the Yellow Jacket and the Peacock's Feather. The British Government made him a C.B. Yet he left China as poor as he had entered it. His pay he had spent in promoting the efficiency of the force under him, the money gift offered by the Chinese Government he refused, and the only thing he accepted from them, a gold medal, was subsequently contributed by him to the Lancashire Cotton Famine Relief Fund. One memento of his command in China clung to him, and this was the sobriquet of "Chinese Gordon," by which he was ever afterwards known.

From 1865 to 1871, Gordon lived at Gravesend superintending the constructing of the new defences in course of erection on the Thames, and doing much good work in ragged schools, workhouses, and infirmaries. His house, —school, hospital, and almshouse in turn—rather recalled the abode of a missionary than that of an engineer officer, whilst his charity was unbounded. In 1871 he was appointed British representative on the Danubian Commission, and spent two years at Galatz. We have already explained how Colonel Gordon came to succeed Sir Samuel Baker in the Soudan. Offered £10,000 a year, Gordon would only accept £2,000. Landing at Suakim he crossed the desert to Berber, paid his first visit to Khartoum, and pushed up the Nile to Gondokoro, the nominal capital of his province. He began by conciliating the natives and by breaking up the slave stations. His European staff succumbed under the effects of the dreadful climate, although on him it made no impression.

Gordon continued "Governor-General of the Equator" for a period of eighteen months, during which time he accomplished miracles. When he arrived, there was a fort at Gondokoro, and one at Fatiko, 200 miles to the south, miserably garrisoned by soldiers who dared not venture out half a mile for fear of being slaughtered by the exasperated natives. When he left he had established a chain of stations from the Soudan up to the Albert Nyanza, and rendered the communication between them perfectly safe. He had, moreover, succeeded in restoring confidence and peace to the tribes of the Nile Valley, who now freely brought their produce to these stations for sale. He had effectually checked the slave trade on the White Nile, and secured a revenue to the Khedive's exchequer, without having recourse to oppression. He had been the means of establishing satisfactory relations with King M'tesa, the powerful ruler of Uganda, had mapped out the White Nile from Khartoum almost up to the Victoria Nyanza, and had opened water communication between Gondokoro and the lakes, while continually exposed to the attacks of hostile natives, who had a wholesome dread of the doubtful benefits of civilization. Gordon thought the blacks of the Soudan immeasurably superior to their rulers. "All the misery in these parts is due," said he, "to the Arab and Circassian pashas and authorities;" and he tells us how the Moogie tribes, hundreds of miles south of Gondokoro, pitifully exclaimed in reply to his well-meant advances, "We do not want your beads and your cloth; we do not want to see the pasha; we want our own lands and you to go away." On one occasion a magician stood and cursed the expedition, and a disaster soon after befalling it, Gordon was inclined to believe that the wrathful denunciation of the invader had not been uttered in vain.

In October, 1876, Gordon, judging that he had done enough for the Equatorial Provinces, started northward, halted at Cairo to request Cherif Pasha to inform the Khedive that he intended quitting his service, and on Christmas Eve he reached London. Egypt, however, had not yet done with the intrepid Englishman.



MONTGOMERY

CONVOY OF SLAVES IN THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER IV.

Gordon returns to the Soudan with enlarged authority.—Revolt in Darfour.—He visits the slave raiders' camp unaccompanied, and secures their submission.—Slavery in the Soudan.—Difficulties attending its suppression.—Gordon summoned to Cairo on a financial commission.—Is an incarnate terror to evildoers in the Soudan.—His official work at Khartoum.—Zebehr's son, Suleiman, proclaims himself lord of Bahr Ghazal.—Gordon breaks up the slavers' den at Shakka.—Suleiman captured and shot.—Zebehr tried and sentenced to death.—Khedive Ismail's abdication.—Gordon goes to India, the Mauritius, the Cape, and the Holy Land.

"THE egg of the present rebellion was laid in the three years during which I was allowed to govern the Soudan on other than Turkish principles." So spoke Gordon to a newspaper correspondent who interviewed him shortly before he set out on his last untimely mission. The story of his administration is a sufficient exposition of the truth of his assertion. He felt that while ruler of the Equatorial Provinces he had been hindered in his work by Ismail Yacoub Pasha, Governor-General of the Soudan. He had checked slave-driving in his own province, but Khartoum was still one of the head-quarters of the system. The Khedive, to secure his return, removed this obnoxious official, and offered the Englishman the combined governorship of the Soudan, Darfour, and the Equatorial Provinces. Gordon accepted, and in February, 1879, set off to Massowah to unravel a tangled skein of frontier disputes with Abyssinia, and proceeded thence to Keren or Sanheit, the chief town of Bogos. After pacifying Walad-el-Michael, the hereditary prince whom King Johannes of Abyssinia had conquered and dethroned, Gordon hastened on a swift camel to Khartoum, the seat of his new government.

It was time. The Soudan had been drained of Egyptian troops for the support of the Sultan in his war with Russia. Darfour was in revolt, and its garrisons were beleaguered. Zebehr, still a power in his quasi captivity, and realizing that Gordon's success would be his ruin, and, by drying up the sources of his revenue, destroy all chance of his ever returning to the Soudan, had sent word from Cairo to the men who had met beneath the roadside tree, that the time for action had come. Under his son the "Cub" Suleiman, they were already buzzing like angry hornets in the south. Their head-quarters were at Shakka, "the Cave of Adullam" as Gordon styled it, the haunt of robbers and murderers, who could put 10,000 men into the field, either for hunting slaves or opposing any one rash enough to interfere with that practice. Larger than El Obeid, and strongly fortified, Shakka was crammed with three or four thousand poor wretches captured from negro tribes, and garrisoned by an army of slaves trained as warriors by Zebehr from their youth upwards. To face these, Gordon had nothing but a handful of chicken-hearted Egyptians. He was hampered, too, by the conflicting laws regarding slavery. But setting aside the question of domestic slavery entirely, he declared, as Governor-General, that slave raids were unlawful and slave raiders criminals, and that he was prepared to treat them as such.

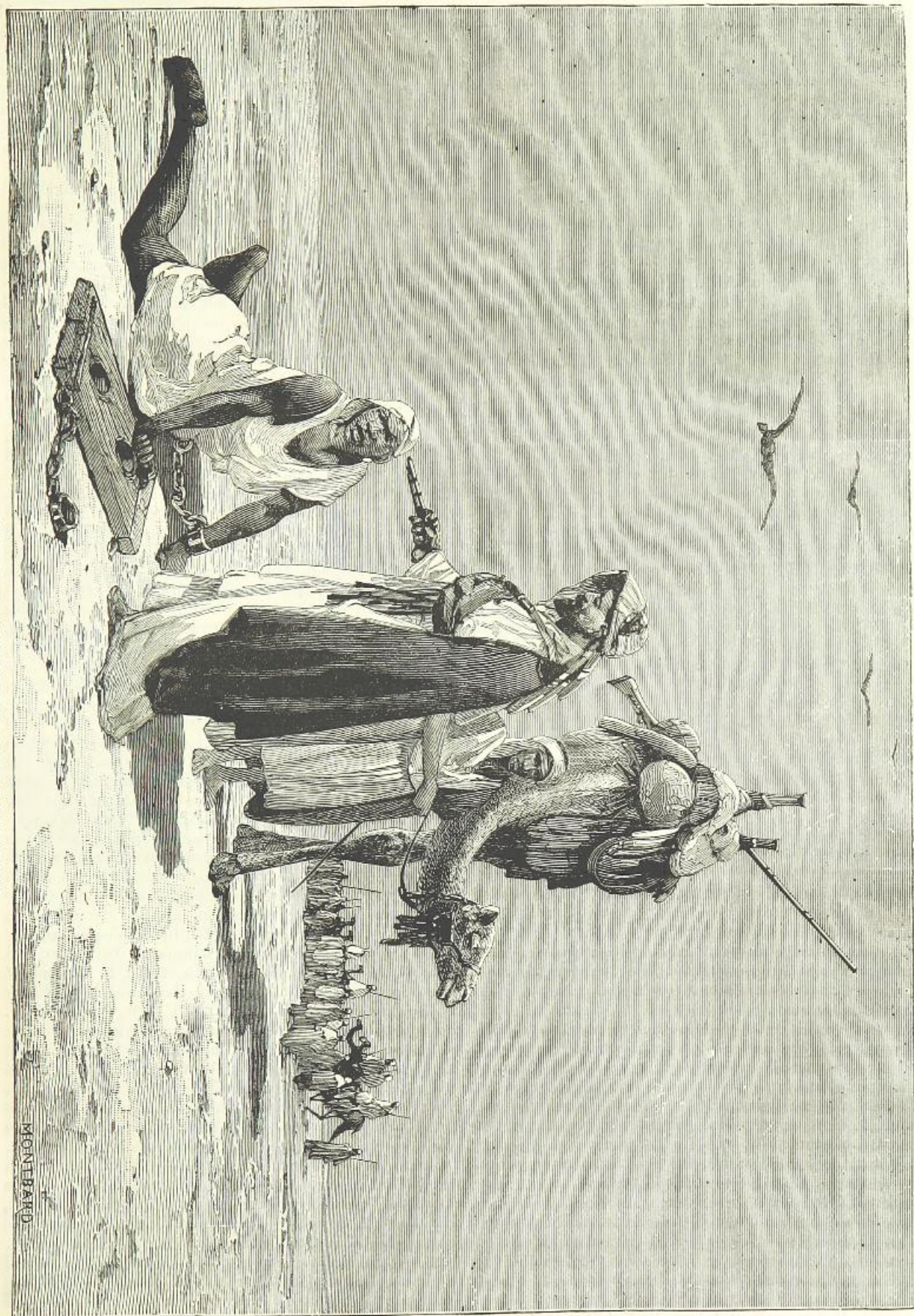
Arriving at Khartoum, Gordon was invested with Oriental pomp, and at once set to work to overthrow every tradition of Oriental rule. "With the help of God I will hold the balance level," was his speech from the throne. In less than a month he revolutionised the whole administration, abolished the kourbash (the hippopotamus-hide whip), checked bribery, fitted up a box with a slit in the lid to receive the daily petitions of all classes, arranged for a water supply for the city, and commenced the disbandment of the 6000 Turks and Bashi-Bazouks, who, instead of acting as a frontier guard,

favoured the passage of the slave caravans. Having put matters straight at Khartoum, he rode away through the desert into Darfour, where Haroun, a survivor of the late Sultan's family, had raised the country against the Egyptians. El Fashar, the capital, and the other beleaguered towns, were speedily relieved. Meanwhile Suleiman and his horde of allies were ravaging the country about Dara. Gordon dashed off on camel-back in that direction, leaving his escort far behind, and entered the town alone. The next day he boldly rode out unarmed, unattended, but resplendent in the superb uniform given him by the Khedive, into Suleiman's camp.

Here three thousand slavers were in arms. Passing through their midst he entered the principal tent, and seating himself amongst the chiefs told them that they were meditating revolt, that he knew it, and that he meant to disarm them and break them up. They listened dumb-founded, and then drew off in groups, debating whether to yield or to fight. "On the one side" as he puts it, "was a bad fort, a cowed garrison, not a man who did not tremble, save himself: on the other a strong, determined set of men, accustomed to war, good shots, and with two field-pieces." But Gordon's daring had quelled their spirits, and they shortly sent him a letter announcing their submission, and swore fealty to the Government, Zebehr's son being amongst the foremost. At Suleiman's invitation he visited the latter at Shakka, which he found swarming with slaves, and finally appointed him, on his promise of fidelity, to the governorship of the Bahr Ghazal provinces. Perhaps in this matter Gordon acted in accordance with the notion that an old poacher makes the best gamekeeper.

There were, however, other slave raiders to be dealt with, and the necessity of their suppression was still a paramount one. The entire question of the slave trade was a difficult one to grapple with. There were three distinct phases in the careers of the slaves after their capture. At Shakka, whither they were first of all brought, they were fairly well treated, for like cattle, the better their condition, the higher the price they fetched. After they were sold, there came a time of hardship and suffering at the hands of the slave dealers who purchased them. Loaded with chains, and with heavy wooden "sheybas" or yokes, they started on the long caravan journey across the desert. Weakened by semi-starvation, exhausted by the march, consumed by fever and parched by thirst, they dropped by hundreds on the way, when the only mercy accorded them was a bullet through their brains before they were left to the jackals and vultures. The third and last period of their career was one of comparative ease, for they were sold to private individuals, and employed in domestic servitude, which in the Egyptian provinces is attended with no particular hardship.

As not merely the possession but the purchase and sale of slaves in Egypt were perfectly legal proceedings, Gordon saw that it was impossible to strike any effectual blow, save on the frontier, where the slave-raids could be met and checked by an armed force. Strive as he would, he was in the end forced to admit that, even with absolute power of life and death over everyone in the Soudan, he could scarcely see any hope of arresting the evil. The larger caravans he succeeded in checking, but Darfour and Kordofan were peopled by Bedouin tribes more than semi-independent, who raided on the negro tribes of the south, or exchanged cloth for slaves with kindred Bedouin tribes beyond the pretended boundaries of Egypt. The slaves thus entered the Egyptian territory four or five at a time, and were sold to the little merchants flocking into these



DISPATCHING AN EXHAUSTED SLAVE IN THE DESERT.

MONTBARD.

lands, and by them brought down in threes and fours to more populous places, to be resold to others. Gordon realised that he could stop the slave gangs by giving the tribes leave to capture and keep all those that passed, but that in this case the slaves would only exchange the frying-pan for the fire, and would much prefer to be carried to their destination and employed in towns than to be held in bondage by the Bedouins who had rescued them from the slave traders. Even with those whom he and his lieutenants rescued, difficulties continually arose. It was impossible to feed them or to send them back to their own country, and if they were let loose they would only be picked up again, an escaped slave being "like an escaped sheep, the property of the person who finds him."

After a flying visit to Khartoum, Gordon set off down the Nile to Berber and Dongola, whence he was recalled to the capital of his government by a reported Abyssinian invasion of Senaar. He struck out straight for Khartoum, across the Bayuda desert, but on reaching his destination learned that the alarm was a false one. He then rode off into the Bogos country to look up Walad-el-Michael, who was again troubling the frontier, and succeeded in pacifying him. By this time he had completed a year of office, in the course of which he had effected wonders in the way of reform, and had ridden over 3840 miles on camel-back, with the result, as he expressed it, of shaking either his heart or his lungs out of place. On his way back to Khartoum he was summoned by telegraph to the Egyptian capital to lend his aid in arranging the finances of the country, which had fallen into hopeless confusion. Reaching Cairo on March 7, 1878, he was received with every honour, and placed at dinner on the Khedive's right hand. "The sun which rose with such splendour set in the deepest obscurity" was his remark. He was too much in earnest and spoke out too openly, and within a month, started off in quasi-disgrace to inspect the south-eastern provinces of his government. After dismissing an old enemy, Raouf Pasha, from the governorship of Harrar, he made his way to Khartoum by Suakim and Berber, and for months remained engaged in settling questions of finance and the affairs of the province. The finances could not be made to balance, but a number of incompetent and unjust officials were dismissed, and the slave trade was absolutely put down. To slave dealers, pashas and other evil-doers Gordon was an incarnate terror. "Your brother," he wrote to his sister from Khartoum seven years ago, "is much feared, and I think respected, but not overmuch liked. The people in the Soudan tremble before your brother."

A Swedish traveller who visited the capital of the Soudan at this period has sketched the following characteristic portrait of Gordon in the midst of his official work at Khartoum:—

"After passing through the courtyard, filled with soldiers, I came first into a little room, where two clerks were at their desks. Through this I was led into a large square room with windows on two sides and very little furniture, as is generally the case in Egyptian work-rooms. A divan ran round three of the walls. The room was almost filled by officials, merchants, priests, and officers, who were waiting to talk to Gordon, while black servants, offering coffee and cigarettes, made their way through this crowd of visitors. In the midst of the room, at a large square table, sat a man, dressed in black. His back was turned to the window and his right arm rested on the table.

"That was Gordon. What did he look like? From what I had heard of him I imagined him to be the type of a true Briton; tall and large-limbed, bearded, and

of strong sharp features, who by a look, a gesture, could control his savage or half savage surroundings. But he was not that by any means.

"A short, slender man with a fine, pale, almost beardless face, whose thoughtful far-away, almost dreaming, but nevertheless energetic look gave his whole being a striking expression of seriousness. He was like a scholar, who in his lonely study conceives and works up a new and grand idea.

"His voice was soft and low. He spoke in short, abrupt sentences; was cool and distant, and while speaking looked at me with steady, questioning eyes. It was as if he tried to read in my face whether he might trust me or not. I had hoped that he would take some interest in my travels, but I was disappointed. Gordon's is a remarkable nature of steady individuality. He helps all travellers as far as it is in his power, but of scientific interests he has none. He is entirely taken up with the work to which he has devoted himself—namely, to free the slaves, and to this end he has worked without interruption for several years with strenuous efforts and at great personal sacrifice."

While Gordon was thus engaged at Khartoum, Suleiman, son of Zebehr, and now Governor of Bahr Ghazal, had gathered round him a number of his father's old adherents, with whom in July he broke out in open revolt. He proclaimed himself lord of the province, seized on a number of government stores, and surprised and massacred an Egyptian garrison at Dem Idris. This rallied the Bedouin tribes around his standard, and he was soon at the head of some 6000 men. Gordon found it impossible to leave Khartoum, but dispatched his staunch lieutenant Romulus Gessi to deal with Suleiman. The struggle between these twain was an exciting one, and a dozen battles were fought before the rebellion was quelled. Gessi, after being delayed by the difficulty of collecting forces and the flooded state of the country, came up with Suleiman near Dem Idris at the end of December, and began a series of engagements in which the mad fury of the rebels was only equalled by the daring and resource of their opponents in face of what appeared to be overwhelming odds. After repulsing attack upon attack, Gessi, in March, 1879, was at length able to assume the offensive. Setting Suleiman's camp on fire by means of rockets he drove out the slavers, and sweeping the district clear of them, freed some ten thousand of their victims. Continuing his pursuit of Suleiman he chased him from Dem Suleiman, a place named in his honour, and then hung on his trail like a bloodhound.

Meanwhile in February a summons to Cairo had reached Gordon, but he failed to attend to it, and at length obtained permission from the Khedive to break up the slavers' den at Shakka, and then to join Gessi. He hurried along, discovering and freeing gangs of slaves on his way. Suleiman sent emissaries to him, whom he tried and shot, and such was the terror he inspired, that the slave-dealers began to disperse in all directions, releasing their captives, who, wandering about the country in thousands, were snapped up by the Arabs like sheep. Shakka cleared, Gordon went on to Toashia, where he met Gessi, and liberally rewarded him. Again the latter started off on his pursuit, which ended by his capturing Suleiman with ten of his principal companions, and shooting the whole batch. In their possession were found papers implicating Zebehr so deeply in the revolt, that his trial became a necessity. He, too, was sentenced to death, but despite this still continued to draw his pension at Cairo as heretofore. Haroun, the pretender to the throne of Darfour, was killed, and his force dis-



THE SUPPRESSION OF SULEIMAN'S REVOLT : A BEDOUIN SHEIKH CHECKED IN MID CAREER.

persed. The pacification of the Soudan seemed complete, and the final extinction of the slave trade only a matter of time. But in July, on his way back to Khartoum, Gordon received the news of Khedive Ismail's abdication, and started at once for Cairo.

He told Tewfik, the new Khedive, that he did not intend to go back, but he nevertheless accepted a mission to Abyssinia to settle matters with Johannes that entailed some hardships and personal discomfort. Physically worn out from his intense exertions, he came to England for a time, visiting on his way thither the ex-Khedive at Naples, whose guest he was for eight days. Gordon, on this occasion, did not disguise his opinion that the Powers in deposing Ismail had not only committed a great injustice, but also a political blunder, which they would soon have cause to regret. With characteristic outspokenness, he said to the ex-Khedive, "All your efforts for humanity have been misunderstood. But take courage. Some day, sooner or later, the day of justice will arrive, and it will be you who will restore to Egypt her prosperity, and complete the sacred work you have commenced."

On the appointment of Earl Ripon to the Governor-Generalship of India, Gordon accepted the post of private secretary to the Earl, but resigned it on his arrival at Bombay, feeling, as he expressed it, "the hopelessness of doing anything to the purpose in face of the vested interests out there." On the invitation of the Chinese authorities he soon afterwards left India for China, between which country and Russia differences had arisen, and successfully exerted his influence in the maintenance of peace. In the spring of 1881, Gordon went to the Mauritius as Commanding Royal Engineer, and in the following May he proceeded to the Cape to aid the Colonial authorities in solving the Basuto difficulty. Shortly after his return to England he left for Palestine, where he spent a year in retirement outside Jerusalem, devoting much time to proving, to the horror of pious tourists, that the received "holy places" are not the right ones after all, and working out the scheme of the Jordan canal.

CHAPTER V.

Raouf Pasha succeeds Gordon in the Soudan, and renews the old system of oppression and torture.—The Khedive's authority destroyed by Arabi's rebellion.—The Soudan ready for the seed sown by the Mahdi.—The promised Mahdi and the date of his coming.—Mahomed Ahmed, the pretended Mahdi.—His origin and personal appearance.—His early knowledge of the Koran.—Is apprenticed to a boat-builder.—Runs away and joins a fakir school near Khartoum.—Completes his religious education and is ordained a fakir.—Prays and fasts incessantly in a cave at Aba.—Acquires a great reputation for sanctity.—Assembles numerous fanatical dervishes around him.—Makes his pretensions known to his fakir brethren, and then publicly proclaims his mission.—Raouf Pasha dispatches an emissary to remonstrate with him with ill-success.—Successive defeat of various expeditions undertaken against the Mahdi.—The rebellion rapidly spreads.

DURING his administration of the Soudan, General Gordon had established a system of just and equitable government, which after his departure led to inevitable revolt against the misrule of his successors. He had warned the Khedive on his appointment that he would render it for ever impossible for Turks and Circassians to govern the Soudan again. By treating the people justly, and by mercilessly repressing all who defied the laws, he had established a much higher standard of government than had ever prevailed in that region before. At the same time he himself had to some extent contributed to further the hatred against the Egyptian rule by his policy as regarded the slave dealers. His endeavours to

check a trade that in the eyes of the Soudanese, and notably of the Dongolawis, was legitimate and justified by the Koran, coupled with the fact of hundreds of those engaged in it having been shot down by his orders, rankled deeply in many minds, and intensified the bitter feeling that already existed against Egypt.

After Gordon's departure, Raouf Pasha, whom he had twice removed from governorships on account of his extortions, was appointed his successor. When Gordon's policy was reversed, his old officials became marked men, and a horde of Turks, Circassians, and Bashi-Bazouks were once more let loose to harry the hapless Soudanese. Taxation returned with heavy pressure, and Raouf managed not only to fill the government treasury, but his own pocket with surprising celerity. Anything and everything was taxed, and after such a fashion that most of the products of the soil were made to pay four and five times over, till it was no wonder that the inhabitants in sheer despair allowed their fields to lie fallow, and wandered off as traders, slave dealers, or mere robbers. It was not alone the taxes themselves, but the manner in which they were collected, that roused such bitter hatred against the Egyptian rule. One of the most important was the poll tax, which was levied on the nomad tribes. As the Bedouins never paid it willingly, it was collected by Bashi-Bazouks, who were quartered on the tribe till the money was forthcoming. These collectors lived at free quarters in the camp, exacting a luxurious maintenance, and freely appropriating to themselves the wives and daughters of their unwilling hosts. Should the latter hesitate to pay, they were scourged with the kourbash, tied up by the thumbs, exposed naked to the sun, or otherwise tortured. As a result the feeling of the native Soudanese for these agents of Egyptian tyranny was one of the bitterest hatred.

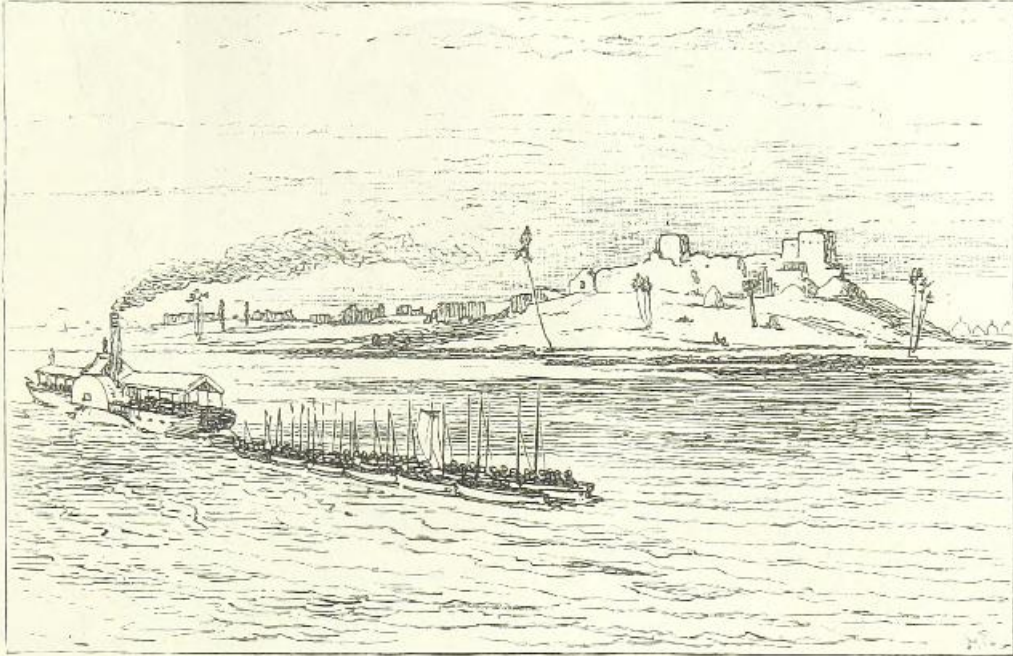
Arabi's rebellion annihilated the authority of the Khedive Tewfik in the Soudan. With the suppression of the slave trade the commerce of Khartoum had declined. In Darfour, its real centre, the occupation of thousands had been interfered with, and at heart every slave-hunter was a rebel. Turks, Circassians, and Bashi-Bazouks plundered and oppressed in the Soudan, the same as in Bulgaria. Oppression begat discontent; discontent necessitated an increase in the armed force at the disposal of the authorities, and this increase had to be supported by augmented taxation. So things went on in a dismal circle till they culminated, after repeated financial deficits, in a disastrous rebellion. Hard times, the failure of crops, universal extortion and general discontent prepared a soil most favourable to the germination of the seed cast forth from the hands of the Mahdi.

For it must be noted that the most competent authorities fail to recognize the present movement as essentially a religious one. Gordon stated that the treatment the people received, justified them in rebelling, and instead of regarding the Mahdi as a religious leader, said that he personified popular discontent, and was probably a mere puppet put forward by Ilyas, Zebehr's father-in-law, and the largest slave-owner in El Obeid, only assuming a religious title in order to give colour to his defence of popular rights. Lieut.-Colonel Stewart ascribed the rebellion to the venality and weakness of the officials, particularly in the Southern Soudan, the suppression of the slave trade, and military weakness, combined with the oppression practised by the Bashi-Bazouks. Consul Hansal, a twenty years' resident at Khartoum, wrote, "The frustration of the slave trade, the government monopoly of the chief articles of commerce, the universal looseness in the management of affairs, and the barbarous treatment of

the sheikhs by government officials, constitute the lever which moves the people to rebellion. The present revolution is not so much the result of religious fanaticism, as of a universal hatred of the ruling powers."

The British consul, Mr. Frank Power, gave it as his opinion that it was the cruel system of taxation current throughout the Soudan, and not the Mahdi, that was the main cause of the rebellion. According to him, every Arab must pay a tax for himself, for his children, and for his wife or wives. This he has to pay three times over—

the thirteen-hundredth year of the Hegira, namely, 1883. He would bear the same name as the Prophet, and his father and mother the same names as the Prophet's father and mother. Now the Prophet was called Mahomed Ahmed, his father Abdallah, and his mother Amina, and these are respectively the names of the Dongolawi fakir who assumes to be the Mahdi, and of his father and mother. Mahomed Ahmed, the pretended Mahdi, is said to be no Arab, but a genuine Nubian, born according to some at Hannek near the third cataract of



HANNEK ON THE NILE, THE REPUTED BIRTHPLACE OF THE MAHDI.

once for the Kedowi, once for the tax collectors, or local beys, and once for the Governor-General. The two last are illegal, but still scrupulously collected to the piastre. If a Soudanese wishes to grow corn he must pay £3 per annum for the permission to do so, and another £7 per annum for liberty to take water from the broad Nile (without which the land is a sand desert), or he must go into prison for life and have his hut burnt. He has further to pay for liberty to sell his corn. If the crop is a good one he pays double taxes, one to the Government, and the other for the private purse of the pasha. If he has a trading boat and does not continually fly the Egyptian flag, he is fined £4, besides paying £4 for the privilege of flying it. Everyone must pay for the right of working to earn money, as well as for being idle. If he cannot pay the taxes he is kourbashed and put into prison. No matter in what way he makes a few piastres, the dragoman of some bey or pasha will steal it for his master, and will frequently pull down huts, and tear up yards and fields to find where the coins are hidden. If a peasant buys a few rags for his wife or child, or mends a hole in his hut to keep out the sun, he is told he must have money somewhere, and is doubly taxed; yet, after all, his sole possessions are a hut made of mud and river reeds, a rush bed, a rush mat, and an earthen pot.*

According to Mahomedan tradition, the true Mahdi, that is, "the God-directed," but which may be approximately rendered "the Messiah," was to make his appearance in

the Nile, in the year 1843, but according to others in the island of Napt Arti opposite Ordeh or New Dongola, the capital of the province of that name, and some fifty miles higher up the river. He is of middle height, slim, but well developed, of dark brown complexion, and wears a black beard. He has, on both cheeks, three parallel scars. When he first proclaimed himself as the Mahdi, he was forty years old, which is regarded as the prophetic age among the Mussulmans, from its being the age when Mahomed revealed himself. The scars, too, are the same which marked Mahomed, and which must mark every true prophet.

From his earliest childhood the so-called Mahdi is said to have shown signs of a decided vocation. At twelve years of age he knew the Koran by heart. As a boy he was apprenticed to his uncle Sherif-ed-deen, a boat-builder at Shakabeh, an island opposite Senaar. Having one day been beaten by him, he ran away and went to Khartoum, where he joined the medressu or free-school of a fakir, (a learned man, head of a sect of dervishes,) at Hoghali, a village close to the city. This school is attached to the tomb of Sheikh Hoghali, the patron saint of Khartoum, who is greatly revered by the inhabitants of the town and district. Here the young Mahomed Ahmed remained for some time studying religion, but not making any very great progress in the more worldly accomplishments of reading and writing. He next proceeded to Berber, where he joined another school, kept by a Sheikh Ghubush, and likewise attached to a shrine much venerated by the natives, with the view

* "Letters from Khartoum," by Frank Power, pp. 38, 39, 91.



MAHOMED AHMED, THE MAHDI.

of completing his religious education. Thence he went to the village of Aradup, south of Kana, and became a disciple of Sheikh Nur-el-Daim, by whom he was ordained a fakir. Other accounts say that, his father being dead, his two elder brothers, boat-builders on the White Nile, thinking there was the stuff for a great scholar in their brother, found him the means to study under two learned professors near Khartoum, Abdel Dagim, and El Gourachi.

The teaching of the schools in which the young Mahomed Ahmed graduated is mainly confined to reading and writing, to getting by heart as many sentences of the Koran as possible, and, in the case of the more advanced students, to expounding that volume. As this contains not only the religious but also the civil law of Islam, the influence of its expounder extends through all grades of the population with which he is brought into contact, although dependent, in a great measure, on the fakir's shrewdness and the degree of favour with God that is attributed to him by the people. One qualification it is essential for a fakir to possess, namely, to be able to write verses of the Koran on scraps of leather, which are worn as amulets, and are considered to be a protection against

sickness, spears, and bullets, and also to insure the wearer a favourable reception from the fair sex. The power of the amulet is in proportion to the sanctity of the writer, and the Nubians further believe that a good and learned fakir can control rain and fine weather. Hence nothing will induce a true believer to be hostile to these holy men, whose mysterious power he greatly fears, and who keep up their reputation by avoiding all excesses, at any rate openly, abstaining from drink and tobacco, and passing most of their time in reading and reciting the Koran.

Mahomed Ahmed on his ordination took up his abode on the Island of Aba, near Kana on the White Nile and four days' journey south of Khartoum. Here he began by making a khaliva, or subterranean excavation, to which he was wont to retire in order to repeat for hours together one of the names of the Deity, accompanied by prayers, fasting, and incense burning. Fifteen years are said to have been thus spent, corresponding with the fifteen years which the Prophet passed in meditating on his mission near Mount Harsa. Mahomed Ahmed's reputation for sanctity spread far and wide, and be-

DERVISH PREACHING THE JEHAD, OR HOLY WAR, TO ARAB CHIEFS



coming comparatively wealthy he collected disciples, and married several wives, whom he was careful to select from amongst the daughters of the most influential Baggara Sheikhs. To keep within the number of four prescribed by the Koran he was in the habit of divorcing them and renewing his relations with them according to his fancy. Gradually he acquired a great reputation for holiness, and, as local head of the Gheelan or Kadrigé order of dervishes, assembled a number of these fanatics around him.



A SOUDAN DERVISH.

The Mudir of Fashoda, who exercised jurisdiction over Aba, was, like most of the Egyptian Governors in the Soudan, anxious to enrich himself at the expense of the population over whom he ruled, and made a demand upon Mahomed Ahmed for extraordinary taxes. The latter having resisted, the Mudir sent word that if he did not pay, he would have him brought to Fashoda with a chain round his neck, and dispatched soldiers to the island to carry out this threat. They were however all killed, and the news spreading far and wide caused a great commotion. Mahomed Ahmed saw his opportunity, and, as the true Mahdi was to make his appearance in 1883, he determined to take time by the forelock, and to put forward pretensions which, in the then state of the Soudan, were sure to be well received. About the end of May, 1881, he began to write to his fakir brethren, announcing that he was the Mahdi foretold by Mahomed, and that he had a divine mission to reform Islam, to establish a universal equality, a universal law, a universal religion, and a "beyt-ul-mal" or community of goods, whilst all, be they Christian, Mahomedan, or Pagan, who did not believe in him, should be destroyed. In August, during the Feast of Ramadam, he publicly proclaimed his mission, and thousands at once flocked to his standard at Merabieh, a village near Aba.

Information of the nature of the Mahdi's letters had reached Raouf Pasha at Khartoum in July. Early in August he dispatched his lieutenant, Abou Saoud, a man whom Gordon had tried and found sorely wanting, with instructions to bring Mahomed Ahmed to Khartoum. At

Aba, the messenger found the object of his quest on a raised seat, holding a staff in his right hand, and surrounded by five hundred followers in coats of mail, and with swords unsheathed. To Abou Saoud's question as to what he really wanted, he replied by announcing his divine appointment as the Mahdi. To the assertion that the governing authorities of the province belonged to Islam as well as himself, he retorted that such was not the case, as the said authorities allowed Christians to have churches and protection, and moreover they collected taxes. To the messenger's advice not to rise against the Government but to give himself up, since he would be helpless to accomplish anything in opposition to their soldiers, breech-loaders, cannons, and steamers, he boldly answered: "If the soldiers shoot at me and my followers, the bullets will do us no harm; and if they come against us with steamers, the steamers and the cannon will sink together." Consequently, Abou Saoud had to return to Khartoum with his errand unfulfilled.

Raouf Pasha, finding it necessary to take the bull by the horns, dispatched three hundred men, with a single cannon, on board a couple of steamers, to assail the Mahdi. The three principal officers, Ali Effendi, Ibrahim Effendi, and Abou Saoud, quarrelled all the way as to which was entitled to the supreme command of the expedition. On their arrival at Aba, a further dispute occurred as to whether they should land by day or by night. Finally, on August 11, a handful of troops, with Ali Effendi at their head, disembarked at daybreak a little distance from the village. Seeing a man with several others around him observing their approach, Ali Effendi jumped to the conclusion that this must be the Mahdi, and resolved to settle the whole affair at a single blow. Accordingly, with more zeal than discretion, he marched up to the man, asked why he was creating such disturbances in the district, and, without waiting for an answer, incontinently shot him down. So bold a move possibly deserved success, only the stranger did not happen to be the Mahdi, and within a very few minutes of his fall, Ali Effendi and his followers were cut down to a man. The remaining soldiers came straggling up by companies, and finally refused, point blank, to fire at the Mahdi. The latter's followers, however, were not equally considerate, but assailed the soldiers, killing about a hundred and thirty, and obliging the rest to throw down their arms and run.

The steamer had meanwhile arrived abreast of the village, and the officer in charge of the gun was ordered to fire at the Mahdi, who could be descried on horseback a few yards from the bank. But the fellow was panic-stricken by the mere sight of the holy man, and after protesting that he could not find either powder or ball, on the gun being eventually loaded fired in the air. The Mahdi rode quietly off, and Abou Saoud, with the troops who had saved their lives by flight, returned to Khartoum crest-fallen. The result of this defeat of the government troops was a large and immediate addition to the Mahdi's followers, and something like a panic in Khartoum. Eventually Mahomed Said Pasha, Mudir of Kordofan, was sent against the Mahdi with a strong body of troops from his own Mudirate, reinforced by detachments from other garrisons. Mahomed Ahmed, realizing his peril, retired to the Tekelé mountains with his followers, like an Old Testament hero, and established himself at Gebel Gedir to the north-west of Fashoda, among the Nubian negro descendants of the Fung, notable for their warlike qualities and according scarcely a nominal allegiance to the Khedive, Mehemet Ali having failed to subdue them when he conquered Kordofan. Mahomed Said Pasha had

very little heart in his work, and in lieu of tracking his prey to his lair, wasted time at Kawa, and finally returned home on the plea that the Nile was rising.

A man of better mettle, Rashid Bey, the Kurdish Mudir of Fashoda, had already twice appealed in vain to the authorities at Khartoum for permission to assail the Mahdi. Finally, in spite of orders to the contrary, he got together 400 regular troops and 1000 Shilluk negroes under their Melek, Kaikun Bey, and started for Gebel Gedir, accompanied by Berghoff, a German holding the post of slave inspector at Fashoda. After a march of fourteen days, on December 8 he came in sight of the Mahdi's forces, and at once ordered an attack. The battle was brief and bloody. Rashid, Kaikun, Berghoff, with almost the whole of the regulars, and most of the Shilluks were speedily stricken down by the lances of the fierce Baggaras constituting the bulk of the Mahdi's levies, and a rich booty, in the shape of Remington rifles and ammunition, fell into the hands of the victors. Fashoda lay defenceless, and moreover the Shilluks, exasperated by their Melek's death, threatened revolt. Rebellion was indeed everywhere in the air. Dervishes went about preaching to the Arab chiefs a holy war. Darfour, filled with the old slave-driving leaven, had already risen. The powerful Kababeesh in the north of Kordofan and the Bishari between Suakim and Berber, the Abu Roof in Senaar, and several tribes on the Blue and the White Nile, were buzzing like wasps. Messenger after messenger of ill tidings reached Raouf Pasha at Khartoum, but ere he could form any plan to avert the coming tempest he was, early in 1882, recalled from his government.

CHAPTER VI.

Abd-el-Kader Pasha appointed Governor-General of the Soudan.—The Mahdi's adherents attack and almost capture Senaar.—Rising in Kordofan and Darfour.—A series of desperate conflicts with Shereef Mahomed Taha, the Mahdi's vizier.—He is eventually slain and his head sent to Khartoum.—Abd-el-Kader's well-directed efforts weakened by Arabi's revolt and by the successes of the Mahdi's followers.—The Mahdi enters Kordofan and attacks El Obeid.—The besiegers repulsed after heavy slaughter.—Failure of an attempt with new levies to relieve Bara.—Khartoum fortified.—More troops arrive in the Soudan on the collapse of Arabi's rebellion.—Abd-el-Kader defeats the rebels in Senaar.—Bara and El Obeid capitulate to the Mahdi.—Abd-el-Kader recalled to Cairo.—Alladeen Pasha succeeds him.—General Hicks takes command of the troops at Khartoum.

ABD-EL-KADER Pasha, a brave, and as the result showed, a skilful commander, was appointed to succeed Raouf Pasha in the Soudan. Pending his arrival at Khartoum he entrusted the government to Giegler Pasha, the Vice-Governor, and a native of Bavaria, and gave orders for the equipment and despatch of a new expedition against the Mahdi. It consisted of thirteen companies of regular Egyptian troops collected mainly from Kordofan and Darfour, with 1500 irregulars recruited from Arab tribes remaining true to the Government and from the Dongolawis, and was placed under the command of Yussuf Pasha, originally a Dongolawi slave-dealer. Well equipped, amply provided with arms and provisions, and accompanied by a thousand baggage camels, this army started for Gebel Gedir, but had scarcely left Khartoum before 500 Dongolawis deserted to the Mahdi, their countryman.

Early in April, Hussein Bey Shukri, Mudir of Senaar, the richest and most important of the Soudan provinces and the granary of Khartoum, sent word by telegraph to Giegler Pasha at Khartoum, that the town of Senaar was threatened by upwards of a thousand Baggaras under

Sheikh Amr-el-Makashef, a relative of the Mahdi. Feeling strong enough to drive them off he applied for permission to do so, which was granted. Accordingly at break of day on April 7, he sallied forth at the head of the garrison, but was speedily beaten back by the Baggaras, who succeeded in following the troops into the town. The garrison rallied in the barracks and government buildings, from the roofs of which they managed to keep up such a fire as at length forced the assailants to retire, but not before they had slaughtered a number of foreign and native merchants in addition to over a hundred soldiers, and had plundered the town. The telegraph office stood close to the government buildings, and up to the last moment the operators stuck to their post, describing how street after street was occupied, and man after man struck down, till the Baggaras took possession of the place and destroyed the apparatus, giving those in Khartoum the impression that all was lost. Indeed, in the confusion, it was probable that the Baggaras would have forced their way into the buildings of the Mudireh, the courtyard of which they actually gained, had it not been for the wounding of their leader. This caused them to retreat, and the troops recovering heart poured in such a fire from the roof as obliged the rebels to keep their distance. For seven days, however, they maintained a state of siege, and the news that they had taken Senaar spread through the country, bringing such numbers to the scene of action that it was estimated that there were forty thousand men camping in and around the town. Karkhodj, lying some sixty miles above it, was obliged to capitulate, and a heavy ransom was exacted there in the form of plunder.

Giegler Pasha faced this ill-news with energy. A company of irregulars from Sawa, and about three hundred gallant Shaiqui Arabs, under Sandjack Salah Aga were ordered to start at once for Senaar, the Pasha himself leaving on April 15 with two hundred of the Khartoum garrison on board two steamers. His confidence was far from being shared by the Europeans in Khartoum, who organized themselves for defence against an attack from without or a rising from within, and fortified and garrisoned the strongly built Catholic Mission House. The whole of Kordofan, where fighting was already going on between soldiers on their way to join Yussuf Pasha's expedition to Gebel Gedir, and small bands of Arabs, was in a ferment. The roads were all rendered unsafe by robbers, the telegraph between Khartoum and El Obeid was cut in several places, and in the latter town a panic reigned, the shops being closed, the houses barricaded, and the inhabitants prepared for a siege. The rising in Darfour, too, grew daily more formidable, and soon all intercourse with that province was cut off, and has remained so to this day.

Meanwhile a Shereef named Mahomed Taha, who called himself the Mahdi's vizier, and had received from the latter a sword in token of his appointment, established himself in the village of Mahomed Ashera, about two hours' journey from the banks of the Blue Nile, just below Abu Harras. Arriving abreast of this spot in his steamers, Giegler Pasha, after vainly summoning the shereef to surrender, dispatched the Sandjak Yussuff-el-Melek with fifty Shaiquies and a hundred soldiers to bring him in by force. This detachment was assailed by an overpowering horde of fanatics armed only with swords and lances, and after a desperate resistance was cut off to a man, the women and girls of the village joining in the fight with savage fury, and mangling the Egyptian soldiers with their teeth. Giegler Pasha was obliged to go on to Abu Harras with his steamers, and

wait on board of them for reinforcements. On May 4 another attack was made against Mahomed Taha by several hundred mounted Shaiquies provided with a cannon, but again the assailants were routed, their artillery captured, and the whole of their officers slain in their efforts to save it.

Good news, however, was at this juncture on the way from the town of Senaar. A capitulation seemed

them before the mistake was discovered. Then Salah Aga was received by the people with tremendous rejoicings; a day of terrible anxiety had passed, and they almost worshipped the man who had saved them. They crowded round him to kiss his clothes, and sang his praises with all the signs of oriental emotion."

Nevertheless the position of the Vice-Governor at Abu Harras remained a critical one till the arrival early in May



AN ARAB CHIEF IN ARMOUR OF THE EPOCH OF THE CRUSADES.

unavoidable, when suddenly Salah Aga, who had pushed on with his handful of Shaiquies, made his appearance before the place. The besiegers asked him with whom he meant to side, but he deceived them as to his intentions until he had gained a position near the river, and then suddenly forming his men into a square, he opened fire. "From morning until four o'clock in the afternoon," says Buchta,* "the fanatical crowds stormed the devoted square. Hundreds and even thousands were mown down by the deadly fire, and already the heroic band was threatened with want of ammunition, when the Arabs retreated, and Senaar was saved. The besieged took their deliverers for enemies, so surprised were they at their appearance, and several shots were fired at

* "The True Story of the Rebellion in the Soudan," by R. Buchta. Translated by Mrs. R. W. Felkin.

of six companies of regulars from Galabat, whom he had previously sent word for to join him there under Ali Kashef, the newly appointed Mudir of Senaar. With them too came 2500 warriors of the great Shukuri tribe, headed by their Prince, Auad-el-Kerim, with his six sons, his nephews, and a number of nobles clad in coats of mail and helmets of steel, and riding thorough-bred Arab horses as in the days of the Crusades. This was a grateful sight, for Auad-el-Kerim was a personal friend of the Vice-Governor's, and had cast his lot with the Government.

The 6th of May was chosen for another attack against Mohamed Taha, this time with a force numbering many thousands:—"At dawn of day," writes Buchta, "the troops were drawn up in order of battle, and the Pasha and the grey-haired Shukuri Prince addressed them, endeavouring to kindle their ambition,

and urging on the Shaiquies, whose late losses had made them bloodthirsty, by the promise of booty. Mahomed Ashera, the Shereef's village, lies, like Abu Harras, on the right bank of the Blue Nile. Between the village and the river there is a wood; on the left bank opposite is a small zereba which Sandjack Osman Aga occupied with the recruits from the neighbourhood of Mesalamia in order to guard the ford of the river, which was near. The regulars from Galabat took up a position before the village, with their front to the river; behind them came Auad-el-Kerim and his cavalry, and the Shukuri, compelling the soldiers to fight by the threat that any who turned back would be speared by their lances. The Shereef approached the troops on horseback at the head of hundreds of praying and screaming dervishes. The bullets thinned their ranks, but three times the ring of dervishes which surrounded Mahomed Taha like a wall was reformed: the corpses lay heaped upon each other, but the Shereef remained unwounded. Then the soldiers, overcome by superstitious fear, shouted, "The Shereef has a charm against bullets; he is invulnerable." If it had not been for the Shukuri spears they would certainly have fled.

"Round about the Shereef the heaps of dead grew continually higher and higher, for old and young, women and children, allowed themselves to be shot down without giving an inch, as from one minute to another the religious madness waxed higher. The Shereef turned his horse to get free from the pile of slain, it stumbled and was falling; when a bullet struck its stooping master on the top of his head. A dreadful panic seized the fanatics, and the Shaiquies, heated by the fray and embittered by their losses in recent fights, rushed upon them with indescribable fury and wrought a terrible slaughter. Neither women nor children were spared, in spite of all the efforts of the Pasha, who himself carried the Shereef's wife and son to the steamer, in order to save them from the rage of the Shaiquies. Many fled to the Kubba, a name given to a saint's tomb, for safety, but the Shaiquies fired through the doors and small windows as long as any sound was heard within. The dead and wounded lay together in the huts of straw which were soon enveloped in raging, leaping flames. Those who fled to the river were shot down by Osman Aga's men, and here alone eight hundred rebels met their death. The Shereef's body, from which the head had been half severed, was brought to the Pasha on the back of a camel. Large numbers of enthusiastic horsemen in coats of mail, galloped round it as it advanced, rending the air with their deafening cries, and presenting a scene of wild picturesqueness and mad excitement. The Shereef's head was taken through the villages on the Blue Nile, and finally set up in the market place at Khartoum."

In this as in their preceding battles, the rebels fought only with swords and lances. The dervishes and fakirs denounced firearms as heretics' weapons, though later on when Egyptian soldiers went over in bodies to the Mahdi, Remington rifles became plentiful amongst his followers, and were no longer regarded with contempt.

After this victory, the Vice-Governor pushed on with part of his force to the town of Senaar, but only to find that Salah Aga had already raised the siege. The regulars from Galabat, under Ali Kashef, and the Shukuris set to work to clear the rest of the rebels out of the province, and after defeating Achmet-el-Makashef, brother to Amr, and ten thousand of his followers at Teko, and overawing the Qoahles, who were on the point of rising, succeeded in temporarily re-establishing peace. Amr-el-Makashef, who had recovered from the wound

received at the siege of Senaar, was subsequently encountered and slain by Salah Aga, and his followers were driven across the White Nile.

Abd-el-Kader Pasha, the newly appointed Governor-General, arrived at Khartoum on May 12. A capable administrator and a brave soldier, he might, in happier times, have done much to benefit the provinces he was appointed to rule over. He began by drawing troops from Senheit and Gardaref, and dispatching them under Rashid Pasha to Kordofan, where the Hassaneeyah Arabs were plundering the caravans. He then set to work to organize about five thousand irregular troops, drawn from the Dongolawis, and Shaiquies, and collected at Khartoum. Two terrible moral blows, however, were dealt him in swift succession. The one was the news of the military revolt in Egypt headed by Arabi, and the massacre at Alexandria. The other was the intelligence that the army sent under Yussuf Pasha against the Mahdi at Gebel Gedir, had encountered the rebels, and had been almost totally annihilated. The battle, it seems, took place on June 7. The Egyptians had come upon the rebels in a densely wooded country, and began to form a zereba or stockade, pending the completion of which the troops were drawn up in a square. In this formation they were assailed by the Mahdi's followers, and the square being broken were cut down almost to a man.

The Mahdi now left the Tekelé mountains, and advanced northward into Kordofan, the immediate conquest of which he confidently announced to his followers. The entire province was already rising in his favour. The Hamr Arabs had assailed a body of Egyptian troops under Bimbashi Nazin Effendi, and driven them out of Abu Harras to El Obeid. At Shakka another detachment had been cut to pieces on June 20. Four days later Bara was attacked by 20,000 men, but the 800 troops forming its garrison beat these back after slaying four times their own numbers. The investment of the town, however, continued, and the bulk of the Egyptian forces in the province concentrated themselves under Iskender Bey at El Obeid. In August Shatt was reported to have been plundered and its inhabitants slaughtered, but an attack on Duem during the same month by 20,000 Baggaras was repulsed with tremendous slaughter, the rebel loss being estimated at from three to four thousand men.

Early in September, 1882, the Mahdi arrived before El Obeid with 60,000 men, chiefly Baggaras and Hassaneeyahs. The garrison consisted of 6,000 men; the town was well fortified, and the walls were mounted with twelve cannon. The rebels advanced to the assault on September 8, with their wonted enthusiasm, and, in spite of the loss inflicted by a continuous and well directed fire, succeeded in entering the town, and engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with its defenders. At this juncture, Iskender Bey ordered grape shot to be poured indiscriminately into the mass of combatants, and by this means drove off the assailants, though at the same time mowing down a number of his own troops. On two subsequent occasions the assault was renewed, but with equal ill success, the rebels losing altogether as many as 15,000 men, it is said. This was a severe blow to the Mahdi's prestige, and numbers of his followers fell away, but he managed to retain his hold over the remainder, and converted the siege into a blockade.

Towards the end of September, Abd-el-Kader, who had succeeded in recruiting several thousand men among the friendly tribes by promising them a year's exemption from taxation, besides £2 for every dervish slain, and £19 for the head of every rebel chief, dispatched a



EL OBEID, THE CAPITAL OF KORDOFAN.

strong body of troops from Senheit, together with some Shaiquies under Ali Bey Lufti to relieve Bara, but they were assailed by the Arabs and driven back, after losing more than half their number. Kordofan might almost be regarded as lost to the Government, whilst Sheikh Achmet-el Makashef was again active on both banks of the White Nile between Kawa and Merabich. The Egyptians, however, in November, achieved a success at Duem.

It was now that Abd-el-Kader, with a view to emergencies, turned his attention to fortifying Khartoum. The Blue and White Niles were united by a canal, and the city was thus transformed into a fortified island. In December the collapse of Arabi's rebellion enabled the Egyptian government to dispatch fresh troops to the Soudan, and there was a gleam of hope. Fighting, however, went on on the White Nile, and in Senaar, and Mesalamia. At the close of the year Lieut.-Colonel Stewart arrived at Khartoum for the purpose of reporting on the situation of the Soudan, and the means requisite for suppressing the rebellion.

In January, 1883, Abd-el-Kader started in person at the head of an expedition intended to clear the province of Senaar, whilst a large body of Egyptian regulars were concentrated at Omderman opposite Khartoum, under Hussein Pasha. Abd-el-Kader did his work well. On the 27th he beat the rebels under Woad Kerif near Maduk, and in March gained another victory at Karkodj. But the news from Kordofan continued disastrous. Bara fell on January 5, and on the 19th the garrison of El Obeid were compelled by famine to surrender, after undergoing such privations that it is said the soldiers were forced to eat the leather straps of their accoutrements. The Mahdi entered the place in triumph; soldiers and civilians alike joined the ranks of his followers, the Christian merchants of the town embraced Mahomedanism; only the members of the Catholic Mission refused to change their faith, and were placed in close confinement. Ever since this period the Mahdi has been the sovereign ruler of Kordofan.

In the midst of Abd-el-Kader's successes in Senaar, he was suddenly recalled to Cairo, owing to intrigues there against him, and Alladeen Pasha, the Mohafa of

Massowah, was appointed Governor-General in his place, Hussein Pasha succeeding him in command of the army he had been leading in Senaar. At the same time, General Hicks, an officer of the Anglo-Indian army, arrived at Khartoum with several other English officers, and assumed command of the forces there.

CHAPTER VII.

Major-General Hicks.—His military career.—He assumes the command of the Soudan army.—Reception at Suakin.—Arrival at Khartoum.—Engages the Mahdi's followers under Amr-el-Makashef, near Merabieh, and signally defeats them.—Rejoicings over the victory.—A letter from an adherent of the Mahdi circulates in Khartoum.—Expeditionary force organised against the Mahdi at El Obeid.—Hicks Pasha sets out at the head of his combined forces. Is beset by spies along the whole of his route.—Gloomy forebodings on the part of those belonging to the expedition.—Last letters of Major Seckendorff, Mr. Evans, and Mr. O'Donovan.—Final telegram from General Hicks.—After long silence rumours of a victory reach Khartoum, followed by stories of an appalling disaster.—The army led into an ambush by treacherous guides.—A complete massacre ensues.—Death of Hicks Pasha.—The lives of some of the prisoners believed to be spared.—Triumphal entry of the Mahdi into El Obeid.—Retreat of Egyptian garrisons.—The entire Soudan in arms.—Osman Digna attacks Sinkat.—His antecedents.—Defeat of an expedition for the relief of Tokar.—Death of Consul Moncrieff.

MAJOR-GENERAL W. HICKS, subsequently known as Hicks Pasha, was a pensioned officer of the Anglo-Indian army, in which he had seen a good deal of active service. He entered the Bombay army as far back as 1849, and served in Bengal during the Indian Mutiny in 1857-9 with the 1st Belooch battalion, and as staff officer to the Punjaub moveable column. He took part in the Rohilcund campaign with Major-General Penny's forces, and in the campaign for the subjugation of Oude, being present at several actions, including that with Feroze Shah's forces before Bareilly. He subsequently shared with Lord Clyde's forces in the defeat of the enemy under Beni Madho at Dhoondia Keria, and the capture of the fort of Buxar. Later on he served with Lord Clyde throughout the operations across the Gogra, and took part in the capture of the enemy's guns at Silk Ghaut, for which he was mentioned in despatches. He accompanied Lord Napier's expedition to Abyssinia, and was present at the taking



HICKS PASHA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE SOUDAN ARMY.

of Magdala. In 1882, when holding the retired rank of colonel, he went to Egypt, and after filling the position of chief of the staff, was appointed by the Khedive early in 1883 Commander-in-Chief of the Soudan Army.

Hicks Pasha and his staff left Cairo on February 7, and proceeded by train to Suez, and thence by steamer to Suakim. Here they were rowed ashore, and as Colonel Colborne tells us, "were received by the governor with all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, which on this occasion consisted of the blowing of asthmatical trumpets, which made day hideous by their braying, and a feeble salute from a dilapidated gun." The troops of the small garrison were drawn up in line, in front of the residence of the Governor of the Eastern Soudan, who met the British officers on the beach. On the 11th, General Hicks and his staff left with an escort of Bashi-Bazouks by the desert route for Berber. Here they embarked on board steamers and made their way up the Nile to Khartoum, which was reached early in March. Three weeks later they were joined by a detachment from Cairo, with six Nordenfeldt guns, the first introduced into the Egyptian army, under Captain Walker. The troops were assiduously drilled and trained in ball practice, and no effort was spared to render them fit to take the field. This was a very needful task, for as the ex-Khedive Ismail subsequently pointed out, the very way in which the poor fellows were sent to the war, was enough of itself to deprive them of all stomach for fighting. "Egyptian soldiers," he observed, "need more than all others a flag, military music, and all the éclat of war; without these things they will not, and even cannot, fight." Although this must have been well-known to all concerned, Arabi's men, sent up to reinforce Hicks Pasha, were despatched like so many malefactors under a guard and without arms, and were in many instances led by officers who were forced to accept the task as a punishment or even as an alternative to exile.

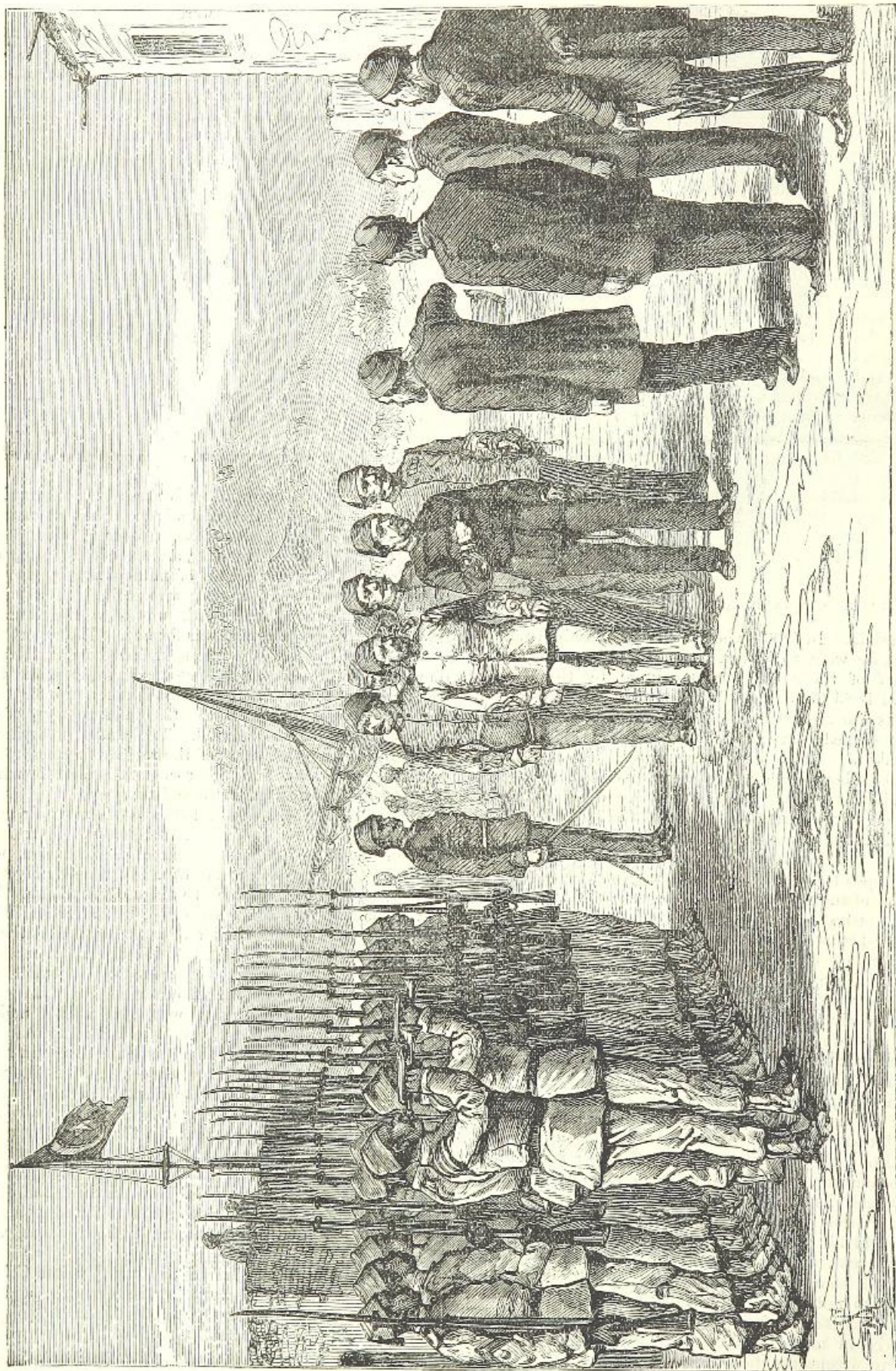
While these preparations were going on a large number of Baggaras were gathering under the leadership of Achmet-el-Makashef, on the White Nile south of Duem, which they were again threatening. To oppose them a strong force of Egyptian troops had been massed at Kawa, under Hussein Pasha, the successor to Abd-el-Kader, in command of the Senaar army. On April 6, General Hicks steamed up the Nile with further reinforcements from Khartoum, and on the 23rd four battalions and a half of Egyptian infantry, Arabi's old troops, a contingent of Bashi-Bazouks, a handful of mounted Soudanese on their active little ponies, and on camels, and four Nordenfeldt guns set out to encounter the enemy, who was reported to be entrenched at Gebel Ain. This force was under the command of Suleiman Pasha, who was accompanied by Colonels Colborne and De Coetlogon, and some other European officers. General Hicks, whilst retaining the control of the entire expedition, embarked on board a steamer with two more Nordenfeldts and a Gatling, and proceeded some forty miles up the White Nile to take possession of the important ford between Senaar and Kordofan, by the island of Aba, with a view of cutting off the retreat of the Baggaras.

Suleiman Pasha on quitting Kawa, at once formed his troops in one large square, and advanced in that cautious formation. The first day's march over ground scored with fissures caused by the action of the sun, and covered with thorny patches of mimosa scrub, proved a fatiguing one to the troops, who halted in a ruined village. The next night's halt was on a rise near the river, where a large zereba was formed. The report that an immediate attack was intended, led General Hicks to land and join his troops the following morning, and they remained in the position they had taken up for three days. On the afternoon of the 26th a large body of the enemy's horsemen was descried. These, after galloping up to within a thousand yards of the rapidly formed square, were met with a fire from the rocket tubes and howitzers that caused them to turn rein and disappear.

On the 28th the Egyptian forces broke up their camp and advanced with mounted Bashi-Bazouks in front to feel the way, and the square in close formation, with camels and baggage in the centre. In the evening they encamped nigh to the fortified village of Merabieh. The next morning they again advanced, but after an hour's march the scouts rode back and announced that the foe was rapidly advancing. The position was an excellent one for the tactics about to be pursued by General Hicks, being an open plain with no cover nearer than eight hundred yards. The square was soon halted and in readiness, with all the baggage, camels and camp followers in the centre. Along each face bristled a thousand rifles, whilst at each corner at intervals outside the line were placed the Nordenfeldt-rifled howitzers and rocket tubes. This plan of placing the guns outside the line obviated the necessity of leaving any gaps in the square by which an entry might be effected, but has not been followed by the British commanders in subsequent engagements. "Crow's feet," little iron spikes joined in three and calculated to make the ground inconvenient for stepping on to bare-footed savages, or horses without shoes, were thrown out freely.

"The prompt formation of the men," writes Colonel Colborne*, "was satisfactory in the extreme, and all were apparently ready for the fight. There is no question as to the good moral effect produced by the presence

* With Hicks Pasha in the Soudan. By Col. the Hon. J. Colborne, pp. 153-6, 159-61.



ARRIVAL OF HICKS PASHA AND THE SUDAN FIELD FORCE AT SUAKIM.

of a handful of British officers. The white helmet made itself conspicuous, and the fellah soldier glanced now and again over his shoulder to this reassuring rallying point. Colonel Farquhar, accompanied by Captain Massey and four Bashi-Bazouks, raced in to report the enemy's advance. So rapid was this that in fifteen minutes they were on us in a cloud. About one thousand yards to our front and right was a wood out of which spearmen were pouring in their thousands, led by their chiefs carrying gaily coloured banners. There they are in the opening of the wood in front, there they are, a confused crowd of horsemen and footmen, breaking with no effort at organization from their cover. *Zuush!* fly a couple of rockets followed by the sharp bang of a section of howitzers. Eagerly we watched the effect, but the rockets burst upon our own men, and though the shells had been nicely timed they seemed to make but little impression. Breaking from cover the enemy sweeps with an inward curve right and left, his extreme flanks converging towards the opposing angles of our square. Now file-firing commences from the front directly assailed, the men having been cautioned to aim low. Nearer they swept, horse and foot closing on either flank, but as they came within our zone of fire, they butted forward, hit to death. The Nordenfeldts have now got to work, and within a few minutes the leading mob, for it was but that, fell in piles. But fanaticism knows no check. The chosen chiefs of the Mahdi were there, followed by their own chosen henchmen. They staggered to the front, to break into a furious gallop straight for our death-dealing square, while in their rear swiftly sped the faithful spearmen.

"Onward they came, waving their banners inscribed with the Mahdi's own rendering of the Koran; but the Khedive's troops, encouraged by their English officers, had no fear. They had seen the charm-protected enemy bite the dust under their fire. Allah and the true prophet were with them, and they hurled defiance in answer to the fanatical apostrophising of the rebellious sheikhs. Still the chiefs led on their men with all the reckless and romantic chivalry of the old Saracen knights. One by one they fell dismounted, two or three to rise again and dash forward on foot, waving their standards, only to drop and rise no more.

"And what gallant men they were! Right up to the cannon's mouth, right up to the rifle muzzle dauntless they rode, encouraging their followers with the promise of paradise, to break our square. But Nordenfeldts and Remingtons are no respecters of creeds or fanatical idiosyncrasies. Sheikh after sheikh went down with his banner, although the Mahdi had assured each that he was invulnerable; and their faithful, but misguided followers fell in circles around the chiefs they blindly followed. Twelve of the most prominent leaders—nine from Senaar and three from Kordofan—have left their bones to whiten on the battlefield amidst three hundred of their followers. These were the men whom the Mahdi had declared proof against the Turkish bullets.

"The rebels were commanded by Amr-el-Makashef, who, with another leader, the Sheikh El Arakee, had been only recently sent from Kordofan by Mahomed Ahmed, the so-called Mahdi. Calmly, and apparently without the slightest fear, did these Arab cavaliers ride about from right to left, as if seeking to pick out a weak point at which to charge and break into our compact body.

"Their devotedness was in vain. One after another they bit the ground, the first-named chieftain being rolled over by the Nordenfeldt at our left corner. After half an hour's continued rattle of musketry, seeing their chiefs fallen, and the banners in the dust, the advancing

hordes waver, and are greeted with a tremendous howl from our troops, who had stood as steadily as any troops could. Now the enemy move off to their right, among the long grass, and our front is cleared. Shells are bursting among them. All are soon out of sight, except a few who walk about unconcernedly, and actually come up singly, after the rest have retreated, to within a few yards, brandishing their spears in defiance. One after another these poor fanatics are knocked over. When the smoke had rolled away it was seen that the ground was strewn with corpses, most of them within four hundred yards.

"A strange episode occurred then. Within six yards two men were lying with one of the standards before spoken of. An Egyptian captain was sent out by his colonel to secure it. No sooner had he taken hold of it than up rose the standard-bearer, who was only wounded in the leg, and dashed a spear into his left hand, while the other, not wounded at all, also attacked him. The officer cut over the first with a blow on the neck, and the other was shot, but not before a desperate struggle had taken place. And now, when victory was secured, it was a curious sight to see the Bashi-Bazouks, who, on camels, had been acting as scouts, show their joy by brandishing their rifles over their heads, while their band of music struck up a wild triumphal air, accompanied by 'tam-tamming.' Three cheers were now given for the Khedive, then for Hicks Pasha, and then for Suleiman Pasha. The joy and enthusiasm of the troops at their first victory were intense. Their officers came up and warmly shook hands with the English officers.

"The exuberant joy of our little Soudanese was excessive, and in its demonstration they displayed all the childish glee of semi-savage natures. Perched on the backs of camels or astride their ponies, they tossed their lances spinning into the air, waved their arms, and chanted with wild abandon a sort of Soudanese 'Io Triumphe.' This was accompanied by furious volleys of tam-tamming and ear-splitting blasts from the horns of buffaloes and hollowed tusks. The scene—a mixture as it was of infantine delight and demoniacal savagery—was thoroughly African and characteristic of a rudimentary form of social existence. No regret for the loss of life, no compunction for the shedding of blood, no ethical abstraction marred the pure pleasure which the sense of victory conveyed to these simple warriors."

The forces under Amr-el-Makashef were estimated at from 4000 to 5000, and their loss could not have been less than 500 slain on the field, irrespective of those carried off by their friends. The Egyptians lost only two killed and a few wounded. They continued to advance on Gebel Ain. This position was however found to have been abandoned by the rebels, the bulk of whom had either fled further south or crossed over into Kordofan. All, however, who essayed the latter course were not equally fortunate, for General Hicks and his steamers came upon a party of some hundreds crossing the river on rafts, and, opening fire with the Nordenfeldts, slew a large number. Several chiefs tendered their submission, and by the close of the summer the insurrection was virtually crushed in Senaar, though Darfour and Kordofan were still in the hands of the Mahdi.

After a sojourn of a few days at Gebel Ain, General Hicks and his forces returned to Khartoum, a strong garrison continuing to occupy Duem. The reconquest of Kordofan was determined upon; the annihilation of the Mahdi having now become a matter of paramount importance in the eyes of the Egyptian authorities, from the fact of his emissaries seeking to foment a revolt in



ENGLISH OFFICERS DRILLING EGYPTIAN TROOPS.

Khartoum itself, where the following letter of Iskender Bey, who, it will be remembered, had commanded the Khedive's troops in El Obeid, but who had since its surrender transferred his allegiance to the False Prophet, had been circulated:—

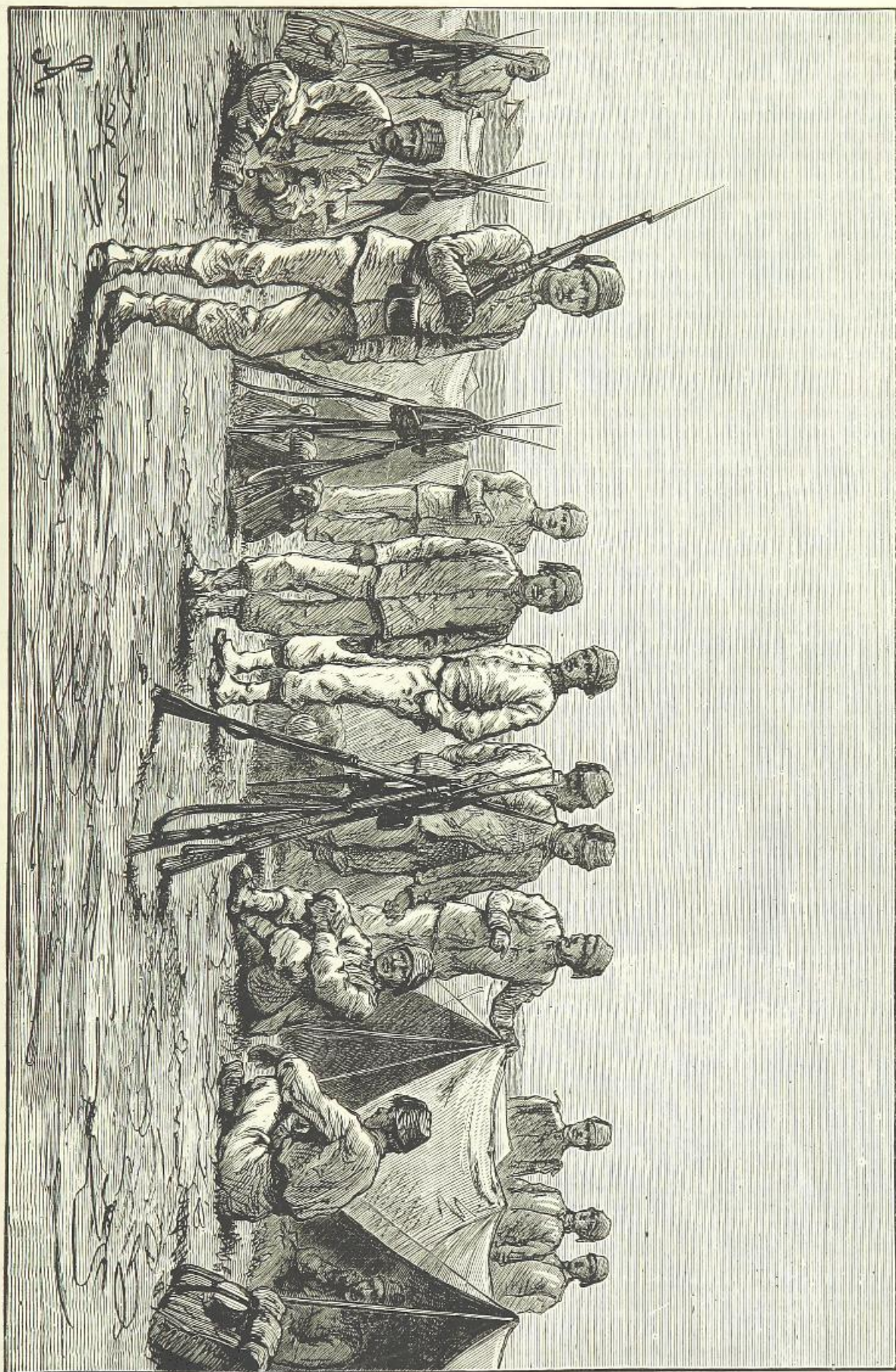
"From the servants of God, Sheikh Mahomed Iskender and Sheikh Yussuf Mansur, formerly officers of the Kordofan army, now helpers of the Mahdi, with whom is peace, to all the Mohammedan officers of the army in Khartoum. We warn you, friends, and sincerely advise you, in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet; greeting and peace be with him. We have not been forced to write this warning, but from fear of your destruction, and lest you should come to a bad end, we give you our willing counsel. Friends, we are with the Mahdi, and though we have been with him for six months and have during that time heard all his words, we have not discovered the slightest thing that is evil in him or in his holy mission. We swear by the great God and by the excellent Koran that he is the true Mahdi, the expected one. A proof of this we find in the fact that the great sums of gold and silver which have come into his possession, have no attraction for him, but they lie in the Moslem treasury, in charge of a trustworthy man, who doles them out to widows and orphans, followers and emigrants. The Mahdi speaks politely to everybody (notwithstanding that the contrary has been reported in Khartoum), he abhors falsehood, and his pride is the spread and glory of our religion. He is always smiling and his countenance is beaming as the full moon. His appearance is like that of the sons of Israel (Ishmael), and on his right cheek is a wart, and other signs which are written in the books of the holy law. We all receive a sufficiency out of his treasury, but have no regular wages.

If we were to describe to you all the good qualities of the Mahdi we should have to write you a long letter; but if you are good Moslems, despise earthly things and look towards the end and to paradise. The way thither is by submission to the Seyd el Mahdi. Beware of fighting against Moslems. We and you, God willing, will fight against the unbelievers, the enemies of the faith. If you are believers in God and His prophet, leave off helping unbelievers, and remember that victory comes from God, and that He gives it to whom He will. Together with the Mahdi's large army, consisting of 200,000 fighting men, we have Remington guns and shells, which have been taken from the Turks. In spite of this the Mahdi, with whom is peace, prevents the

use of firearms; spears and swords are used. In the name of the great God, the God of all times, he (the Mahdi) has not bidden us to write this, but we do it ourselves with free will, and out of anxiety for your good."

General Hicks set to work to organize and equip the expeditionary army which was reinforced from Cairo, and at the same time negotiations were set on foot to secure the active support of those tribes in Kordofan who as yet preserved their neutrality, and of Adam the Sultan of the Nubian negroes inhabiting the mountainous country of Tekelé to the south of Kordofan. The latter promised his assistance, offering to join the Egyptians with his troops if they came near enough for him to effect a junction. On August 20th, General Hicks formally assumed the command of the expeditionary force. The first question to be decided was the route to be chosen for the advance on El Obeid, and this depended upon the facility of obtaining a supply of water on the march. The whole of Kordofan depends upon a few wells lying at long distances apart and nearly or altogether dry in the summer months. After some deliberation it was decided to take the most southerly route following the Nile as far as Duem and thence striking across the desert in a south-westerly direction through Gebel Kohn to the Birket Shirkelê. According to such information as could be gathered at Khartoum the difficulties as regarded the water supply on this route appeared to be comparatively small, but as a precautionary measure it was resolved by the general to have sufficient camels to carry a supply for twenty-four hours for the whole army if needed.

On September 8, General Hicks reviewed his troops, consisting of 7000 infantry, 400 mounted Bashi-Bazouks, and 100 cuirassiers sheathed in coats of mail, recalling



EGYPTIAN INFANTRY IN CAMP.

those worn in the middle ages. They had with them four Krupp guns, six Nordenfelts, and ten mountain howitzers. On the following day they marched from Omdurman on the Kordofan side of the Nile where their camp had been formed, and in twelve days reached Duem, a distance usually covered by caravans in a third of the time. Reinforced by the garrisons of Duem and Kawa they numbered 10,500 men. With General Hicks were Aladeen Pasha, Governor General of the Soudan, Abbas Bey, Colonel Farquhar, chief of the staff, Majors Seckendorff, Massey and Warner, Mr. Evans, chief of the intelligence department, Captains Herlth and Anatyagna, Surgeon-General Georges Bey, Surgeon Rosenberg, Mr. Cheyne, a civil engineer, Mr. Frank Vizetelly, artist of *The Graphic*, who when attached to the staff of the *Illustrated London News*, for many years previously, had gone through the various campaigns in Italy, and been with the Confederates throughout the American Civil War. He had marched with the expedition all the way on foot from Suakim to Berber, a feat no European had ever accomplished before. Finally there was Mr. O'Donovan, the able correspondent of the *Daily News*, who as representative of that paper had been present with the Turkish army in Armenia in 1877-8, and had afterwards followed the Carlist Civil War in Spain, and who in 1879 visited the land of the Tekke Turcomans, sojourning in close intimacy with these marauding tribes for a period of five months at Merv. Colonel de Coetlogon did not accompany General Hicks's expedition, being engaged in patrolling the Nile and hindering the further passage of rebels into Kordofan, and Colonel Colborne, Major Martin, and Captain Forestier-Walker were absent on sick leave.

Gloomy forebodings as to their possible fate had already seized on some of the stoutest hearts in the expedition. Major Seckendorff, writing from Duem, on September 22, said :—

"Pleasant times are certainly not in store for us. The False Prophet will give endless trouble. He musters a great force, and disposes of over 15,000 good breechloaders and fourteen cannons, besides holding two fortified cities, Bara and El Obeid. The most important thing is that he commands well-mounted cavalry, and fanaticism makes heroes of all his people—a description which certainly does not apply to our troops. I have seen Egyptians in three battles, and should be at a loss to find one hero among them. The lack of water is terrible. All the wells on the road are destroyed. When we march from here we leave the Nile, and other rivers there are none. We cannot carry more water than we need for twenty-four hours, and how much that is, you know when you remember that we are 11,000 men, with 6000 camels, horses, and mules. . . . If our cavalry gives timely notice of attack from the Arabs then all will go well, but if they succeed in taking us by surprise then we must be prepared for the worst. If they defeat us once, not one of us will return home, for then the entire Soudan will rise as one man. Khartoum and all will be lost. The people will then place unbounded faith in the False Prophet."

Mr. O'Donovan in a letter from the same place, dated September 23, after referring to the death of an intimate friend, continues :—

"I am writing this under circumstances which bring me almost near to death as it is possible to be without being under absolute sentence of execution or in the throes of some deadly malady; and yet I speak of poor ——— as if I were going to live for ever. It would be odd if the next intelligence from this part of the world told that I, too, had gone the way of all flesh. However, to die even out here, with a lance-head as big as a shovel through me will meet my views better than the slow, gradual sinking into the grave which is the lot of so many. You must know that here we are 1500 miles away south of Cairo, in the midst of a wild, almost unexplored country. The Egyptian army, with which I am here camped on the banks of the Nile, will have but one chance given them, one tremendous pitched battle.

"The enemy we have to meet are as courageous and fierce as the Zulus, and much better armed; and our army is that which ran away before a handful of British troops at Tel-el-Kebir. We are obliged to march in square, with our baggage and water camels, 5000 in number,

in our midst, lest the enemy's cavalry surprise us. In this guise we can march only ten miles a day, for after twelve the heat becomes frightful, as we are not far from the equator. Thus it takes us four days to get from one set of wells to another. Then, perhaps, when we get to where water ought to be, we find the wells filled up with stones and earth, or, mayhap, rotting bodies of men and camels. Then we have to go right-about-face back again to where we came from, with the enemy's cavalry hanging on our flank all the time, and watching an opportunity to make a dash at us. You know I am by this time, after an experience of many years, pretty well accustomed to dangers of most kinds, even some extra. Yet I assure you I feel it terrible to face deadly peril far away from civilised ideas and where no mercy is to be met with, in comparison with cravens that you expect to see run at every moment, and who will leave you behind to face the worst."

On September 27 the hapless army marched forth from Duem to its doom. Its path from the outset was beset by the Mahdi's spies, who faithfully reported to him its every movement, whilst General Hicks had to trust to treacherous guides and false reports. There was dissension, too, in the Egyptian ranks, for Aladeen Pasha was bitterly jealous that he had not been entrusted with the supreme command, and rumour afterwards credited him with a wilful share in the impending disaster. Military critics shook their heads ominously as they read of the decision taken by the council of war, called at the first halting place, to give up the proposed series of posts connecting the army with its base, and to leave the line of retreat to be crowded in by hordes of savages. One of the last messages received from the army was penned by Mr. Evans, and dated September 30. The following passage occurs in it :—

"The heat is terrible. About thirty men have died from exhaustion, and dozens of the camels die daily. . . . We halted at this miserable village of twenty huts to give the men and beasts a little rest—the water is horrible. The enemy is said to be in great force thirty miles in front of us, so that we shall meet in four days. The road behind us is closed; and, after this communication, nothing more can be sent to Khartoum till we have defeated the rebels."

Writing on the same day, and dating from the entrenched camp thirty miles south-west of Duem, Mr. O'Donovan recorded that the army was advancing as rapidly as possible to El Obeid in order to press on a decided action. After describing the great precautions taken on the line of march to prevent surprise, the letter proceeds :— "There will be no communication with the external world for the next few weeks, as for the moment we practically burn our ships." His last message was dated from Sange Hamferid camp, 45 miles south-west of El Duem, Oct. 10, and was as follows :—"We have halted for the past three days, owing to the uncertainty of the water supply in front. Here we are entirely dependent on surface pools. A reconnaissance of thirty miles forward yesterday by Colonel Farquhar ascertained that the pools were barely sufficient for a rapid march to the village of Sarakhua, now deserted, where there are a few wells. The enemy is still retiring, and sweeping the country bare of cattle." A portion of a private letter from Mr. O'Donovan, written at this period, and to which, in common with the above extracts, a melancholy interest now attaches, is given in fac-simile, together with a portrait of the writer, on the opposite page.

The last telegram received from Hicks Pasha was dated October 17. In it he said :—"The army is twenty miles from Nourabi. We have depended on the pools of rain-water. Fortunately we have found by reconnaissances that water is ensured as far as Sarakhua. The guides' information is vague. I regret abandoning the intention of establishing posts and a line of communication. The Governor-General informs me that the Arabs will close in after the army has passed and prevent supplies—besides the pools will dry up. Water is not obtainable ex-

cept by digging wells. . . The health of the troops is good. This is fortunate, as there are no sick to carry. The heat is intense."

Then came a long period of silence. Suddenly news of a startlingly favourable character was received. A telegram arrived from Khartoum dated October 31, stating that an Arab had come in the day before bringing important intelligence, which had been since confirmed by two soldiers who had arrived from Duem. It was alleged that Hicks Pasha found from 25,000 to 30,000 Arabs encamped near him, on the Khor-el-Nil, a torrent three leagues from El Obeid. Next morning the Arabs divided themselves into two columns, and attacked the Egyptian square on two sides, thus permitting Hicks Pasha to make use of his 6000 Remingtons and all his Krupp, Nordenfolt, and rocket batteries. The Arabs, who were armed with lances only, failing after some time to reach the square, fled, leaving 8000 of their number killed, and all their women, food, and baggage animals. The Mahdi himself was not present at the battle. Hicks Pasha pursued the main body of the fugitives, and overtook them at Melbeis, where he found the Mahdi posted with the fugitives, and 2000 cavalry, his bodyguard. The Arabs again attacked, and were defeated with great loss, the horse of the Mahdi being killed. The Mahdi was reported to have been cut down by the light cavalry sent out in pursuit. The Arabs then fled to El Obeid, which was at once closely invested by Hicks Pasha, who was master of the country around, and had established his head-quarters at Melbeis, two miles from the besieged city. On November 4, according to the Arabs' report, Hicks Pasha was in full possession of the town and of the Government treasury, the Egyptian loss having been nil. Colonel de Coetlogon, while patrolling the White Nile, was said to have captured many of the fugitives, who were trying to cross to Senaar by means of shallop canoes.

Soon doubts were aroused regarding the accuracy of this intelligence. It was pointed out that at the date on which Hicks Pasha was said to have entered El Obeid, he must have been, according to his calculated rate of progress, at least seven days march from that town. Days went by, bringing no confirmation of the alleged success, but in its stead the story of an appalling disaster.

The full details of that disaster we have yet to learn, and possibly they will remain for ever untold. In its bolder outline the

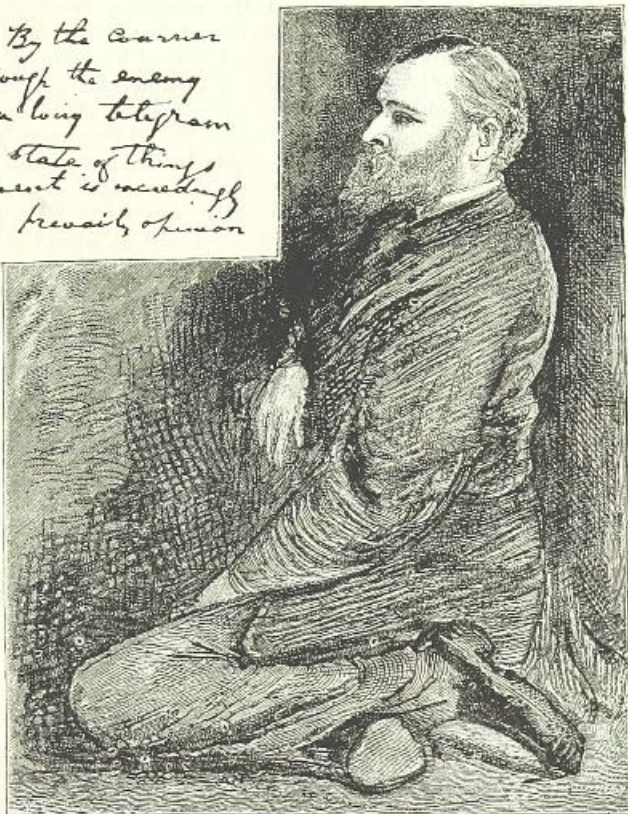
story, divested as far as possible of conflicting incidents, seems to have been as follows. On leaving Duem for El Obeid, the troops came across the rebels, and had several skirmishes with them, the Egyptian loss being confined to a few Bashi-Bazouks and Soudanese irregulars, and the result being magnified into the victories first reported. On arriving at Birket Kahad, where they found a lake and took in a supply of water, Hicks Pasha appears to have formed the army into two divisions. The first, under himself, was to strike direct at El Obeid, whilst the second, the leadership of which he had entrusted to Aladeen Pasha, was intended to hold the Mahdi in check at Kaz, to the east of that town. The army marched on Alouba, where it spent the night, meeting numerous detachments of the enemy on the road, but easily putting them to flight. The next day, which, as far as can be made out in face of the difficulties the Oriental mind seems to suffer from regarding accurate chronology, was November 2, the troops continued their march, taking with them the necessary supply of water for twenty-four hours. It would seem that the guides were treacherous, and led them towards the rocky and wooded defiles of Kashgil. Three hours were occupied in crossing a forest, and they were subsequently surprised by a strong force of the enemy, who checked their advance. The square was formed, and, after fighting the whole day long the rebels were defeated, and the Egyptians passed the night on the field of battle. As far as can be ascertained, both divisions of the Egyptian army had re-united during the day.

The following day, presumably November 3, the

*By the courier
who carries this through the enemy
behind us I send a long telegram
about the general state of things
which for the moment is exceedingly
disagreeable; as the prevailing opinion
is that we are running
a terrible risk in
abandoning communications.*

*tions with our base on
the Nile and nearly
230 miles into an
almost unknown
country. General Hicks
has just sent for me to
say that this is the last
opportunity we shall
have for some weeks
of communicating with
the external world.*

* * *



*I remain dear Mr Robinson - I hope,
in spite of our ugly prospects here, some advance
during your
C. Gordon*

troops set out again. Their supply of water was soon exhausted, and the enemy surrounded them in large numbers, but after several encounters with heavy losses on both sides were defeated, the Egyptians again passing the night on the scene of action. On Sunday, November 4, the army marched on Kashgil and after it had been for four hours on its way, was attacked by a terrible fusillade. The troops suffered terribly from thirst, but managed to keep their ground during the entire day. On November 5, the fighting having ceased, the exhausted Egyptians resumed their struggle onwards towards the wells through a rocky wooded defile. In the opening encounters, the Mahdi had sent forward his dervishes to the assault stating that they would conquer by Divine aid. On this occasion, however, he seems to have relied more upon military strategy and the regular troops who had joined his banners from the Kordofan garrisons. An extensive ambush had been prepared, and about half an hour after the Egyptians had started, they were surrounded on all sides by the rebels, who opened fire on them with rifles and artillery. Owing to the rocky formation of the ground, and the number of trees, Hicks Pasha could make no use of his guns, neither could a proper formation be maintained by the soldiers. They fought in detached groups, each body of men surrounded by Arabs, who picked them off in turn. Still though exhausted by the want of water for three days, the Egyptians struggled bravely, keeping up a lively fire until the cartridges in their pouches were expended. Then towards mid-day, the rebels charged home, and in a few minutes the expeditionary force was annihilated. Aladeen Pasha had been slain at the commencement of the battle, but General Hicks was one of the last to fall. Surrounded by his staff, who dropped around him one by one, he is said to have fought like a lion, emptying his revolver thrice, and then hacking with his sword till a lance-thrust stretched him beside his slaughtered comrades. Major Seckendorff was stabbed to death while lying sick on a hospital bed.

The reports further stated that Mr. Frank Vizetelly and about fifty soldiers who had been absent from the camp subsequently came up and were taken prisoners, the Mahdi giving orders that their lives should be spared. Some two hundred Egyptians, a few camp-followers, and the greater number of the wounded also received quarter, together with a German named Klootz who had acted as orderly to Major Seckendorff. A black lay sister who had escaped from the convent of El Obeid, and arrived at Khartoum about six weeks after the battle, brought the intelligence that Klootz was the sole surviving European. Her statement seems to have been subsequently confirmed by a Greek merchant, who asserted moreover, that each of the sheikhs of the Mahdi's army was permitted to plunge his spear into the dead body of Hicks Pasha, so that he might be able to say he had assisted at his death. Other reports were to the effect that impressed by Hicks Pasha's gallantry, the Arabs, resolved to build a tomb over his body in recognition of his bravery, while the heads, of the staff officers, and of the principal Egyptian officers were struck off and fixed over the gate of El Obeid. The victorious Mahdi made a triumphal entry into that town wearing a yellow silk turban and prophet's green mantle. Following him came a train of camels belonging to the slain army with the spoils of victory, including a number of cannon, rifles, &c.

For some time subsequently, reports equally hopeful and ridiculous continued to be circulated with regard to the safety of a portion of Hicks Pasha's army, but their falsehood has long since been established. The few

fresh particulars that came to light were brought to Cairo nearly a year afterwards by a young Greek gum-merchant named Costi Muskos, who happened to be at El Obeid when that town surrendered to the Mahdi. He said that when the Mahdi heard Hicks Pasha was coming to El Obeid he sent Abdul Halim instructions to follow closely in his track, under pretence of being friendly. General Hicks more than once wished to attack the band which was following him, sleeping in his last night's encampment, and intercepting his communications, but Aladeen Pasha refused. With regard to the battle of Kashgil he stated that the fight began on a Saturday evening with heavy firing by Hicks's force on Halim's troop, ambushed in the woods. The rebels lost few men, but their fire on the Egyptian army in the open was deadly. The firing continued throughout Sunday and during the night, and the general assault was made on Monday morning. The Egyptian troops, starved and thirsty, had no fight left in them and were simply massacred. The massacre was over by noon. He saw the dead bodies of Hicks and other officers. None were buried; but the Mahdi buried his own men as quickly as they were killed. It was impossible to estimate his loss. The Mahdi went out without cannon and with about 15,000 irregulars, but was joined by many more in the course of the fight. The narrator stayed a short time at Obeid as the Mahdi's servant, and obtained permission from him to go to Khartoum, whence he went on to Cairo. Other reports tended to raise hopes that Mr. Frank Vizetelly, the artist, was still alive, his personal appearance having been described by various traders so as to place his identity almost beyond the possibility of doubt. He was spoken of by them as drawing trees and practising medicine, and as being the only Englishman with the Mahdi.

Colonel de Coetlogon, who had succeeded in clearing the White Nile of the rebels, was at Duem when the first news of the disaster was brought to that town on November 19, by a trustworthy sheikh. He at once fell back to Khartoum and in conjunction with the Vice-Governor, Hussein Pasha, and the General, Ibrahim Pasha, took measures for the defence of that city, and the recall as far as possible of all outlying garrisons, a general retreat to Berber being contemplated, as the whole Soudan was again in arms. A dervish entered the bazaar at Senaar, and having sworn on the Koran that Hicks Pasha's army had been annihilated, induced five thousand of his listeners to arm themselves and declare for the Mahdi. The garrisons of Shatt and Duem retreated to Khartoum, whence many of the Europeans made a hasty flight. A Soudanese coming from Darfour, *via* El Obeid, and who reached Khartoum on February 24, 1884, after being thirty-five days on the journey, reported that Slatten Bey, an Austrian commanding the Egyptian garrisons in Darfour, was still surrounded at El Fashar, and that Darra, Masteri, and Foga, were also invested. Moreover the garrisons of Om Shanga and Thashi had surrendered. There had been no fighting that he had heard of at Bahr Gazelle. At El Obeid he saw the Austrian missionaries, who seemed to be free to go about the town. He also observed in the street three white men, and was told that they were Englishmen taken at Kashgil, and that they were well treated. He further stated that the Mahdi had only the old garrison of El Obeid with him. All the Arabs had gone to their villages, but had promised to assemble in the event of further war.

During the preceding August, while Hicks Pasha was engaged in making those military preparations at Khartoum which met with so untoward a result, Tewfik Bey,



AN AMBUSH OF ARABS IN THE SUDAN.

the then Governor of Suakim, heard for the first time of disloyal meetings being held in the neighbourhood of Sinkat, a desert stronghold, garrisoned at that time by only sixty men, and not more than forty miles distant from Suakim. Tewfik at once proceeded thither, and ordered Osman Digna, a bankrupt slave-dealer and chief of the revolted tribes, and whom we now first hear of in connection with the rebellion, to report himself at Sinkat.* Osman flatly refused to come. Two days later, however, he not only arrived himself, but brought 3,000 armed men with him, halting about a mile from the barracks. Hence he sent messengers with two letters from the Mahdi to Tewfik Bey, stating that since the Egyptians were worse than Christians, Jews, or even Kaffirs, debasing as they did the Koran, all arms, ammunition, and government property must be surrendered to Osman Digna, the vizier of the Mahdi. The messengers added that if these demands were not complied with every man would be put to the sword.

Tewfik's position was a serious one; he had only sixty men, in a mud-built barrack large enough to accommodate several hundred, while he was exposed to the immediate attack of 3,000 fierce tribesmen. To gain time he told the messengers that he had two superiors, without whose orders he could not comply with their demands. When they had left he commenced to loophole the barracks and pile up sand-bags at the gates. For four hours, during which the messengers kept coming and going, Tewfik and his men were strengthening their position; but at last Osman Digna lost patience, and swore that he would assail them before the shadows were six feet longer. Tewfik bade him come on and do his worst. The insurgent army swarmed up to the attack. Fortunately Tewfik's men were almost all blacks, who fought with unflinching bravery. The garrison, however, was too small to hold the whole of the position, and at least twenty Arabs penetrated inside the barracks. These intruders were killed to a man, and in half an hour the assailants were beaten off with a loss of one hundred slain. Of Tewfik's force seven soldiers were killed, and one officer and ten men wounded—including Tewfik him-

* Osman Digna, the Mahdi's ameer, or lieutenant, in the Eastern Soudan, is the grandson of a Turkish merchant and slave-dealer, who settled at Suakim some time in the beginning of the century. Ahmed Aga-el-Digna, as the Turk was named, married a woman of the Hadendowa tribe. In accordance with the tribal custom the children born of this marriage assumed their mother's nationality, and Ahmed Aga's eldest son, Abubekr, the present ameer's father, was regarded as a Hadendowa pure and simple. Abubekr bequeathed to his two sons, Osman and Ahmed, a thriving trade in European cottons and cutlery, as also in "hubba soda"—"black ivory grain"—the slang term which the slave-dealers apply to their human chattels. The Suakim branch of the business was managed by Ahmed. His brother Osman, of a more restless and adventurous disposition, was travelling partner, and his long journeys over the Soudan enabled him to become acquainted with the leaders of the anti-Egyptian movement, which, though not culminating in rebellion until the year 1881-2, was distinctly recognisable at least as early as 1869-70. In those years Osman made the acquaintance of Zebekr Pasha. About the year 1870, the prosperity of the Digna family began to decline, and seven years afterwards it fell. The firm sustained serious losses through the capture, by a British cruiser, of one or two cargoes of slaves on their way to Jeddah from a creek near Suakim. Then came the Anglo-Egyptian Slave Convention, when Osman Digna, reduced to despair by the commercial ruin of his house, formed his first schemes of rebellion, which however came to nothing, owing to his friends refusing him their support. Happening to be in the Central Soudan when Mahomed Ahmed, from his retreat in the little island of Aba in the White Nile, proclaimed himself to be the true Mahdi, he lost no time, when once the insurrection was fairly started, in throwing in his lot with the new Prophet. He was joined by his brother Ahmed from Suakim, who, before leaving for the interior, sold all the Digna property in the place. In the month of August, 1883, Osman Digna appeared in the Erkowit hills, and in the Mahdi's name issued his proclamations and warnings to the tribal sheikhs and the officials of the Egyptian Government.

self, who received five severe blows from the sharp stakes of the insurgents. Just after the rebels had recoiled from the assault, a reinforcement of 800 men reached them, but they showed no desire to renew the attack. Had they done so, Tewfik's fate would have been sealed, as he had only twelve rounds of ammunition remaining for each man of his reduced garrison. Assistance subsequently arrived, and in October Tewfik had several hundred men with him in Sinkat.

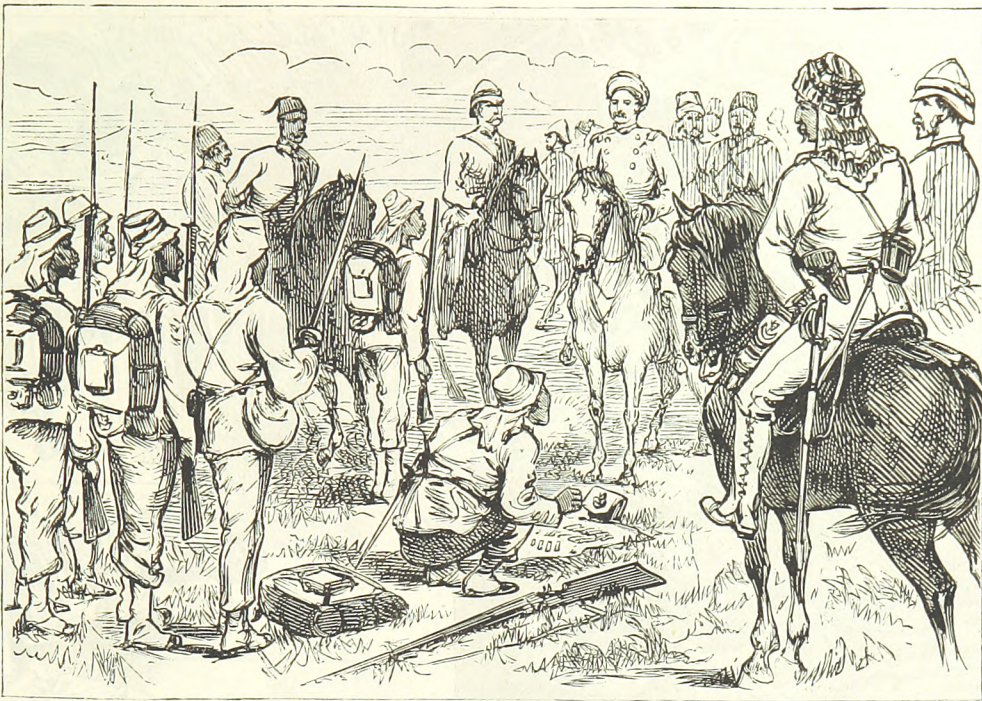
The revolt had, in the meantime spread, and Tokar, a town forty-five miles to the south of Suakim was beleaguered, and Suakim itself threatened, when, almost simultaneously with the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army a like disaster, though on a smaller scale, befel an expedition despatched from Suakim for the relief of the Tokar garrison. On November 3, three hundred and fifty men with a field gun under the command of Mahmoud Tahir, and accompanied by Commander Moncrieff, R.N., the British consul at Suakim, proceeded by sea to Trinkitat, and were advancing to Tokar, when they were attacked by a far inferior force of Arabs, scarcely a couple of hundred in number. The Egyptian square was broken and a shameful panic ensued, the men throwing away their arms, accoutrements, and clothing, and abandoning their officers to their fate. Consul Moncrieff was last seen fighting desperately in company with four Greeks, against overwhelming odds, but was dragged from his horse and slain, a fate that befel nearly half of the detachment, the remainder managing to escape by flight. On November 12 Suakim itself was attacked, but the rebels were repulsed. The Governor, however, on applying for reinforcements, declared that it was useless to send him Egyptian troops, as they could not be prevailed upon to fight.

CHAPTER VIII.

New expedition against the rebels organised under Baker Pasha.—Unwillingness of officers and men to join it.—Defeat of a force sent to disperse the tribes threatening Suakim.—Baker Pasha and his troops arrive at Suakim.—Visit to Massowah.—Bad news from Sinkat.—The Holy Sheikh.—The chiefs of neighbouring tribes do him reverence, and offer to assist against the Mahdi.—They are received on board the *Euryalus*.—Tokar in great peril.—Its relief determined on.—The Soudanese Blacks.—Baker Pasha lands at Trinkitat with nearly 4000 men.—The troops cross the lagoon and commence their advance against the enemy.—Desperate charge of Arabs.—The Egyptian square broken.—A savage massacre ensues.—Gallant death struggle of English officers.—Flight of the remnant of the army, and its return to Suakim.—Panic at Suakim.—Landing of blue jackets and marines.—Admiral Hewitt appointed to the supreme command.—Forlorn sortie of the Sinkat garrison.—Massacre of Tewfik Bey and several hundred men.—Generally precarious condition of the garrisons in the Soudan.

THE Egyptian authorities at Cairo, were crestfallen on receiving intelligence of the total destruction of Hicks Pasha's army, and for the first time realized the potency of the antagonists they had to deal with. A new expedition was organised in all haste, and placed under the command of Baker Pasha, formerly Colonel Valentine Baker of unpleasant notoriety, who was invested by the Khedive with full military and civil powers in all parts of the Soudan, that might be reached by his forces. The Khedive recommended conciliatory measures in the first instance, and informed General Baker that he "relied upon his great prudence only to engage the enemy under the most favourable circumstances"—a confidence that the sequel scarcely justified.

As the Egyptian troops proper were not allowed to proceed to the Soudan, the contingent at the disposition of General Baker was composed of very mixed and in-



BAKER PASHA INSPECTING THE SOUDANESE BLACK TROOPS.

efficient materials, comprising Egyptian gendarmes, Turkish Bashi-Bazouks, Soudanese blacks, and Italian policemen, all of whom needed to be got into fighting shape before the army could take the field. The black troops had been originally levied with the intention of being placed under the command of Zebehr Pasha, but this step had to be abandoned on the British Government pronouncing it "to be inexpedient both politically and as regarded the slave trade."

The plan of operations decided upon was this:—The garrison at Suakim after receiving the foregoing reinforcements were to advance towards Berber with the double object of pacifying the country and maintaining communication between the two places. From the outset however a series of somewhat ominous incidents occurred. After a review of a portion of the proposed expeditionary force by the Khedive at Cairo, the Turkish officers came in a body to Baker Pasha, and plainly refused to go to the Soudan on the plea that their contract of service was for Egypt alone. The Egyptian officers, who for their part did not dare refuse to go, wept on learning their destination, and of 600 gendarmes sent off from Cairo to Suakim, on November 28, no less than 268 deserted during the railway journey to Suez.

Meanwhile the position of Suakim itself was becoming critical. The rebels were swarming in its vicinity, and towards the close of the month made several attacks. On December 1 they assailed some friendly Hadendowas, assembled within a mile of Suakim, but were repulsed, and at daybreak the following morning a column set out to chastise the rebels, who were camped by the water-holes at the foot of the mountain. It was composed of twenty horsemen, 500 Soudanese blacks, with thirteen officers, and 200 Bashi-Bazouks led by two officers, and provided with a mountain gun. This force came up with the revolted tribes about twenty miles from Suakim, at a spot near Tamanieb. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, a staff officer with a few Bashi-Bazouks returned to Suakim, reporting that they had found the enemy in small bodies in the plain, and had driven them off and

pursued them to the hills. Suddenly an Arab gave a signal cry, and they were instantly surrounded on all sides, and when the party left, fighting was still going on. The conflict began, it seems, about noon, and continued for a short time only, because the Bashi-Bazouks broke up helplessly, and fell back in confusion upon the Soudanese negroes, who had been holding their ground steadfastly, and fighting the enemy opposed to them with admirable courage. This threw the blacks into disorder, while at the same moment they found themselves assailed by some 3,000 Arabs. The negroes however fought back to back in groups or pairs, grasping their muskets by the barrel, and swinging them like clubs, or standing firm with fixed bayonets against the onset of lance and sword and shield.

Later in the evening a sergeant-major of the blacks came in to Suakim with ten of his men, and reported that on the enemy attacking, the blacks formed one square, and the Bashi-Bazouks another. The latter were first assailed, and broke directly, the men flying wildly. Up to the time of the flight of these useless soldiers the Soudanese he said were "killing the Arabs like flies." The black square, on its retreat, was pursued by Arabs, and soon broken into, when a general *mêlée* ensued. The troops had for the most part fired only ten rounds, though furnished with two hundred for each man. This second party had left the field at sunset, when the combatants had scarcely light enough to distinguish each other, but fighting was still going on. A small body of the blacks, having taken up a separate position, were defending it desperately. The result of the engagement was that out of 720 men who left Suakim in the morning, there returned only forty-five, all told. These consisted of fifteen cavalry, the two officers who brought the intelligence, running on foot all the way, and ten of the brave negro troops, all of whom were more or less wounded. The rebels on their side suffered severely, as Colonel Harrington, on visiting the scene of the battle, counted on the field about 400 dead bodies of Arabs, and ascertained that many others of the slain had been re-

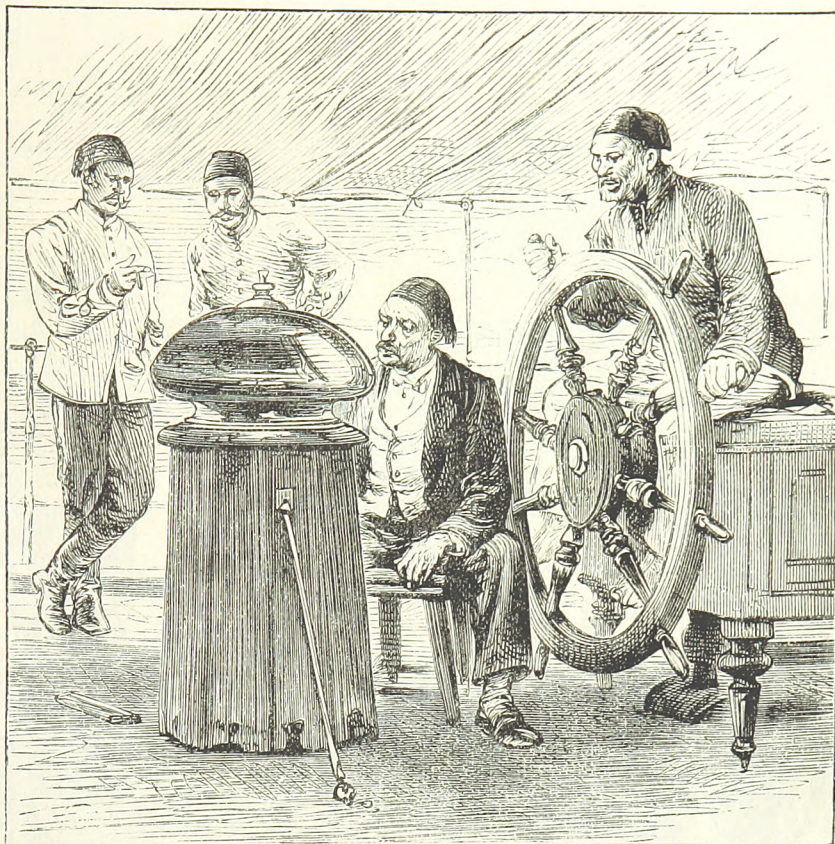


ON BOARD THE STEAMER "MANSOURAH." 1. The Forecastle. 2. Egyptian Soldiers at Prayers. 3. Grinding coffee for the Pasha.

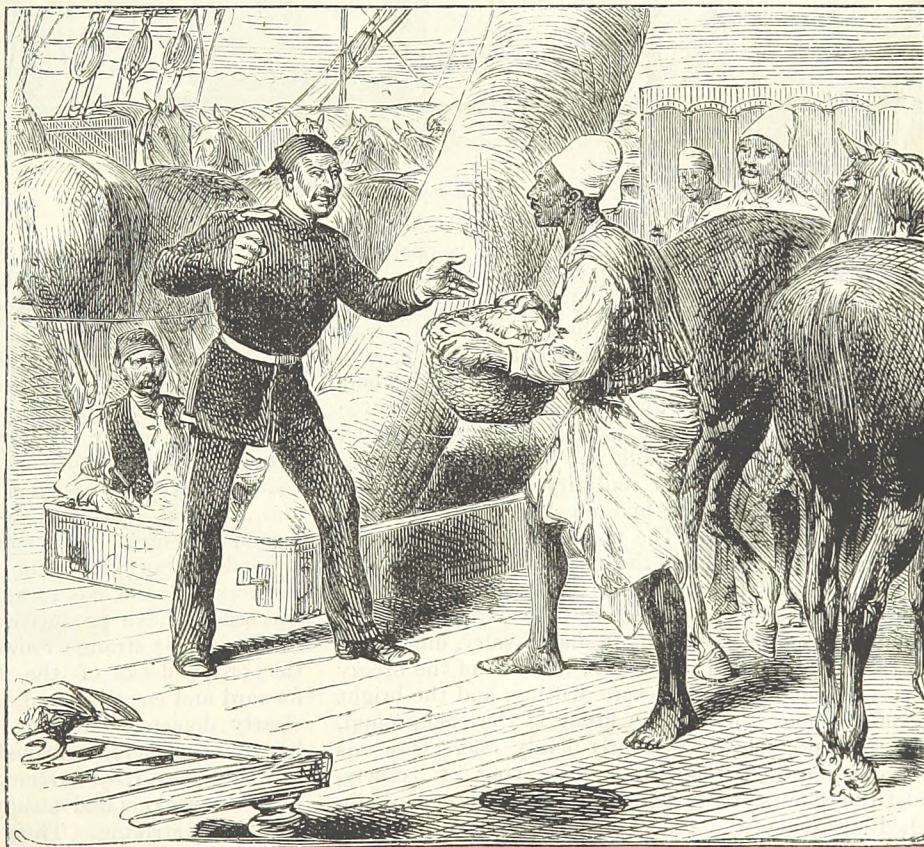
moved by their relatives. It was bitterly observed at Suakim, that Mahmoud Tahir, the man who abandoned Commander Moncrieff to his fate, stayed idly in the town doing nothing, while he might have led 1,200 men to the rescue.

Baker Pasha started from Cairo for Suakim on December 18, having been preceded by Colonel Sartorius, his chief of the staff. The rebels were already threatening Rewayeh, a town north of Suakim and between that place and Kosseir, and an Egyptian gunboat had to be sent to carry off the garrison and inhabitants. The new commander and his staff embarked at Suez on board the Red Sea steamer *Mansourah*, some of the ordinary incidents on the voyage of which to Suakim, including the gambling of the officers, the praying of the men, and the pounding of the coffee for the pasha are shown in the accompanying illustrations. At the time of Baker Pasha's arrival, H.M.S. *Euryalus*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewitt, and several gunboats, were anchored off Suakim.

With the object of entering into relations with some of the Arab and Abyssinian chiefs and arranging, if possible, for the retreat of the Khar-toum garrison by way of Kassala, Baker Pasha proceeded in company with Admiral Hewitt to Massowah, arriving there on December 31. During their stay the General dispatched a number of black troops belonging to the Massowah garrison by steamer to Suakim, eventually replacing them by Egyptians from the latter place. On his return to Suakim early in January Baker Pasha set to work to organize his forces, the first object he had in view being the relief of Sinkat, where Tewfik Bey, though still holding out gallantly, could not hope to do so much longer, owing to lack of provisions. This information was brought by a couple of Soudanese employed as spies on the rebel movements, and who were subjected to the usual close questioning in order to test the truth of their story. Negotiations, from which at the outset great hopes were entertained, but which subsequently turned out to be futile, were thereupon opened with a number of tribal



STEERING THE STEAMER "MANSOURAH."



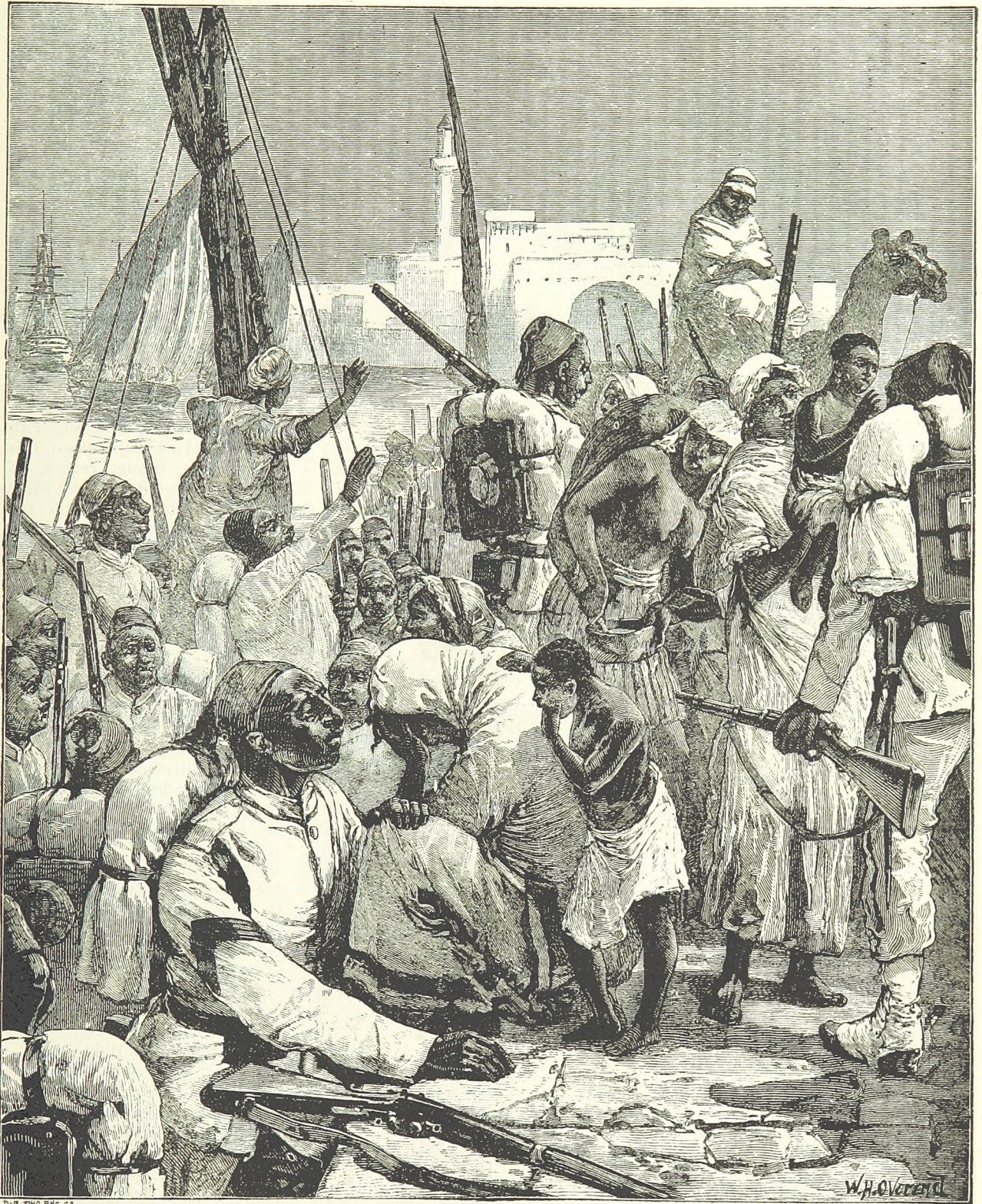
A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE HORSES' FODDER.



BAKER PASHA LANDING AT MASSOWAH.

chiefs to secure, if possible, their active co-operation against Osman Digna; and Osman-el-Maghrani, the Holy Sheikh or Syud, a famous Mussulman ecclesiastic from Cairo, was despatched to Suakim to exercise his influence in the same direction. His arrival at Baker Pasha's camp presented a picturesque and imposing scene. The whole route from the causeway to the General's tent, about a mile in length, was lined with troops. The Syud, dressed in a tunic of blue silk and mounted on a white horse, was preceded by the military band and a large company of men on foot and on horseback, some of whom carried banners. The population of Suakim followed in the rear and on the right and left flanks of the procession. The prevailing colour in the vast assemblage was white, relieved by the blue, red, and yellow uniforms of the infantry and cavalry, and these with the white tents of the camps, the blue of the breezy sky across which the clouds were drifting, and the bright grey of the houses of Suakim filling in the background, made the spectacle a singularly lively one. Onwards the procession slowly flowed, with waving of banners, amidst the shouts of the men, and the continuous, high-pitched bird-trill of the Arab women, while people rushed out of the crowd to touch the hem of his Holiness's garments or to kiss his hand.

During the sojourn of Syud-el-Maghrani at Suakim numerous sheikhs with their following of wild spear-armed warriors flocked day after day into the town to do reverence to the holy man and make their professions of loyalty, but although his influence undoubtedly did much towards checking open hostility, it afterwards became only too apparent that the majority of these leaders were merely waiting for providence to declare itself on the stronger side. A curious incident at this epoch was a visit paid by these so-called friendly sheikhs to the *Euryalus*, Admiral Hewitt's flag-ship, which, although only a second-class cruiser, was the largest vessel that had ever entered the port of Suakim. It was to impress the desert warriors with the aids to warfare which modern invention and science have produced, that the Admiral was asked to receive the strange crowd that moved sedately along the broad decks of the *Euryalus*. As they stepped forward and gazed around, wonder and astonishment were clearly depicted on their countenances. The contrast between the sheikhs arrayed in flowing robes, and the half naked and swarthy warriors who followed them, with the neat blue-jackets and steady marines that stood around, was most striking. Their greetings with the Admiral over, they were taken to see the big guns, where even Arab stoicism was not proof at the sight of missiles as



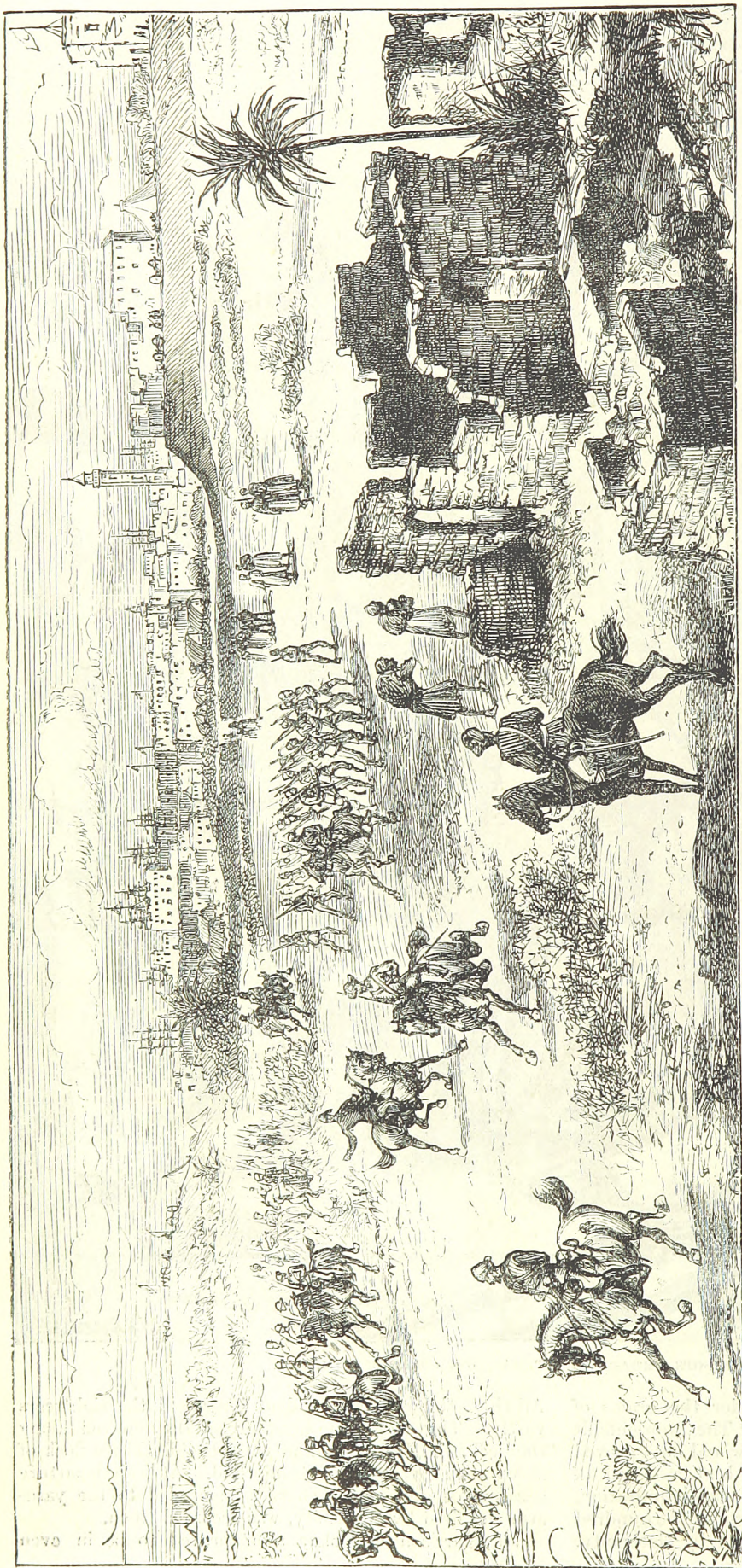
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BLACK TROOPS EMBARKING AT MASSOWAH FOR SUAKIM.

big nearly as themselves, and of powder the grains of which were larger than grape shot. The Nordenfeldt guns which showered bullets with what would have proved deadly precision had they been aimed at a crowd of charging Arabs, were also the object of much admiration, and then a mine of 70lbs. of gun cotton, sunk some hundred yards or so away from the ship, was fired by electricity.

All these things it was evident impressed the sightseers vastly. They huddled together as they moved along the deck, and looked around them timidly like a flock of sheep when driven into a strange fold. At their departure a salute of gun cotton charges suspended to the yard-arm and fired by electricity, was accorded them.

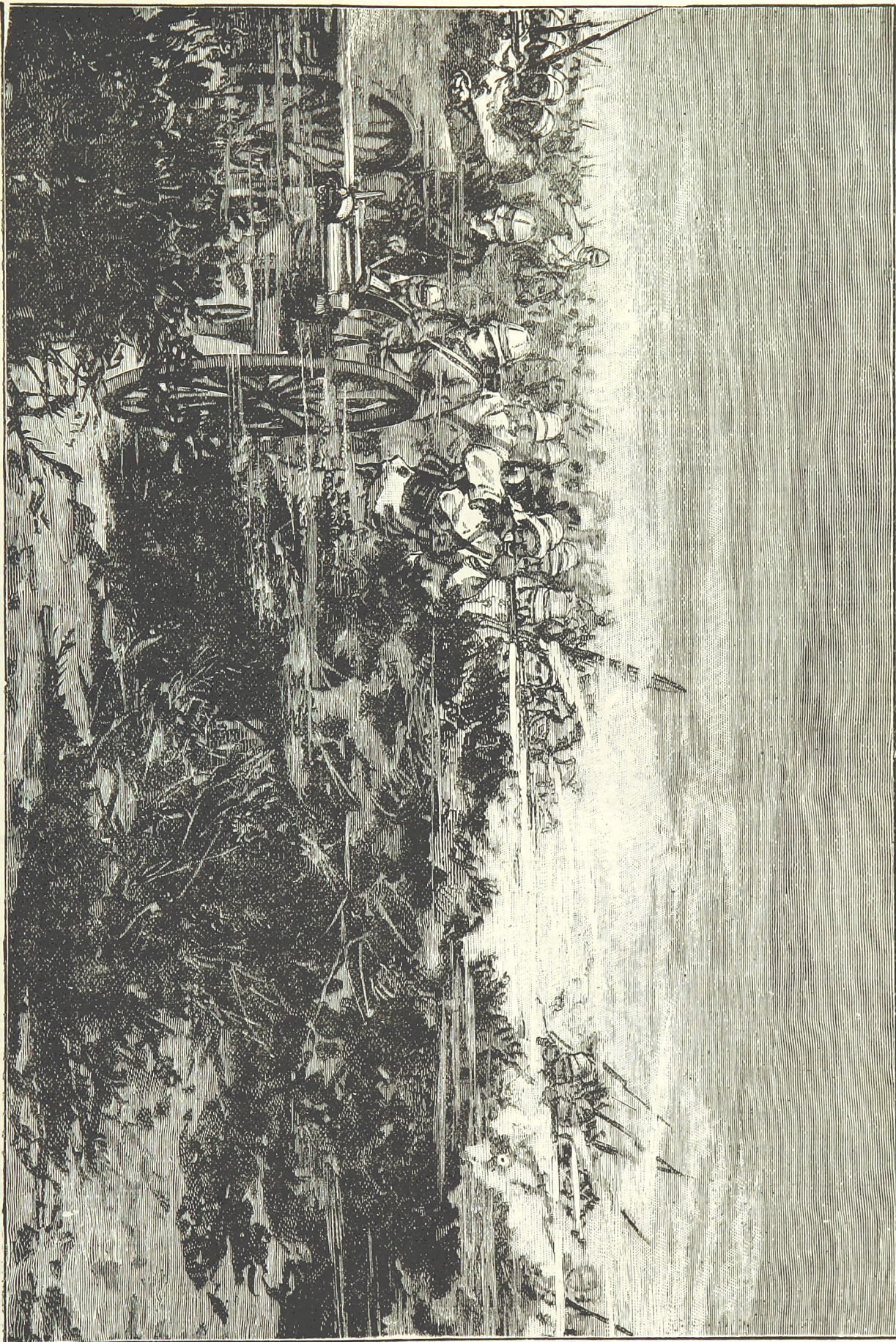
The garrison at Tokar soon proved to be in even



CAVALRY STARTING ON A RECONNOITRING EXPEDITION FROM SUAKIM.

more desperate straits than that at Sinkat. A letter received from its commander towards the end of January, 1884, said:—"It is impossible for us to be in a worse condition than we now are. The enemy have filled up all the wells outside the town, and the water in the inside wells is brackish and bad. The troops are suffering greatly from diarrhoea, and I fear that in two or three days we shall be obliged to surrender. We have dried grain enough for three months, but no meat or ghee, and only from ten to twenty rounds of ammunition per man. The rebels fire upon us night and day." Baker Pasha felt bound to make an immediate effort for the relief of the imperilled garrison, though, with the material at his disposal, this was by no means certain of success. No dependence whatever could be placed on the native Egyptian levies, officers and men being equally inefficient. The Turkish cavalry had to some extent been got into training by employing them on several reconnoitring expeditions from Suakim. The black troops too from Massowah had acquitted themselves creditably during a night attack on a zereba several miles from the coast, but Zebehr's blacks although reliable, were almost wholly untrained in the use of their rifles. As an optimist looker-on grimly observed, "We may have a chance, if not of victory at least of escape, if the native officers realize that drill consists not wholly in saluting, and if the rank and file do not elevate their rifles for 1500 yards when measuring to shoot for 100 paces off."

In pursuance of his plan of operations, Baker Pasha left Suakim by sea, and on January 27 landed with 1600 men at Trinkitat, about 40 miles lower down the coast, whence he counted upon marching to Tokar. The following day he was joined by the remainder of the troops from Suakim, bringing up the force under his command to nearly 4000 of all arms, whilst it was estimated that Osman Digna barred his way with at least four times that number. The harbour of Trinkitat is merely a circular bay, measuring seven or eight miles across, and bisected by a peninsula running out about four miles in a south-easterly

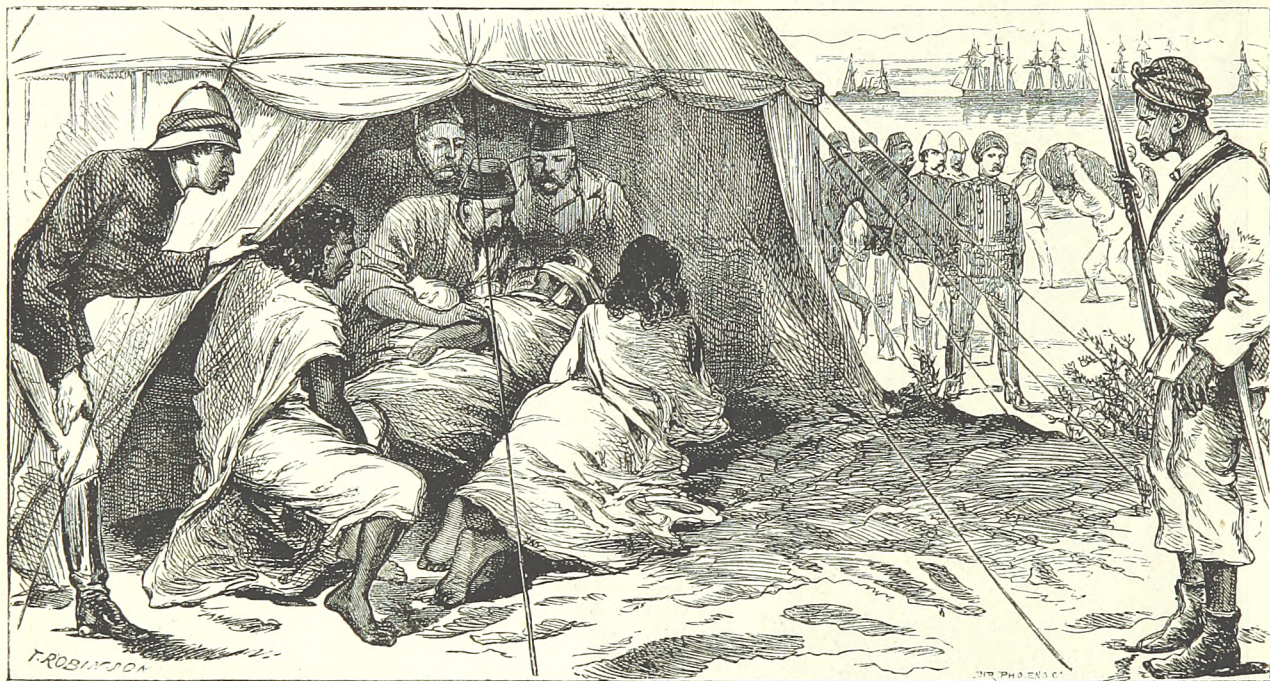


REPRISE OF A NIGHT ATTACK ON A ZERBBA NEAR SUAKIN.

direction from the mainland. On this peninsula the Egyptian camp was formed and strongly fortified. At the landward end of the peninsula was a shallow lagoon about three miles broad, which it was necessary to traverse in order to advance inland, and which proved very difficult for cavalry and artillery to cross.

The Egyptian forces remained encamped for several days, while Baker Pasha was anxiously awaiting the anticipated arrival from Agig, on the coast between Trinkitat and Massowah, of some chiefs whom he had invited to co-operate with him in the relief of Tokar. During this time the black troops were regularly trained in rifle practice, and several cavalry reconnaissances were undertaken, notably one to the neighbourhood of some hills where Osman Digna was supposed to be lurking, when a large number of bullocks and sheep were captured. Suddenly the men found themselves confronted by a considerable body of

here and there were patches of scrub and thorny mimosa and other prickly shrubs, which should be at least as impenetrable for naked savages as for well-clad men. The scrub grew thicker as the army advanced, but the ground was still open enough for the operations of cavalry. Shortly after eight o'clock parties of the enemy were sighted. These retired slowly upon the approach of the cavalry skirmishers, but afterwards showed more and more thickly. At half-past eight the column halted. A Krupp gun was brought forward and unlimbered, and a few rounds of shell were fired. It was hardly to be expected that any execution would be done upon the scattered parties of Arabs, but the effect was to cause them again to fall back. The morning was dull, with heavy showers, and just at this time a rain storm burst upon the Egyptian army, and greatly obscured the view of the country in front. This was an advantage for the



QUESTIONING WOUNDED PRISONERS AT TRINKITAT.

Arabs, many of them mounted upon camels, and had to fall back with a loss of five men. On other occasions parties of rebels were engaged, when one or two wounded prisoners were taken and closely interrogated on being brought into camp.

On February 2 a move forward was made from Trinkitat, and a fort constructed three or four miles to the south. Thither the remainder of the army advanced across the lagoon on the following day, and in the evening the entire force encamped on carefully chosen ground, a vigilant watch being kept against surprise. A few shots were from time to time fired by Arab scouts, but otherwise the night passed quietly. On the morning of the 4th the troops were paraded before daybreak, and by half-past seven the three hundred baggage camels were laden and ready to move forward. The formation was as follows:—Three infantry battalions in échelon, and marching in columns of companies; the artillery and cavalry on the front and flanks, and cavalry vedettes extending all round at points a mile distant from the main body, thus effectively protecting it, it was thought, from any sudden attack. The Turkish cavalry were in reserve. The country was open, but scattered

rebels, who probably regarded it as an interposition of Allah in their favour.

They gathered thickly and approached nearer, and at nine o'clock showed in considerable force on some slightly rising ground, near the water springs, whilst, on the column's left front, clumps of spears with bannerets could be seen, partially concealed amidst the hillocks and bushes. The guns again opened fire; but the shells passed over the enemy's heads. The force was now ordered to advance; but, no sooner had it got into movement, than the clumps of spears were no longer visible. The cavalry skirmishers, however, were soon hotly engaged, and could be seen firing wildly in all directions from the saddle. Presently about a dozen Arabs, riding barebacked on wiry little horses, appeared from behind a hillock, and coolly galloped round the right flank, within three hundred yards of the cavalry on that side, running the gauntlet of the latter's fire. They passed scatheless, and as they still kept along parallel to the column, with the evident intention of gauging its strength and disposition, Baker Pasha ordered Major Giles, commanding the Turkish cavalry, to charge the Arab horse, which he did in capital style, but was nearly

caught in a trap: for, after a pursuit of upwards of half a mile, he found himself confronted by spearmen, who jumped out of the brushwood. Here the Arabs had the best of the tactics. After a hot chase, the rebels escaped, but as the Turks rode back again towards the column, they again showed themselves, and this time galloped across the front, and round to the left. Whilst attention was distracted by this incident, a sudden commotion arose in the midst of the cavalry skirmishers on the left flank, who had been taken by surprise, though warnings of the coming catastrophe might have been detected previously. The vedettes on the left had for some time been drawing closer to the main body. They were getting out of order, and it seemed as if the responsible officers had forgotten their very existence.

The rebels, who must for some time have been lying concealed close by, now sprang to their feet, and, with wild cries, charged the Egyptian horsemen. These at once turned rein, and came galloping in a wild and very disorderly fashion. The order was at once given for the infantry to form square—a manœuvre in which they had been daily drilled for weeks, but which at this crisis the half-disciplined mass failed to accomplish. Three sides were formed after a fashion, but on the fourth side two companies of the Alexandria regiment, seeing the enemy coming on, leaping and brandishing their spears, stood like a panic-stricken flock of sheep, and nothing could get them to move into their places. This was the state of things when the rebels, numbers of whom, in spite of the vigilance of the cavalry vedettes and scouts, had concealed themselves in the brushwood, rushed down with loud yells, delivering their chief attack upon the left side of the square and the left portion of the front line. The frantic efforts of the Egyptians to get into proper formation, the confused din of orders, and the chaos in the rear, where three hundred camels, with the whole of the transport and commissariat, were struggling to force their way inside the square, defies description. As a matter of fact, what should have been the rear side was an irregular outbulging mass of horses, mules, camels, and men tightly wedged together, and extending towards the centre of the square. The Soudanese blacks, who composed both the left side of the square and a portion of the front, stood well for a short time, but were soon demoralised by the inrush of fellow-soldiers and the camel men from behind. Into the gap thus left in the square the enemy hotly poured, and at once all became panic and confusion. The troops fired indeed, but for the most part straight into the air. The right side of the square was not at first assailed, and the men kept up a continuous fire towards the front, with the result of killing many of their own cavalry. The Turks lost several men by their fire, while Baker Pasha himself, being outside the square, narrowly escaped being shot. Lieutenant Cavaliere was killed in this way.

Nothing could well surpass the wild confusion which the mass presented—camels and guns mixed up together, soldiers firing in the air, while wild Arabs, their long hair streaming behind them, darted among them, hacking and thrusting with their spears. They displayed the most profound contempt for the Egyptian troops, and clearly regarded themselves as invincible. A single man would fall upon a score of infantry, and a mounted Arab rode single-handed at a troop of cavalry. He slashed on the back and severely wounded the Egyptian commander, who was too frightened even to attempt to defend himself; and the Arab at last fell, shot by an English officer. The scene finally became one of pure savage massacre. The Egyptian infantry, throwing away their weapons,

knelt down, raised their clasped hands, and prayed for mercy. The rebels seized them by the neck, speared them through the back, and then cut their throats. The yells of the Arabs and the cries of their Egyptian victims were appalling. In eight minutes from the beginning of the Arab rush the whole force was in hopeless flight, and the Egyptian cavalry, with many riderless horses, rushed past in a stream, perfectly wild with terror.

When the charge was made on the left flank of the column, General Baker with Colonel Hay and the rest of his staff were out with the cavalry in front. Upon riding back they found that the enemy had already got between them and the column. They at once charged, and cut their way through, but not without several of them being killed, amongst others Abdul Rusac, the chief Egyptian staff officer. His horse was hamstrung, and as it fell he was instantly speared by the Arabs. The General and Colonel Hay had a narrow escape from the spears thrown at them. On nearing the square the former had to run the gauntlet of the fire of the Egyptians in front, who, regardless of what was going on around, were blazing away before them. When Baker Pasha reached the square the enemy had already broken it up, and it was clear that all was lost. Colonel Sartorius with his staff were inside the square when the enemy burst into it. They in vain tried to rally the panic-stricken Egyptians, and were so closely cooped in by the huddled mass of soldiers that, for a time, they were unable to extricate themselves. When the Arab spearmen had thinned the throng of Egyptians, they succeeded in breaking out and



MORICE BEY.

in cutting their way through their assailants. Dr. Leslie, Morice Bey, Captain Forestier-Walker, and Lieut. Carroll, were last seen standing in a group close to the guns, in the front face of the square, and surrounded by the enemy. They had been cut off from the main body by the inrush of the Arabs, and were defending themselves with their revolvers and swords. Their quiet demeanour was as a ray of light and divine hope in that hell of fierce triumph and cringing despair. Morice Bey, after receiving a spear thrust through the side, killed



SUDANESE BLACKS RESISTING AN ARAB CHARGE.

three of his assailants. Dr. Leslie, not having time to draw his revolver, dispatched two Arabs with his sword. He and Morice Bey fell nearly at the same moment.* Lieutenant Smith and Captain Forestier-Walker, after shooting some of their men who attempted to run away from the guns, remained at their posts until speared. So sudden and rapid was the enemy's onset that only a single round was fired, the Egyptian gunners bolting instantly afterwards.

It had now become a total rout, and the shattered column kept streaming across the plain towards Trinkitat, preceded by the flying cavalry, while the enemy pressed hotly on the rear, slaughtering at will. All mounted men unable to ride well were dismounted by the rush of the flying horsemen, and killed. For five miles the fight and pursuit were kept up, during which the Massowah black battalion behaved remarkably well. For a portion of the distance they retired steadily, firing volleys into the enemy. Zebehr's blacks were undrilled and hardly able to fire their rifles, not having been in camp long enough before the advance to enable their officers to instruct them properly. It is not surprising therefore, that they bolted almost as promptly as the Egyptians. Many very gallant actions were performed by the European officers, who engaged in hand to hand struggles with the Arab spearmen both during the onslaught of the latter and while being pursued by them to Trinkitat. Major Harvey saved his European servant, when exhausted in the flight, by placing him on his horse and running himself on foot beside it.

Baker Pasha was among the last of the returning fugitives, and had to face more than one Arab spearman within a few feet of him as he rode along. He, however, reached Trinkitat unscathed. On reaching the earthwork, where the troops had encamped the night before, the General made what efforts he could to protect the rear of the flying fugitives by ordering a charge of Turkish cavalry and a few Egyptian horsemen whose flight had been arrested by the officers, but nothing would induce them to charge. He got them, however, to form in line at the earthwork, and to halt facing the enemy. The pursuit here ceased, the enemy doubtless being afraid of the fire of the ships, though in fact no gunboat was in the harbour. The weary fugitives, however, still streamed on, and horse and foot, with many riderless horses here and there among them, made their way across the two intervening miles of deep mud to Trinkitat. On reaching the shore they would have crowded into the few boats and swamped them, had not the English officers, revolver in hand, kept them back. Then they stood huddled together on the beach like a flock of sheep, and if the enemy had come on would have been butchered with as little resistance as so many sheep might have made. Only when it was found that the rebels had really ceased their pursuit, did the panic subside.

All night long the work of embarkation went on, the General, the European officers, and the crews of the English ships working unceasingly in getting the men, horses, and baggage on board. None of the Egyptian officers lent their aid to keep order or to help in the embarkation, but were either in bed or skulking. The Arabs prowled round about the camp, but fortunately refrained from making any attack. By morning all the men were on board, and it was then seen that the total loss of the troops on the

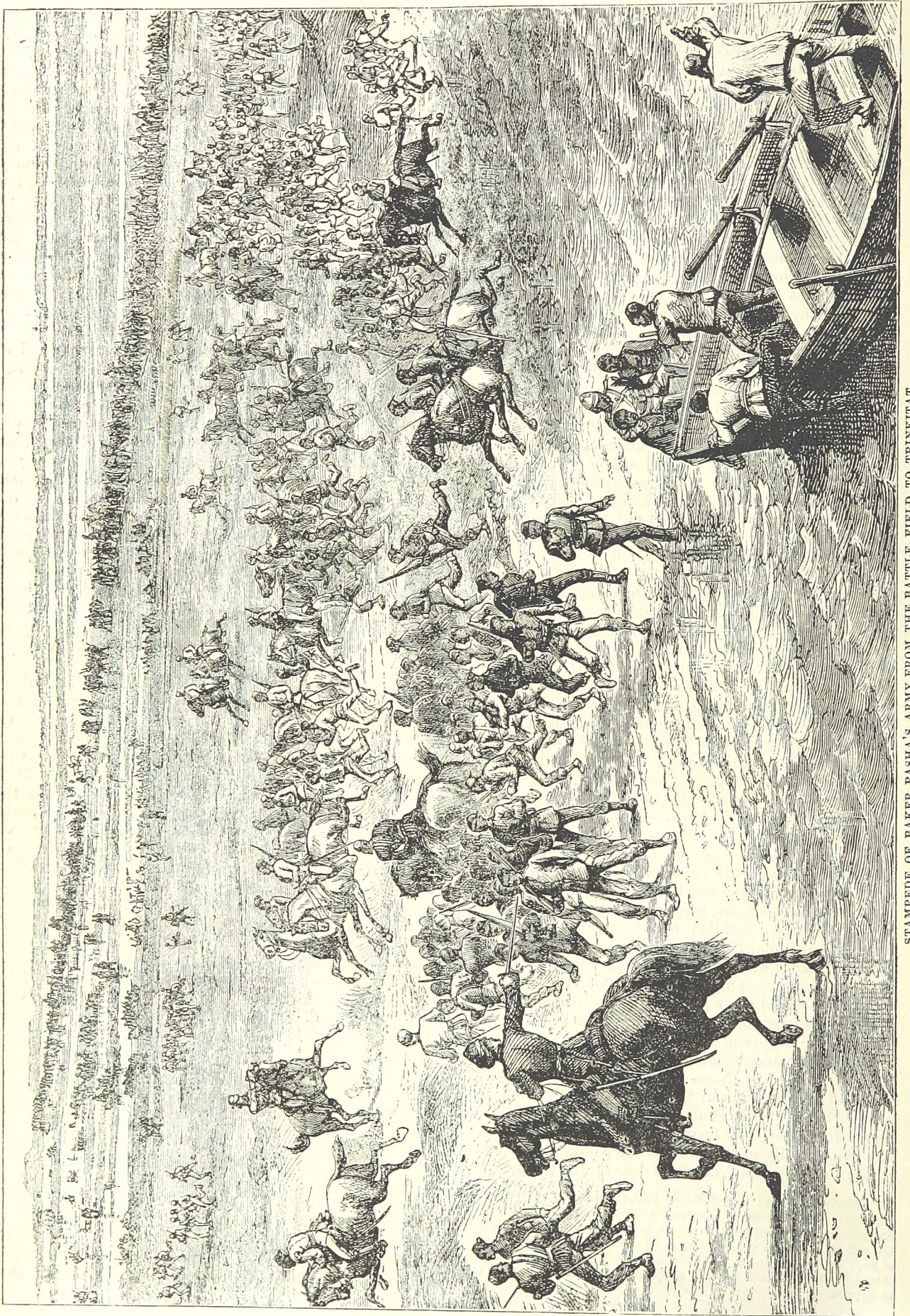
previous day's disaster amounted to more than 2000 men, including 96 officers, 16 of whom were on the staff. Among the English officers killed were Morice Bey, Dr. Leslie, Major Watkins, Captain Forestier-Walker and Lieutenants Carroll, Smith, Carrere, and Wills; other officers killed were Colonels Abdul Rusac and Yussuf, Major Racca, Lieutenants Bertin, Morisse de Marchi, Cavalieri, Pallioko, Messeburg, Donabauer, Duporte, and Leonhardt. Only two of the battalion commanders were among the survivors. Of Zebehr's blacks, which left Trinkitat 678 strong, 410 were said to be killed. Of 636 men of the Alexandrian regiment no less than 496 were reported killed or missing. The Turks, too, lost heavily, while only three Italians returned to Trinkitat out of 36 who started. Of 400 men from Sanheit, on the Abyssinian frontier, only 70 reached Suakim. It was believed that the majority of those killed were slain during the pursuit.

The men on board the ships were all better pleased at the prospect of being sent home again than if they had won a great victory, and felt no disgrace whatever at their defeat. It subsequently transpired that the total number of the rebel force which assailed the Egyptian troops was only 1800, or about half as many men as Baker Pasha had under his command. It was estimated that nearly one third of them were killed, a considerable proportion of whom fell before the revolvers and swords of the European officers. The survivors regarded it as a piece of good fortune that the army was attacked so early on its march, the belief being that had it been allowed to reach Tokar, not a single man would have returned. The spoil secured by the rebels included five guns, with 36,000 lbs. of cannon ammunition and a large quantity of rifle cartridges, and about 3,000 rifles thrown away by the troops during their flight. The whole of the baggage was of course lost.

The news of the disaster created quite a panic in Suakim. In order to provide against an attack by the rebels, and also to preserve order in the town, Admiral Hewett, on February 6, promptly landed a party of blue-jackets and marines with some Gatling guns. Baker Pasha having returned with the remnant of his troops, nearly 3000 men were available for the defence of the town, but the majority were completely demoralized. The mere sight of a handful of rebels would have caused a stampede from the camp to the island. In every part of the town and on the road to the camp there were heartrending scenes, women and children weeping for husbands and fathers killed in the late battle. Even for the purpose of holding Suakim the Egyptian troops could not be relied upon, whilst the town-people, becoming infected with religious mania, threatened to turn on the Europeans. Luckily at this juncture the English Government telegraphed to Admiral Hewett, that he was invested with full powers, military and civil, at Suakim, and instructed him to warn the Arabs that any attack would be repulsed by British troops. The Admiral thereupon assumed supreme command, Hussein Pasha, the Governor-General, tendering his resignation, which was promptly accepted. Orders were moreover despatched from Cairo for the withdrawal of Baker Pasha and the remainder of his routed forces, and arrangements were made for the despatch of a British expedition to relieve Tokar.

Meanwhile Sinkat had fallen. Towards the end of January the news received from the town was most heartrending. The people had eaten all the dogs in the place, and were now feeding on the horses and skins. There was only one bag of barley, and by February 1, nothing would be left. If no relief came, Tewfik said that

* Morice Bey had joined Baker Pasha's army in the capacity of paymaster. He seems to have had a prescience of disaster, for on accepting the appointment he wrote to his friends: "I have eaten the salt of Egypt for seven years, and I cannot desert her in her hour of need." He was Inspector-General of the Egyptian Coastguard, and after the trial of Arabi and his companions escorted them from Cairo to Cyprus.



STAMPEDE OF BAKER PASHA'S ARMY FROM THE BATTLE FIELD TO TRINKITAT.

he would sally out and try to fight his way to Suakim, as he preferred death in battle to starvation. It was no empty boast. One last appeal he was still to make. On February 8 a heartbreaking letter was received at Suakim from him. At the time he wrote he was in ignorance of the rout of Baker Pasha's army, and he implored that assistance might be sent to him. The garrison were then starving, and the men were chewing the leaves of trees to allay their cravings. At last human nature could endure no more, and the siege of Sinkat closed in a gallant sortie, which does much to redeem the lustre of Egyptian arms.

before he was aware of their presence. Osman's hordes at once rushed to the attack, the Amoab tribe falling on the right flank of the doomed band, and the Bishareen Arabs on their left. Tewfik's men were greatly weakened by famine and scurvy, and were consequently the more easily overcome. They fought gallantly, however, and killed eighty-six of their assailants before they were themselves slain. Tewfik's entire following is believed to have numbered over 500, and of these it was said only four men, thirty women, and the *cadi* of Sinkat were spared. All the women, including the wives of the commandant, prefect, and chief clerk, were sold as slaves



SOUDANESE GIVING NEWS OF THE SINKAT GARRISON TO THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT AT SUAKIM.

On February 9, Mahmoud Ali, sheikh of a friendly tribe, sent six men to Sinkat to explain to Tewfik Bey the chances of escape. Four of these men were taken by the rebels, but the remaining two escaped. A rebel sheikh then approached Sinkat, and called on Tewfik to surrender, saying his single life would be spared. Tewfik is reported to have pointed out to his men that by fighting they might possibly save themselves, otherwise in a few days they would be certain to perish of hunger, flight being altogether impossible. Having animated the soldiers with his own spirit, they prepared to defy the rebels, and after having burnt all the stores, spiked the guns, and blown up the powder magazine, they sallied forth, each man with his pouch filled with as much ammunition as he could carry, and the women following in their wake.

They advanced a couple of miles without hindrance, but on entering a narrow gorge strewn with huge boulders, they encountered the enemy, who were concealed there in large numbers. Tewfik had too few men with him to weaken his troops by sending out reconnoitring parties, and consequently approached close to the enemy

among the Arabs. A prisoner escaped from the rebel camp, and who bore signs of ill-usage, his body shewing marks of blows, and his wrists being chafed with ropes, brought the foregoing particulars to Suakim.

The news from the interior up to the close of the year was anything but reassuring. Fortunately for Khartoum, which had less than a couple of thousand men to man its four miles of earthworks, it was reinforced on December 26 by the arrival of the garrison of Fashoda, numbering 1300 men, who had made their way down the Nile without opposition in a steamer and some nuggars, otherwise Nile barges.* Early in January the garrisons of Kawa and Duem also arrived, but the population of the city was hostile, and whilst greatly outnumbering the troops, was equally well armed. "There are thirty men in high position at Khartoum," wrote Mr. Power, the British consul, "who are known to be the leaders of the rebel

* A nuggar is a vessel 150 ft. in length, 15 ft. in beam, 24 in. to 36 in. in draught, with flat bottom, and of about five to ten tons burthen. The hull is of Souet wood 2 in. to 3 in. thick, secured with nails and caulked with rags and Nile mud. The mast is 35 ft. in height; the sail, 50 ft. by 20 ft., of Nubian cloth, is attached to the upper and lower yard (if any); the rudder is 10 ft. in length.

party, and we are not strong enough to seize them and openly hang them. The other night the Governor made the cool proposition to poison them, but as Colonel de Coetlogon would not listen to this, he suggested that as their servants were in his pay they could be secretly strangled in bed." On New Year's day, "Colonel de Coetlogon had a telegram from the Khedive to say that he believes he cannot get a column together to release us, so we must depend on the neighbouring sheikhs to assist us. This is really rich, as the Khedive knows very well that there is not a sheikh in the Soudan who would or dare help us. To show how much the Khedive knows of the place, he telegraphs to ask 'Are the gates closed?' as if the place had walls, whereas it is an open town with gardens, fields, &c., and had no defence round it till Colonel de Coetlogon had the ditch cut."

As regards the garrisons in Senaar, there was no possibility of relieving them, owing to the enemy having barred the Nile with heavily laden boats and thus rendered it impassable. A couple of steamers were sent from Khartoum to destroy this bridge of boats, but after a sharp encounter with a large body of rebels, returned without having accomplished their purpose. The forces on the Bahr Ghazul were also cut off. Gondokoro was however said to be still holding out, while according to a letter from Slaten Bey, Governor-General of Darfour, bearing date El Fashar, December 4, the state of things in that province was most critical, owing to the want of money and ammunition. The rebels were surrounding El Fashar in large numbers, and there had been some desertions from the Egyptian troops, but several drum-head courts-martial on the offenders had had a good effect in maintaining strict discipline. The False Prophet's forces had attacked Umshanga, sixty miles from El Fashar, and the garrison had surrendered without offering any resistance.

CHAPTER IX.

Political consequences of the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army.—Withdrawal of the Soudan garrisons determined on.—General Gordon selected to effect this object.—His account of the arrangement.—His official instructions.—He arrives at Cairo accompanied by Colonel Stewart.—Receives his appointment from the Khedive.—He starts for Khartoum.—Journey across the Nubian desert.—Arrives at Berber.—Supplants the Vice-Governor of the Soudan.—Proclamation to the inhabitants of Khartoum.—His reception at Khartoum.—Effects immediate administrative reforms.—Abolishes the Kourbash, remits arrears of taxes and empties the prison.—He embarks a portion of the garrison.—Telegraphs for Zubeir Pasha to be appointed to succeed him.—Objections on the part of the British Government.—Failure of conciliating mission to the tribes of the White Nile.—Gordon's first brush with the rebels.—Rescue of the Halfaya garrison.—Defeat of Gordon's troops at Halfaya.—Two treacherous pashas executed.—Gordon offers the Sultanship of West Darfour to the Mahdi.—The Mahdi declines, and asks Gordon to become a Mussulman.—The tribes summoned against Khartoum.—Petty engagements with the rebels.—Gordon's estimate of his assailants.—Khartoum invested.

THE political consequences of the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army, followed as this was by minor defeats of Egyptian troops in the neighbourhood of Suakim, were soon apparent at Cairo, and Sir Evelyn Baring, our representative there, reported to the British Government that it was impossible for the Egyptian authorities, with the forces at their disposal, to hold the Soudan, and suggesting that it would be necessary, after withdrawing the various garrisons, to fall back from Khartoum on to Egypt proper. Cherif Pasha, the Khedive's prime-minister, wished to hold the Nile up to Khartoum with the view of securing the safety of Egypt, but was willing to restore to Turkey the administration of the Red Sea

shore and of the Eastern Soudan. The British Government, while notifying its partial acquiescence in the latter suggestion, expressed the conviction that Egypt, of itself, was unable to cope with the insurrection, and recommended the withdrawal of the whole of the Soudan garrisons at an early date. This injunction, equivalent to a command, caused the greatest excitement in Cairo, and rather than be the instrument of carrying it out, Cherif Pasha resigned his post, and Nubar Pasha was appointed to succeed him.

When the order was given for the evacuation of the Soudan there were ten fortified places occupied by Egyptian troops. Of these El Fashar, the capital of Darfour, in the extreme west, was practically out of consideration, as the whole district between it and Khartoum was in rebellion. Gondokoro, too, was too far to the south to affect the situation. Of the rest, Kassala and Amadel, and Fashoda and Senaar commanded respectively the upper course of the White Nile and the prosperous country lying between the two Niles. But the most important positions were Berber, Dongola, and Khartoum, and the beleaguered garrisons at Sinkat and Tokar.

The Egyptian Ministry of War drew up a statement on the subject of the evacuation, setting forth that there were 21,000 Egyptian troops and 84 guns in the Soudan provinces between Dongola and Gondokoro; that the removal of the supplies of ammunition stored at Kassala to Khartoum would require 4,000 camels, or 6,000 if the supplies of war material on the Abyssinian frontier were also to be withdrawn. The report went on to state that a march from Berber to Wady Halfa through the desert was a physical impossibility, and that the homeward journey would therefore have to be made by river. Such a journey would occupy three months, and would require 1,300 boats. At a meeting of traders interested in the Soudan, held at Alexandria about this time, it was stated that there were 15,000 Christians and 40,000 Egyptians in the various provinces; that there were no less than 1,000 commercial houses owned by Europeans, and 3,000 by Egyptians, and that the import and export trade was of the value of £13,000,000 annually. It was further stated that the Soudan could not be evacuated in less than seven months, and then only at an expenditure of a million sterling.

The cry of the beleaguered garrisons had reached England, where general sympathy was felt for their forlorn condition, and Sir Evelyn Baring having warned the Government that it would be necessary to send an English officer of high authority to Khartoum with full power to withdraw all the garrisons from the Soudan, and to make the best arrangements possible for the future government of that country, it became indispensable for some action to be taken. General Gordon chanced to arrive in England at this opportune moment, having been summoned by the King of the Belgians from his retirement in Palestine to take charge of the extensive district at the mouth of the Congo, that had been brought under the control of the International Association. Earl Granville indirectly learned that Gordon had expressed his willingness to go to the Soudan if his services were needed, and communicated this intelligence to Sir Evelyn Baring, who telegraphed in reply that there could be no better man. Just as Gordon was on the point of leaving for Brussels to receive his final instructions respecting the Congo business, a telegram reached him at Southampton from Lord Wolseley, saying, "Come up at once." "This telegram," observed Gordon, in a letter written "At Sea, 22, 1, 84," to his friend the Rev. Reginald Barnes, "came when I was so bothered that I said to

my sister, 'I will fly on Wednesday the 16th to Brussels ;' so I said to Wolseley, 'I will come up on Tuesday, the 15th, and go to Brussels on 16th.' I reached London at 2 p.m., Tuesday, stayed with Wolseley in Wolseley's office from 2 till 5 p.m., while he talked to Ministers. Nothing, however, came of it ; so I said, 'I will go to Brussels.' I did not see Ministers. I consequently went to Brussels on Wednesday, and got there Wednesday night. At noon on Thursday I got telegram from Wolseley saying, 'Come over at once ;' so I saw the King, who did not like my going, and left Brussels at 8 p.m., Thursday, reaching London at 6 a.m., Friday. I saw Wolseley at 8 a.m. He said nothing was settled, but Ministers would see me at 3-30 p.m. No one knew I had come back. At noon he, Wolseley, came for me, and took me to Ministers. He went in and talked to the Ministers, and came back and said, 'Her Majesty's Government want you to understand this—Government are determined to evacuate Soudan, for they will not guarantee future government. Will you go and do it?' I said 'Yes.' He said, 'Go in.' I went in and saw them. They said, 'Did Wolseley tell you our orders?' I said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You will not guarantee future government of Soudan, and you wish me to go up to evacuate now.' They said, 'Yes,' and it was over, and I left at 8 p.m. for Calais. Very little passed between us. The Duke and Wolseley came to see me off ; so that is over . . . Lord Granville thanked me for going very nicely. Government are right, if they will not guarantee future government of Soudan, to evacuate it."

Gordon's original instructions from the Foreign Office were dated the same day, January 18. They simply directed him to report on the military situation in the Soudan, and the measures advisable for securing the safety of the Egyptian garrisons in that country, and of the European population at Khartoum ; on the best mode of evacuating the interior, and securing the good administration of the Red Sea ports ; on the steps to be taken to counteract the stimulus given to the slave trade by the insurrectionary movement, and to secure the safe withdrawal of the Egyptian troops. He himself described the mission on which he was proceeding in the following terse phrase ;—"I go to cut the dog's tail off. I've got my orders, and I'll do it *coûte que coûte*." He left Charing-cross station, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart as his military secretary, and chief of the staff,* and Lord Wolseley, it is recorded, carried his portmanteau to the carriage, Lord Granville took his ticket for him, and the Duke of Cambridge held open the carriage door.

General Gordon who had always kept up a friendly correspondence with the Khedive Ismail, sending his congratulations to him on every anniversary of the Moslem fêtes, wrote to express his regret at being obliged to start upon his mission without receiving the advice and good wishes of his highness, who was then in Rome. He added, "I cannot conceal my misgivings as to the

difficulty of my task. I feel now more than ever the absence of your powerful hand and loyal heart. I am going because I am a soldier, whose creed is to obey." The Khedive telegraphed in reply his best wishes for General Gordon's success, and his earnest hope that his intelligence and energy would enable him to overcome all difficulties.

On January 25, Gordon reached Cairo, where he received a further and much more extended batch of instructions from Sir Evelyn Baring. By these his mission was formally changed from one of merely reporting upon the best mode of proceeding into one of actually effecting the evacuation of the Soudan, and furthermore of re-establishing the government of the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest. This was Gordon's own suggestion, as was also the one that an endeavour should be made to form a confederacy of these Sultans. He was given full discretionary power to retain the Egyptian troops for such reasonable period as he might think necessary, in order that the abandonment of the country might be effected with the least possible risk to life and property. He was at the same time assured by Sir Evelyn Baring that no effort would be wanting on the part of the Cairo authorities, whether English or Egyptian, to afford him all the co-operation and support in their power.

On the morning following his arrival, General Gordon had an interview of a very cordial character with the Khedive Tewfik, and received a firman appointing him Governor-General of the Soudan. By this firman he was empowered to carry into execution the evacuation of the respective territories and the withdrawal of the troops, civil officials, and such of the inhabitants as wished to leave for Egypt. He was if possible after completing the evacuation to take steps for establishing an organized government in the different provinces.

On January 27, Gordon started for Khartoum in the joint capacity of British High Commissioner, and Governor-General of the Soudan for the Khedive. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Stewart and Ibrahim Pasha, and also had with him a youth named Ameer Abel-el-Shakour, to whom, as heir of the Sultan of Darfour, the Khedive had, so far as his authority extended, restored his paternal dominions. The Suakim-Berber route being closed, the party went by way of Assouan. From here General Gordon telegraphed up to Khartoum, "You are men, not women. Be not afraid. I am coming"; and down to Cairo to say that the youth sent with him as Sultan of Darfour had been incapable from drink ever since he left Cairo, and was totally unfit for the responsibilities of his position. It was then discovered that the wrong man had been sent, and that, instead of a youth, aged eighteen, with forty-two wives, the rightful claimant was a man, thirty-two years old, with only two wives. Such a blunder as this was of course calculated to cast contempt upon a Government already seriously compromised in the eyes of the people.

On reaching Korosko on February 2, Gordon and Stewart quitted the Nile Valley and struck across the Nubian Desert on a lonely ride of 240 miles to Abou Hamed. They had no escort, and the risk was one that the boldest might have shuddered at. Nor could any sure news be hoped for till they had actually reached Berber. The interest excited was intense, and the attention of the entire country was fixed on the figure of Gordon flitting on the back of a swift-pacing dromedary across the sandy and waterless tract swarming with deadly foes in order to do what in him lay to save the imperilled garrison of Khartoum. By a strange coincidence he was encountered

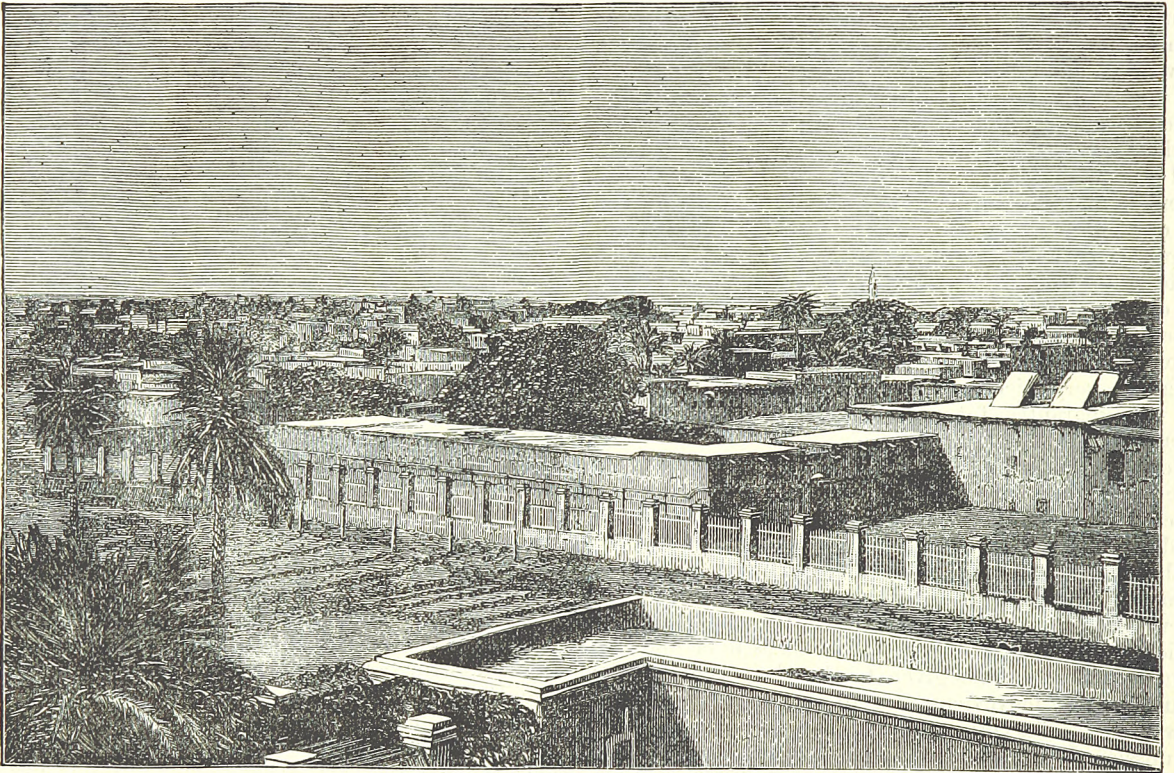
* Colonel John Donald Hammill Stewart, who was born in 1845, received his first commission as ensign in the 11th Hussars in 1869, and became a lieutenant-colonel in 1881. Two years previously he had been appointed British Vice-Consul in Asia Minor. Having been selected in 1882 to report on the state of the Soudan, he started for Khartoum, and after furnishing a full report on the population, position, manufactures and trade of that town, he continued for some months to forward information respecting the various military operations in the Soudan provinces. On his mission ceasing in April, 1883, the Earl of Dufferin expressed on his own behalf as well as in the name of the Egyptian Government, his high appreciation of the energy and industry with which, in spite of innumerable difficulties, Colonel Stewart had discharged his duties. It was doubtless because of his Soudan experiences that Gordon selected Colonel Stewart for his secretary.

between Korosko and Berber by the last European who had left Khartoum, in the person of Mr. Bohndorff, a German naturalist, who had been engaged for some time previous in making a valuable scientific collection in the Niam-Niam country, and on reaching Khartoum in January, had, on the advice of Mr. Power the British consul,* hastened towards Cairo before all communication was cut off. According to Mr. Bohndorff the only Europeans then in Khartoum were Colonel de Coetlogon, Mr. Power, and Herr Hansal, the Austrian consul. All told, there were 60,000 souls in the city. Colonel de Coetlogon had fortified it as strongly as he could,

There was an aspect of sadness and dejection over Khartoum, but the people were perfectly tranquil.

Singularly enough the two men who met thus unexpectedly in the solitary desert, were well known to each other. Bohndorff had been employed some years before under General Gordon on the White Nile, and entertained a lively feeling of gratitude towards his former chief, for many acts of material kindness. He thus described what proved to be their last meeting:—

Leaving Berber at the end of January with my guide and my servant, we struck into the desert. On the after-



THE FORT, KHARTOUM.

but his cannon were not much to boast of, the best having been taken by Hicks Pasha on his ill-fated expedition. Colonel de Coetlogon spoke sadly to Mr. Bohndorff as to the prospects of resisting the Mahdi, whom he already regarded as master of the Soudan. Nothing, in the commandant's opinion, but a strong English expedition would avail for its reconquest, and he was in hopes that a force would be speedily sent under Baker Pasha. Everything seemed to confirm the gloomy forecast of Colonel de Coetlogon, whose view was that Khartoum might be starved after a long siege, but that it was too strong to be taken by force. There were provisions—mainly dhourra—to last for six months. Mr. Bohndorff thought the Egyptian soldiers would surely be killed by the Arabs if they got them in their power, and that in his opinion was the only reason why they did not desert. The populace was openly in favour of the Mahdi, and the Arab traders' sympathies were strongly with him.

* Mr. Frank Power accompanied Mr. O'Donovan to the Soudan, in the capacity of special artist to *The Pictorial World*, with the view of following Hicks Pasha's campaign in Kordofan. Being taken seriously ill, on the arrival of the army at Duem he was sent back down the Nile to Khartoum, and on his recovery continued to remain in that city, acting as correspondent to *The Times*, and subsequently as British consul on the invitation of Sir Evelyn Baring.

noon of my fourth day's march I saw a great cloud of dust far away on the horizon, and soon a cavalcade came riding towards me at an extraordinary pace in contrast to my own wearied march. The leader was in advance, and I noticed his eager manner, and his compact figure clad in a blue military frock coat, red trousers, and a fez.

"Bohndorff," said General Gordon—for it was he—"we all at Cairo thought you were dead. I have often prayed to God to protect you and Dr. Junker and preserve you alive."

I dismounted and went to the side of his camel, and he shook hands warmly. I was overwhelmed with astonishment, for they knew nothing at Khartoum or Berber of Gordon's coming, but immediately I saw him I divined his mission. I only needed to see him to know why he was there.

"Why have you left Khartoum?" said Gordon hurriedly. "I am very glad to be going there. Why is everybody leaving? Are you afraid?"

"Not exactly afraid, but I have finished my collection, and I am returning."

"Well, how goes it there?"

"Everything in a terrible muddle, no one knowing who is faithful to the Government and who is not."

"But are the people at Khartoum afraid?"

"Excellency, there is plenty to be afraid of."

"Tell me, now, is the Mahdi as strong as people say?" and all through he exhibited in his voice and manner the most cheerful and buoyant confidence.

"The Mahdi, Excellency, is much stronger than you have any idea of."

"Ah, ah! I shall manage him."

"I pray God to assist you."

"How is Lupton Bey?"

"Well in health."

"And Slaten Bey at Darfour?"

"I know nothing of him, as communication with Darfour is cut off."

"What is the strength of the movement in Kordofan?"

"I assure your Excellency that Lupton is in a perilous position, and he has no ammunition."

"And about Dr. Junker, when you go to Cairo give my compliments to the Russian consul, and tell him he need not have the least fear for his countryman, as the Gazelle territory will be safe." This was said in the most joyous strain.

"Are you coming back?" he added.

"I hope so, but not now. Would you like me to come soon?"

"If not very soon, you won't find me. I shall not be here more than five months. Now," said he, pressing my hand, "do you want anything?"

"Nothing, Excellency."

He repeated the question several times with the kindest emphasis, and then presented me to Colonel Stewart and Ibrahim Pasha, who rode behind him, wearing grey tourist suits. General Gordon thereupon hastily bade me adieu, and then the party, numbering about ten persons, started off again at the tremendous pace equaling that at which I saw them approach some fifteen or twenty minutes before. Each member of the party carried a small water-sack, some provisions, and a sleeping carpet.

It was within a few hours of Gordon's meeting with Bohndorff in the Nubian desert that Baker Pasha's army was routed near Trinkitat, and before Gordon reached Berber, the gallant Tewfik Bey and the unfortunate Sinkat garrison had sallied forth to certain death.

On February 9 Gordon reached Berber, where he was welcomed with enthusiasm and delight as the father and saviour of the people. He telegraphed to Cairo his opinion that the country through which he had passed was quieting down, and that he had every hope that in the end he would be successful in his mission. The people were indeed flocking in from all sides to meet him, and he held semi-regal receptions of sheikhs and other rulers of the tribes on both sides of the Nile. Before leaving Berber he confirmed Hussein Bey Khalifa in the governorship, but replaced many other Egyptian officials by leading local men. He telegraphed to Khartoum depriving the unpopular Hussein Pasha of his position of Vice-Governor-General, and appointing in his place Colonel de Coetlogon, whom he further created a pasha. He also sent on the following proclamation, which was placarded about the town on the day preceding his arrival.

"TO ALL THE INHABITANTS.—Your tranquillity is the object of our hope. And as I know that you are sorrowful on account of the slavery which existed among you, and the stringent orders on the part of the Government for the abolition of it, and the punishment of those who deal in them (the slaves), and the assurances given by the Government for its abolition, seizing upon and punishing those concerned in the trade; and punishment of those who trade in slaves, according to Imperial decrees, and the firmans forwarded to you—all this is known to you. But henceforward nobody will interfere with you in the

matter, but everyone for himself may take a man into his service henceforth. No one will interfere with him, and he can do as he pleases in the matter, without interference on the part of anybody; and we have accordingly given this order. My compassion for you.

(Signed)

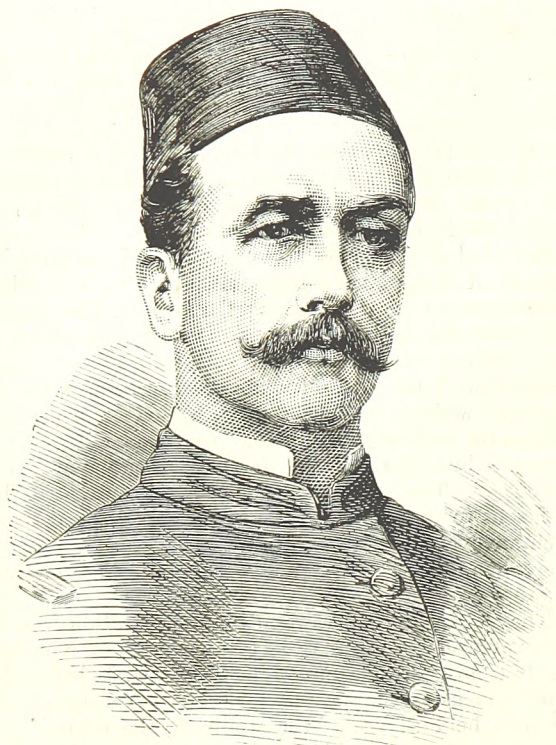
"GORDON PASHA."*

Further proclamations by General Gordon announced the independence of the Soudan, remitted taxation to the extent of one half, promulgated an amnesty, and named the Mahdi Sultan of Kordofan.

Gordon left Berber on February 13, and five days later arrived at Khartoum. His arrival 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 first brief speech, received with the utmost enthusiasm, was as follows:—"I come without soldiers, but with God on my side, to redress the evils of the Soudan. I will not fight with any weapons but justice. There shall be no more Bashi-Bazouks." The very news that he was coming had been sufficient to change the entire attitude of the populace to such an extent that from the moment of its circulation, there had been no longer any fears of a disturbance in the town.

The beginning of Gordon's administration was one series of acceptable surprises to the people of Khartoum. He lost no time in summoning the officials before him, thus preparing the people for some salutary changes. He next held a levee at the Mudirieh, the entire population, even the poorest Arab, being admitted. On his way thence to the palace, about a thousand persons pressed forward kissing his hands and feet, and calling him "Father," and "Saviour of the Soudan." "The furious women," wrote Mr. Power, "wishing to lift his feet to kiss them, threw him over twice." 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 overtaxed people, were publicly burnt in front of the palace, the kourbashes and implements for administering the bastinado being also placed on the blazing pile. The evidence of debts and the emblems of oppression thus perished together. In the afternoon General Gordon created a Council of local notables, composed entirely of Arabs. He then inspected the hospital and arsenal, and in company with Colonel Stewart, Coetlogon Pasha, and Mr. Power, the British Consul, visited the prison, and found

* As this proclamation respecting slavery by General Gordon gave rise to a good deal of comment at the time, we append the answer he made to the enquiries addressed to him on the subject:—"I ask you what your answer would have been to the people of the Soudan, when they asked me whether her Majesty's Government was to hold by the treaty, that the slaves can be liberated in 1889. I answered that the treaty would not hold good, so far as I was concerned, and that I should not interfere with slave-holding. I would also ask you, if taking your view of the dangers of a retirement to Cairo into account, and the peril to Khartoum, &c., I was not justified in telling the people what was self-evident to them—namely, that the separation of the Soudan from Egypt abrogated all the treaties made between Cairo and foreign Governments. I would add that I have ever considered the liberation of the slaves, without compensation, or without some gradual registration system, as robbery; and I am supported in this view by the action of Parliament in 1833, when it granted £20,000,000 to liberate the West Indian slaves. Further, I say you will never carry out the treaty of 1877 in Egypt, by which the slaves are to be liberated in 1889. Had I said that I would allow slave-hunting, you might have complained. What I stated was *in re* slave-holding. As for slave-hunting, rest assured that I have not forgotten it; and, God willing, I will take such measures as will prevent it. I wonder if you are aware of the fact that when I was Governor-General here I never interfered with slave-holding; and that, in fact, till 1889, no one could do so even under the old régime. All my work was against slave-hunting."



COLONEL DE COETLOGON.

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 more than six months, some arrested on suspicion and detained there for upwards of three years, many merely prisoners of war, and one a woman, who had spent fifteen years in the prison for a crime committed when she was a girl. He at once commenced to abolish this bastille. All the prisoners were ordered to be briefly examined, and if it were thought advisable they were to be set at liberty. Before it was dark scores of wretches had had their chains struck off, and on the following day Colonel Stewart continued the good work.

In the evening 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," telegraphed Mr. Power, "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."

Continuing his reforms, General Gordon put a stop to the custom of levying backsheesh on all persons entering the town through the one gate left open, which had been put in force by the minor authorities. He threw open two more gates, so that the people could enter freely, and further abolished the market dues. Boxes were also set up for people to drop petitions or complaints into, and the blame was quickly saddled on any official whose errors were revealed by this means. Hussein Pasha Cheri, the late Vice-Governor, having, six weeks previously, caused an old man, Sheikh Belud, to be bastinadoed until the sinews of his feet were exposed, Gordon telegraphed to Cairo to have £50 stopped from the Pasha's pay, stating at the same time that if he objected he was to be sent back to Khartoum for trial.

So well did things proceed that Gordon expressed confidence in his ability to accomplish the pacification of the Soudan without firing a shot. By February 22 he had already embarked a portion of the Egyptian garrison of Khartoum, and had despatched Ibrahim Pasha in advance to make the necessary arrangements for their passage to Lower Egypt. His plan was to send away all the Egyptians, retaining a sufficiency of black troops for a garrison in Khartoum, the command of which he entrusted to Afresh Bey Shilook, a negro who had won the Legion of Honour while serving under Bazaine in Mexico. He also hoped to provide for the withdrawal of the garrisons in Senaar. In a letter thanking Colonel de Coetlogon for what he had done, when Gordon considered his further services could be dispensed with, he wrote: "My belief is that there is not the least chance of any danger being incurred by Khartoum, which I consider as safe as Cairo. Therefore your services here in a military capacity would be wasted. I consider this place was in imminent danger, not from an external enemy, but from the people of the town, who, bullied by the effete government of Hussein Pasha Cheri, became favourable to the El Obeid people. Rest assured you leave this place as safe as Kensington Park."

A little cloud was however soon to gather. At first the moral support awarded by the British Government to Gordon was all that he could have desired. Mr. Gladstone, speaking on February 13, said that the Government were resolved to do nothing to interfere with the "great pacific scheme" that Gordon was carrying out. When the Opposition attacked his action in issuing the proclamation authorising the holding of slaves, the Government stood by him. But thenceforward they wavered in their policy of unconditional support. Gordon, on February 18, telegraphed for the immediate despatch of his old foe Zebehr Pasha, to take over the government of Khartoum. He pleaded that to withdraw without being able to appoint a successor in his place would be the signal for general anarchy throughout the country, and that Zebehr alone had the ability to rule the Soudan, and would be universally accepted there. But the anti-slavery outcry was again raised, and this time proved too strong. The Cabinet was divided, but the majority declared that they would not have Zebehr at any price, in face of the expression of public opinion. The result of this will be apparent further on.

Ere long it became evident that in spite of Gordon's conciliatory measures, the popular enthusiasm manifested on his arrival in Khartoum was steadily subsiding. The confidence which he himself had felt in the maintenance of tranquillity speedily gave way to serious apprehensions, and led to the issue of a proclamation in the following terms:—"From the date of my arrival until now I have given you sound advice, and everything has been done to ensure tranquillity and put a stop to bloodshed. My advice has not been listened to, and I am therefore forced against my will to send for British troops, who are now on the road, and will arrive in a few days. I shall severely punish all who will not change their conduct."

A despatch received from Gordon at this epoch urged upon the British Government that "if Egypt is to be quiet, Mahdi must be smashed up. Mahdi is most unpopular, and with care and time could be smashed. Remember that once Khartoum belongs to the Mahdi, the task will be far more difficult; yet you will, for safety of Egypt, execute it. If you decide on smashing Mahdi then send up another £100,000 and send up 200 Indian troops to Wady Halfa, and send officer up to Dongola under pretence to look out quarters for troops. Leave Suakim

and Massowah alone. I repeat that evacuation is possible but you will feel effect in Egypt, and will be forced to enter into a far more serious affair in order to guard Egypt." Subsequently he wrote, "I certainly think it worth consideration, should England undertake an expedition for extrication of the garrisons, whether as a Parthian dart she should not proclaim emancipation of slaves, which with many would gild the disagreeable pill of an expedition to the Soudan."

Colonel Stewart, who had been sent by General Gordon on a conciliatory mission to the tribes along the White Nile, returned to Khartoum about this time, having failed for the most part in his object. Stewart and his party, comprising 110 Soudanese soldiers carrying white flags, left Khartoum on board a couple of steamers, provided with stout breastworks of biscuit sacks, and each carrying a single gun. The steamers stopped at the different villages and Colonel Stewart interviewed the sheikhs, and explained to them General Gordon's policy of restoring peace to the Soudan. Colonel Stewart was

received with the greatest friendliness until above Webel Auli, about forty miles distant from Khartoum. The steamers arrived there in the evening, and landed ten men with white flags on the Kordofan side. The villagers fled, but finally one man came. The proclamations were read to him, and Hassan Bey, who accompanied Colonel Stewart, swore on the Koran that, if the people came to the steamers, they would not be injured. Six came on board, and all declared for peace and promised to bring the sheikhs next morning. They then left with letters, containing promises of peace, for the sheikhs. Next morning, on sending a boat ashore for the sheikhs, large numbers assembled, with banners, spears, and rifles, waving lances and beating drums, some on horseback being said to be the Baggara tribe. The steamers waited for some time, making signs of peace, but to no purpose. They then proceeded twenty miles further to the village of Sheikh Tuk Ibrahim, where nearly 1,500 armed men were drawn up, including a large body of cavalry, evidently prepared to oppose any land-



ARAB SHEIKHS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS.

ing. They, however, did not fire, and the steamers, having waited some time, making signals with the flags of truce without effect, returned, as the limit of time named by General Gordon had expired. On the way back Colonel Stewart landed on the eastern bank, which was quiet, and held a large meeting of sheikhs. Here he learned that Tuk Ibrahim had lately returned from Obeid, with a firman from Mohamed Ahmed Mahdi, appointing him chief of the other bank, and authorising him to levy the host of men seen with him so as to prevent any landing, but instructing him not to cross the river.

On March 2 Colonel Stewart again ascended the White Nile, and again issued proclamations of peace, with no good result however. Ten days afterwards the rebel attack against Khartoum commenced. Some 4,000 of the Mahdi's men marched to the Nile and cut off 800 soldiers posted at Halfaya, a village to the north of the city. A steamer was sent to reconnoitre, and the moment she reached the front of the rebel position a volley was fired into her, wounding an officer and a soldier. The steamer returned the fire, killing five rebels. It was thus hostilities began. The rebels next cut off three companies of Gordon's troops who had gone out to cut wood, capturing eight of their boats, and killing or dispersing 100 to 150 men. They entrenched themselves along the Nile, and kept up a heavy rifle fire. Retreat for the garrison was obviously impossible when the rebel force covered the river, the only line of retreat, with their fire. "Our only justification for assuming the offensive," wrote Gordon, "is the extrication of the Halfaya garrison. Were it not for this it is questionable whether we ought to fight against those who have thrown in their lot with the only possible leader they can see, being compelled to act thus in order to preserve their property, which our Government cannot secure to them." Gordon commenced offensive operations by dispatching 1200 men on board two grain barges, towed by three steamers defended with boiler-plates and carrying mountain-guns protected by wooden mantlets, with the loss of merely two killed. This force succeeded in extricating the 500 men left of the Halfaya garrison, and in capturing seventy camels, eighteen horses, and a quantity of arms and cattle, returning with them to Khartoum.

The rebels however still held Halfaya, and on March 16 Gordon determined to drive them away. Their lines, two miles long, about eight distant, and parallel to the Blue Nile, stretched from Halfaya to some wooded sandhills. At an early hour Gordon's troops, about 2,000 strong, marched. The Bashi-Bazouks and Egyptian regulars were in a long line facing the enemy, and also parallel to the Blue Nile. On the left flank was a small square of regular Soudan troops with one field gun. On the right front flank was a handful of mounted troops. As Gordon's men drew near the rebels, the latter began to file away to the right of the line, disappearing behind the sandhills. This supposed retreat commenced shortly before ten o'clock. Three-quarters of an hour afterwards the rebels had all disappeared behind the sandhills. Their rear was covered by about sixty Arabs, mounted on horses and camels. Gordon's troops still advanced, and the artillery fired two shells at the retiring rebels. The horsemen having entered the woods at the foot of the sandhills, to the astonishment of the five principal officers of the force, who had been riding a little ahead, suddenly dashed back, breaking through their own ranks. At that moment the rebel cavalry shot out at full gallop from behind the sandhills on the right. Their appearance was the signal for a disgraceful flight. The men broke up and rushed back without firing a shot. Some sixty horsemen, who

were only armed with lances and swords, dashed along, cutting down the flying Egyptians. The rebel infantry then appeared, and rushed about in all directions, hacking at the men disabled by the cavalry charge. This slaughter continued for nearly two miles, Gordon's men not stopping to fire a shot. Then the Arabs halted, and an officer rallied some of the troops and they commenced a dropping but harmless fire at the enemy, who seemed content not to advance, but treated the Egyptians with the greatest contempt, some riding quietly on camels in front of the muzzles of their rifles. This continued till midday, men occasionally dropping from stray bullets fired by the rebels. The latter then drew off to their old position, carrying with them a number of rifles and cartridges and two mountain guns abandoned by the Egyptians. The irregulars, instead of returning into camp, coolly adjourned to a neighbouring friendly village opposite the palace and, when they had completely looted this and killed some of the inhabitants, strolled back to the camp.

The foregoing account is that of an eyewitness who saw every incident of the battle from the roof of the palace at Khartoum, and who afterwards crossed the river to the fort opposite. Here he encountered a fearful scene of confusion. Men of the Egyptian regulars and Bashi-Bazouks were crying out that their generals had betrayed them. These were two Soudanese blacks, named Hassan and Said, whom Gordon had created pashas, and who had broken through their own lines, and were then hidden in a house, afraid to move out lest they should be murdered by their own soldiers. "There is no lack of evidence," observed the narrator, "that as they galloped back Said Pasha rode towards a gun and slashed the sergeant in charge through to the brain. At the same time Hassan Pasha cut down two artillerymen."

After such a disaster as the foregoing—with something like 2,000 men defeated by sixty rebel horsemen, with the loss of two mountain guns and their ammunition, and with a couple of hundred left dead upon the field—Gordon felt convinced that he must remain on the defensive at Khartoum, and wait until the Nile rose for more active operations. An Egyptian soldier who had taken part in the battle, stated that "on the two traitorous pashas being brought before Gordon bound hand and foot, the latter, who was much grieved, spake never a word, except 'Away with them.' He was reading Holy Writ at the time." The pashas were tried by a military court, which, after two days' deliberation, found them guilty of being in communication with the enemy, of breaking the ranks and the square in the recent battle, and of cutting down an officer and some gunners, with other murders. It was said that the two pashas took out with them seventy rounds of cannon ammunition, although eight was the usual number; also that in the house of Hassan Pasha a store of rifles and ammunition was discovered, and that the pair had stolen two months' pay given them for the troops on account of six months' arrears.

On March 22 the condemned pashas were "executed in the inner yard, near the large square of the prison. They were hewn in pieces by a halbert. I saw the execution," said the soldier above mentioned, "so it is of no use your saying, 'they were shot.' I tell you, according to Turkish military law, a military traitor is always sentenced to be cut to pieces. The two were bound up against the wall by chains and rings. Two soldiers armed with sharp hatchets approached them from out of the sides of a square we had formed. The prisoners' crime was read out and their sentence. A

hundred soldiers were present, some senior officers, but not Gordon Pasha. The senior Bey cried out, 'Executioners, perform sentence on the traitors!' Immediately these advanced close, and lopped off first their arms above the elbows, then the legs above the knees: then cut their bodies in twain; then decapitated them. They died not till they were cut asunder; then their heads fell on their breasts, and they expired with a hideous yell. Surely their fate was deserved. I cannot say whether Gordon Pasha knew of this manner of execution. I tell you this is the Turkish mode of punishing military traitors, and it is a just punishment." * Zebahr Pasha, a relative of Hassan's, on hearing of the fate of the two pashas, expressed approval of the proceeding, saying they had always been doubtful subjects. On the other hand, Hussein Khalifa protested that Said Pasha was the Mahdi's greatest enemy, and that Gordon had acted too precipitately in having him executed. Judging, however, from the subsequent statement of an eyewitness, a son of Salak Elmek Bey, who was a prisoner in the rebels' camp at the time, it would seem that Said Pasha richly deserved his fate. The witness, who had succeeded in bribing his captors, and making his way back to Khartoum, asserted that when the rebel cavalry were about to charge, Said Pasha rode back, breaking his own ranks, with Hassan Pasha, and cut down his own men. Said then held up his bloody sword, and called to the rebel cavalry to follow him, saying, "See, I am indeed true to you; I have killed my own officers."

Shortly after General Gordon arrived at Khartoum he had dispatched a letter to the Mahdi offering him the Sultanship of West Darfour. The text of this letter, as reported by a native who professed to have heard it read, was frank and conciliatory, and actually offered the Mahdi for ten months' respite the whole of the Soudan. It was said to run thus, but of course allowance must be made for inaccurate rendering:—

"I salute you. Let us have the road open between us. Give up your prisoners. I make you Sultan of West Darfour. I remit half the taxes of the Soudan. I allow the slave trade to be carried on. Why should you fight? If you wish to fight, I am ready. Wait ten months. I will then either declare war against you or leave the Soudan to you with fixed boundaries."

A belt, tarboosh, kaftan, &c., were sent by Gordon to the Mahdi with this letter. On the same day that the treacherous pashas were executed an answer was brought to Khartoum, respecting which Gordon wrote:—

"*March 22.*—The man who took my letter to the Mahdi came back to-day. He says Mahdi received the letter; he assembled his councillors, and discussed the matter for ten days, then wrote an answer and tore it up. He then talked over matter for ten days more, and wrote another letter, which he tore up; after another three days he wrote an answer, and sent it by two of his men, who are now waiting outside town. The Mahdi's messengers have come in with the letter, which proposes that I should become Mussulman. He says he looks after the European prisoners; he asserts his claim to be Mahdi, so he is not likely to stop short at Khartoum, but will push his pretensions beyond that. I answered that I had received his letters, styled him Sheikh Mohamed Ahmed—thus cancelling his Sultanship—and said there was end of negotiations. Mahdi sent me a dervish's dress, which I sent back. He returned the dress I sent him. The demeanour of Mahdi's emissaries was exceedingly cheeky. When they pertinaciously kept putting the bundle containing the dervish's dress before me I did not know what it contained, and getting cross I threw it across the room; it was only after they left that my clerk, who gave it back to them, told me it was a filthy patched dervish's coat. They refused to disarm as they entered my presence, and kept their hands upon their swords. I could not help thinking that certainly no Mussulman would have let them go again, and so, at any rate, my being Christian was relied on by them for safety."

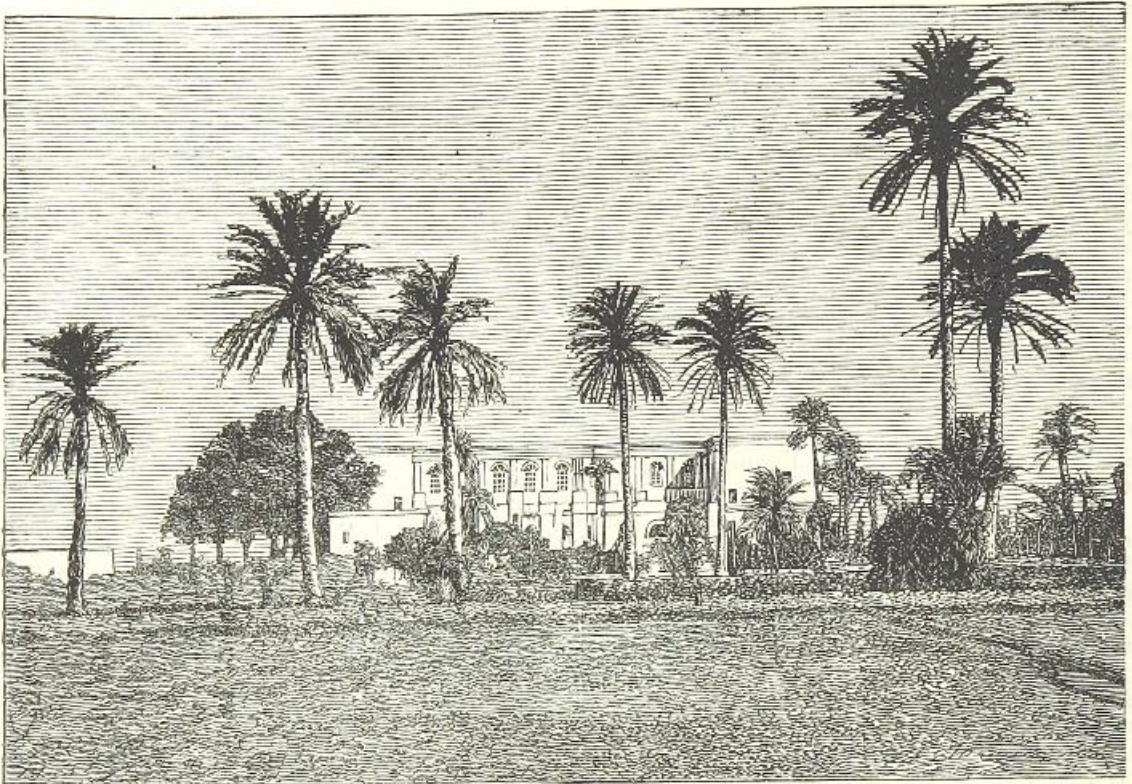
* Narrative of an Egyptian soldier to the *Daily News* military correspondent at Korti.

The Mahdi, according to the native before quoted, "sent back Gordon's clothes, and forwarded to him a suit of his own uniform, and said they must fight." It was evident, therefore, that all hopes of conciliation would have to be abandoned; and this became the more certain when the Mahdi shortly afterwards addressed a letter to the Sheikh Mehemet summoning the neighbouring tribes "to rise up and beleaguer Khartoum." In this letter the Mahdi said:—

"O my friend, there have been numerous addresses from me for exciting and upholding and enforcing the Jihad (Holy War), as God and His prophet urged it. As I ordered you to carry on the Jihad by the siege of Khartoum, it is not allowable for you to depart from this command, for you know that relaxing one's efforts in matters of religion is not proper. The Almighty hath said: 'Make haste to be saved by the mercy of your Lord.' And 'Paradise, its breadth is the heavens,' and 'the earth has been prepared for the believers,' especially those who are engaged in the Jihad. The Koran is full of passages commanding the Jihad, and blaming those who abandon it. And, moreover, your position necessitates the display of exertions and efforts. May your resolution be strengthened, and may you obey God and His Prophet! On the arrival of this letter, rouse all the Moslems who are with you, join together, and rise up and beleaguer Khartoum. Block the roads to it in all directions. Embarrass the 'Turks,' in it, the infidels, and all who are united with them. Interrupt their affairs. Let them see your bravery and valour in God, until they listen to the commands of God, or they will be destroyed, as those before them tasted the punishment for their deeds; and their cannon did not avail them, for the command of God has gone forth. Be zealous in the good fight, and there is no doubt that we shall be victorious over them by God. If you do as I have ordered you, you will succeed. As regards the victory you have seen vouchsafed to us, the matter was facilitated to us; we killed them easily, and they were killed in less than half an hour; we did not kill them, but God killed them. Praise be to God, who has cut down the oppressors of the people. Prostrate yourselves before God, and thank Him for the victory of religion."

Gordon now commenced to turn the steamers he had at Khartoum to account, and sent expeditions daily up the Blue Nile to shell the rebels and capture their boats and camels. Two large houses on the north bank of the river, nearly opposite the palace at Khartoum, were loopholed, as well as several houses outside the fortifications, and were garrisoned by Bashi-Bazouks. Two hundred and seventy of these men, with their officers, having refused to occupy the posts assigned them, were promptly disarmed by General Gordon's orders, by some Soudanese troops. On March 24 four steamers proceeded to shell Halfaya, and a Krupp-gun, being taken to the north bank of the Blue Nile, pounded away at the rebel camp, when an unexploded shell suddenly burst amongst a crowd of Arabs who were examining it, killing sixteen and wounding many others. The same day a party of rebels stole down to a village opposite Khartoum and opened a heavy rifle fire against the palace, but with no particular effect. Similar proceedings to the foregoing seem to have gone on daily. The steamers and the Krupp-gun shelled the rebel positions, and the Mahdi's men on their side kept up a continuous rifle fire against the palace, occasionally killing one of the occupants. Referring to the rebel forces arrayed against him, Gordon wrote on March 29, "They do not appear to number more than 1,500, and of these perhaps there are not 150 determined men, who keep the tagrag and bobtail together. Yet I dare not go out for fear of the town. Had you sent Zebahr, how different would have been the state of affairs!"

For a moment a gleam of hope penetrated Khartoum. A report reached there to the effect that the English had arrived at El Damer, and while confirmation of this news was being anxiously awaited, intelligence came of the rebels having captured the letter-post, but whether this was a post coming in, or one from Khartoum on its way to Berber, whence Gordon's despatches were telegraphed



THE PALACE, KHARTOUM.

on to Cairo, was not known. At this time no communication from the outside had reached Khartoum for three weeks. Meanwhile the tribes had responded to the Mahdi's summons, and Khartoum was completely invested. Yet Gordon wrote on March 31 :—

"I wish I could convey to you my impressions of the truly trumpery nature of this revolt, which 500 determined men could put down. I break my head over our impotence, and the more so when I feel that, once the Soudan taken, you may expect such a crop of trouble in all Moslem States. Be assured for the present, and for the next two months, we are as safe here as at Cairo. If you would get by good payment 3,000 Turkish infantry and 1,000 Turkish cavalry, the affair, including the crushing of the Mahdi, would be accomplished in four months."

CHAPTER X.

British expedition for the relief of Tokar determined on.—General Graham appointed to the command.—Arrival of troops at Suakim and their despatch to Trinkitat.—News received of the surrender of Tokar.—How it was brought about.—General Graham resolves to advance.—Demonstrations on part of the rebels.—Unsuccessful attempt to treat with them.—The troops move forward in square.—Skeletons of the victims of Baker Pasha's expedition line the way.—The rebels open fire from their entrenchments.—Baker Pasha wounded.—The enemy's works attacked.—The troops received with a rush by the rebels.—Fierce fighting at close quarters.—Brave action of Captain Wilson.—The rebel fort carried.—Advance against El Teb.—The enemy's camp and huts captured, together with the wells.—Desperate valour of the Soudanese to the last.—The cavalry operations.—Rebel manoeuvres during the charge.—Horses harnessed and riders speared.—Gallant rescue of Colonel Barrow.—Deaths of Major Slade and Lieutenants Probyn and Freeman.—Severe loss sustained by the rebels.—The advance upon Tokar, which is found almost abandoned.—Discovery of artillery, rifles, and equipments looted from Baker Pasha's army.—Re-embarkation of the troops.—General Graham's farewell order.—Presentation of the Mahdi's standard to the Queen.—Decoration of Captain Wilson with the Victoria Cross.

ON the news of the disaster to the army commanded by Baker Pasha reaching England, the Government resolved

that steps should be at once taken to effect the relief of Tokar, by the aid of a British force. It was decided that the troops at Cairo, under General Stephenson, should be drawn upon for this purpose, and that the command of the expedition should be given to Major General Sir Gerald Graham, K.C.B., V.C., who had led the Second Brigade of Lord Wolseley's army in the Tel-el-Kebir campaign. Messages were dispatched to the garrison at Tokar, urging it to hold out, as relief was on the way, and the expedition was hurried forward with all possible speed. Suakim was the spot selected for the concentration of the troops, consisting of the 10th and 19th Hussars, the Royal Highlanders (Black Watch), the Gordon Highlanders, the 60th Rifles, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the York and Lancaster regiment from Aden, a body of mounted infantry and a brigade of marines drawn from the fleet. It was intended that the Egyptian Camel corps, the men composing which were crack shots, should form part of the expedition, but it failed to arrive in time, owing to the difficulty of getting the animals on board ship.

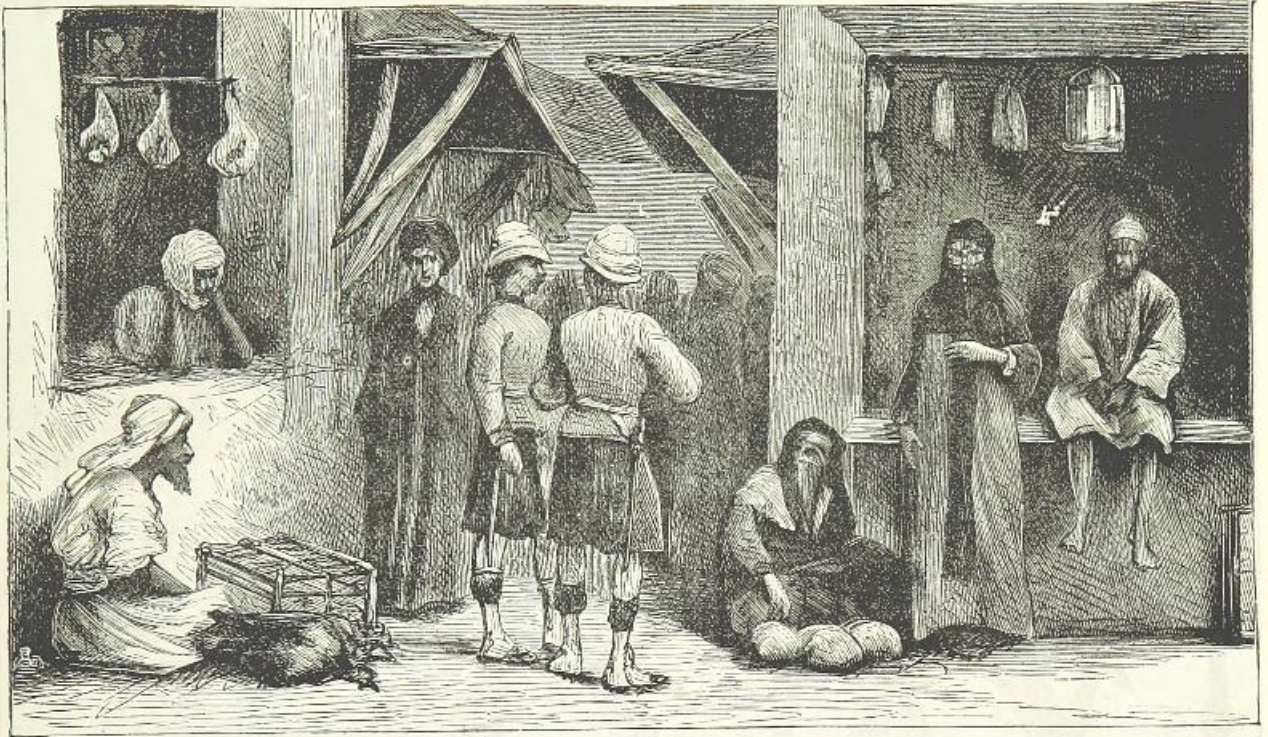
General Graham was engaged on a tour of inspection up the Nile, when he received his appointment, and at once proceeded to Suakim. Meanwhile Osman Digna, the leader of the hostile tribes, had been directly communicated with by Admiral Sir William Hewett, who warned him that a British force was coming to relieve Tokar, and at the same time informed him, that the British Government wished to avoid useless bloodshed, and would not injure the tribes if they desisted from opposing this purpose. The reply of Osman Digna was that he felt himself obliged to take Tokar, and must therefore fight the British and compel them to depart. As an earnest of his intentions in this respect a number of rebels advanced to the outer line of entrenchments surrounding Suakim on the night of February 16, and

opened a sharp fire. In the morning a large body of them were discerned moving, apparently in the direction of Tokar.

The General's plan of operations was identical with that previously followed by Baker Pasha, namely to land at Trinkitat and thence advance on Tokar. By February 22, upwards of 3000 men had been sent on to Trinkitat, but on that day news reached Suakim that Tokar had surrendered. The garrison, it seems, were so galled by the constant fire of five Krupp guns captured by the rebels, and worked by black gunners, that they altogether lost heart, and allowed the townspeople, who had long been in

and 45,000 rounds of ball cartridge, though the ammunition for the guns had been reduced to twenty-two rounds per piece. It was true that the town had been shelled for five days, and that a heavy rifle fire had been kept up at night-time, but the total loss inflicted during this bombardment, was merely two killed and twelve wounded, out of a garrison of 300 men. The rebel force numbered less than 1000, so that there was no fear of an assault—besides which the authorities were aware that British troops were hastening to their relief. In all probability it was this knowledge which decided the capitulation.

Undeterred by the report of the surrender of Tokar, and

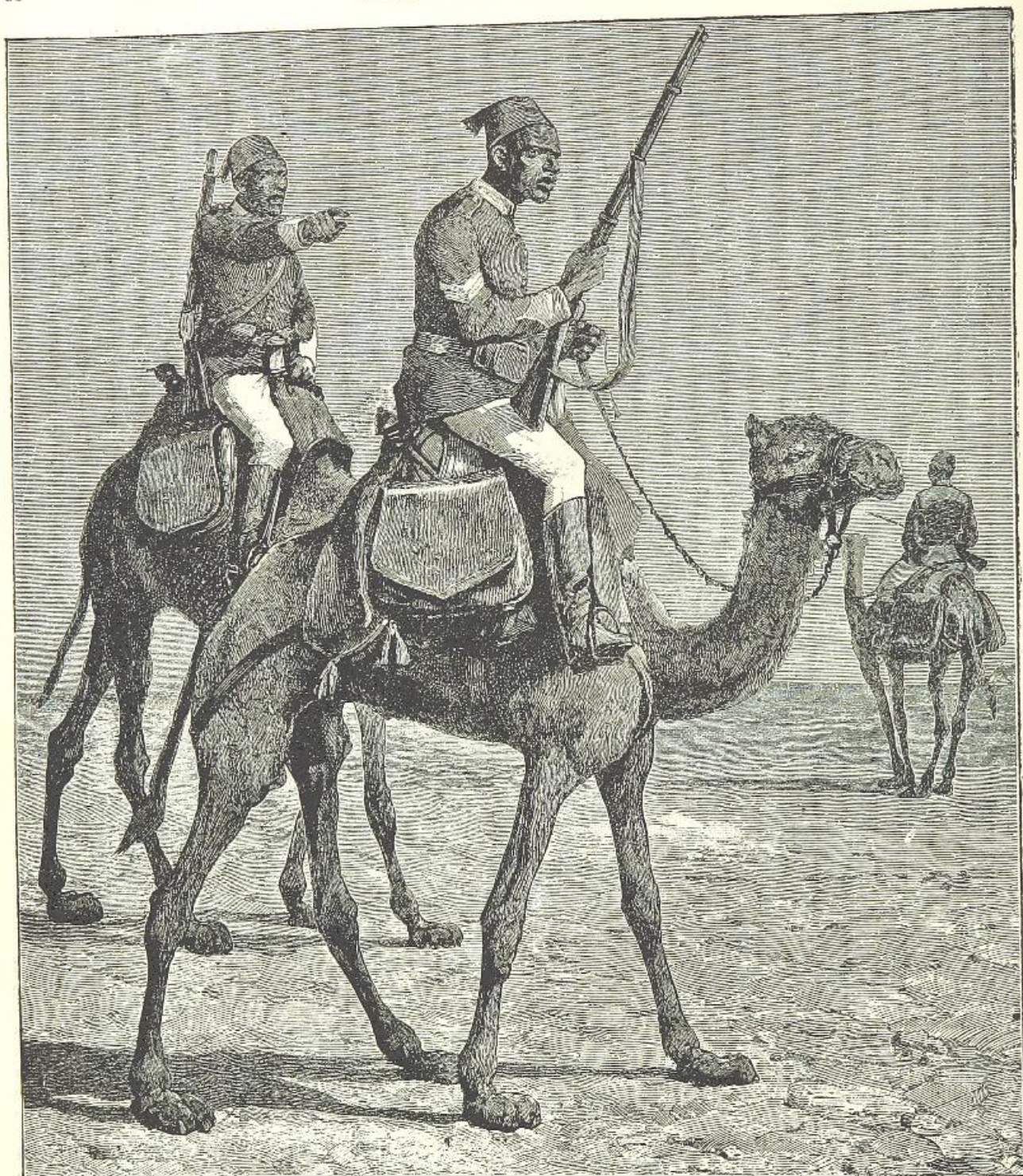


HIGHLANDERS IN THE BAZAAR AT CAIRO.

favour of a surrender, to take matters into their own hands. Accordingly on the 19th, negotiations were opened with the besiegers through the intermediary of Said Khameesa, a merchant of Tokar, who had been imprisoned by the authorities as a sympathiser with the rebels, but who was released and dispatched as an emissary to their camp. On the following day Macaur Bey, the governor of the town, a former staunch adherent of Arabi Pasha, and suspected of wilfully surrendering, in preference to being relieved by the British troops, went out with Jacomb Effendi the adjutant-major, the garrison clerk, and some hundred and fifty officers and townspeople to arrange terms. They had a conference, and on the surrender being arranged, were entertained and feasted, and swore allegiance to the Mahdi.

The surrender was fixed for the next day, and during the night a few soldiers who were still faithful to their colours succeeded in making their escape in the darkness, and bringing the news to Suakim. One officer had wanted to fight, and had tried to rally the troops about him, but had been overruled by his seniors, who were mostly former adherents of Arabi. There was no valid reason for the surrender, there being an abundance of provisions

the circumstance of its garrison having joined the rebel ranks, General Graham resolved to push on to that place from Trinkitat. After a preliminary reconnaissance by Hussars and Mounted Infantry, the Gordon Highlanders and Royal Irish Fusiliers moved across the lagoon on February 25, and took possession of the fort which Baker Pasha had constructed on the further side. The road thither was in some places very bad, and the Highlanders, in order that the column should exhibit a wide front, took off their shoes and stockings and waded bare legged through the swamp on either side. From early morning the enemy had shown in considerable numbers in the vicinity of the fort, apparently viewing the ships and the forces landed from them, with considerable exultation, and regarding the latter as a prey sent by Allah into their hands. As the troops advanced they fell back, but showed in force some four or five hundred strong, on a ridge nearly two miles distant, brandishing their spears and indulging in defiant prancings. Upon the English cavalry advancing, they still held their ground and began firing at a long range; but as it was evident that a yet larger force was concealed behind the ridge, it was not judged advisable to charge them. Fort Baker having been taken possession of, a

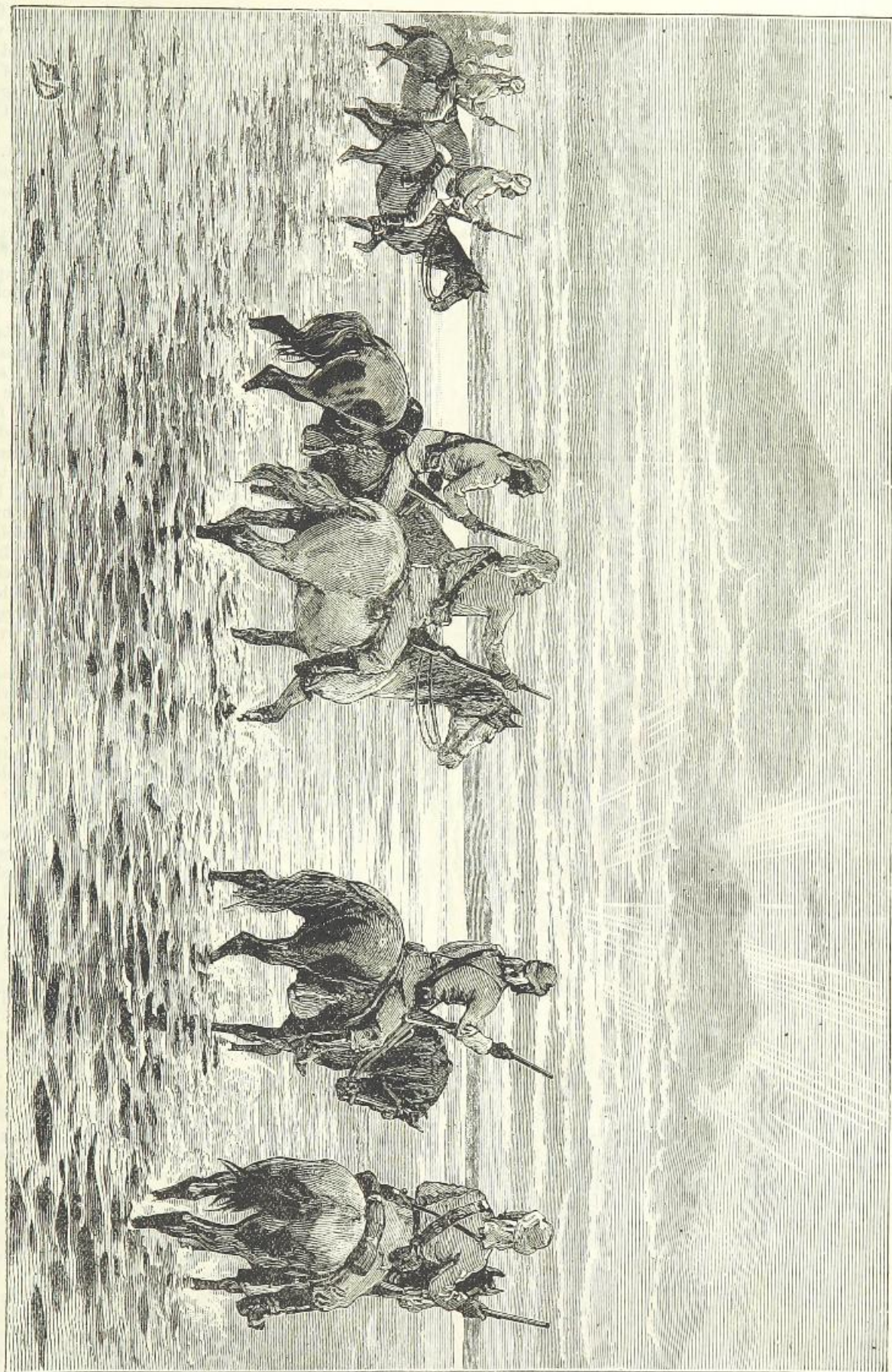


THE EGYPTIAN CAMEL CORPS.

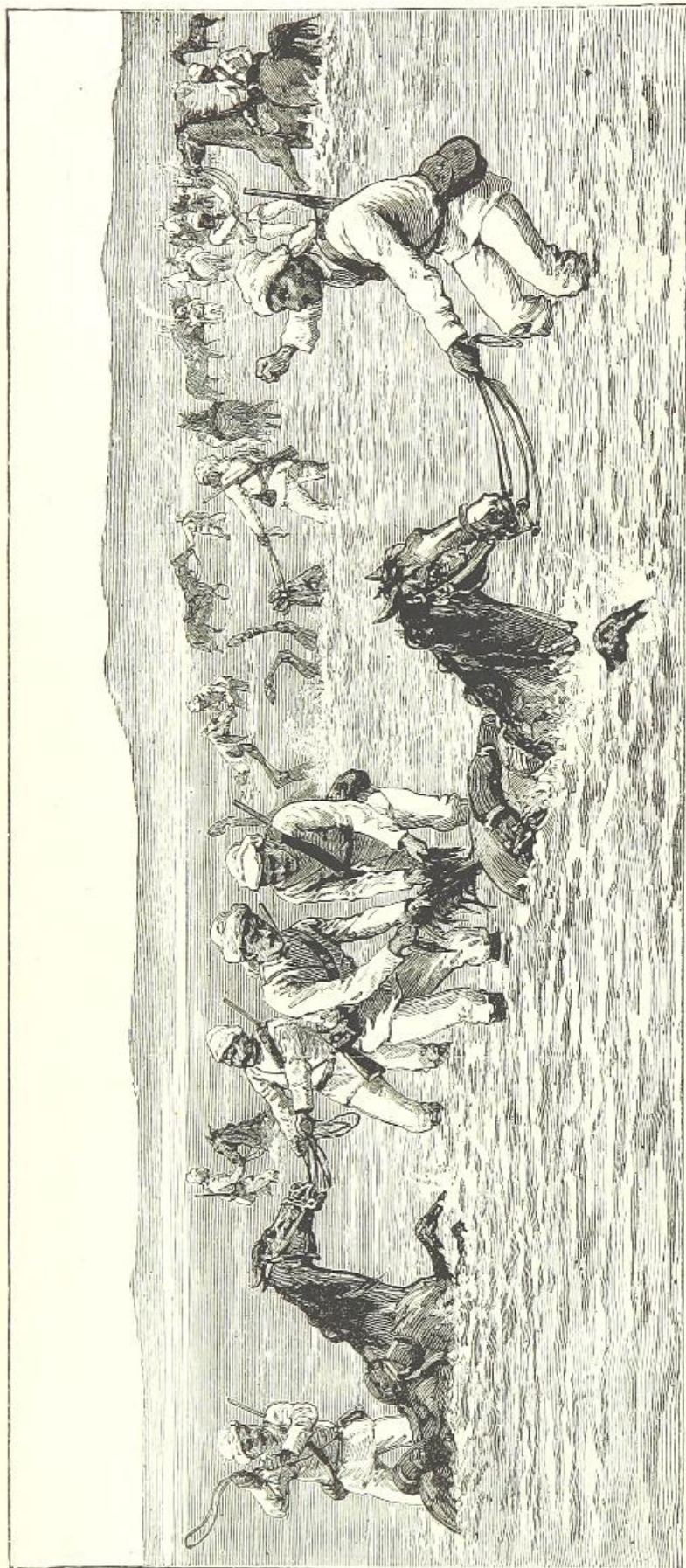
quantity of provisions and water sufficient to supply the army for three days were stored there. The next day the rebels, massed some two miles off and numbering 2000 strong, kept up a continuous fire on the English sentries and outposts, but this was not returned.

On February 27 a last effort was made to treat with the rebels. A flag of truce with a letter attached was carried by Major Harvey a distance of two miles and thrust into the ground. The following morning he found the flag and letter gone but no reply awaiting him. The whole of the expedition had encamped that night near

Fort Baker, and early next morning the men were under arms and ready for an advance. The force consisted of 3000 infantry, 750 mounted troops, and 115 of the naval brigade, with six machine guns and eight seven pounders of the royal artillery. It was formed in a hollow square, or rather oblong, with the transport animals carrying reserve ammunition, artillery ammunition, and hospital equipment inside it. The Gordon Highlanders formed the front, the Black Watch the rear, the Royal Irish Fusiliers the right flank, and the York and Lancaster regiment, which had only arrived the preceding evening



A RECONNAISSANCE DURING THE ADVANCE ON TOKAR.



SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES ON THE WAY TO TOKAR.

from Aden, the left flank. The 60th Rifles and the Marine Infantry were within the square at the right and left rear respectively, and at either of the front corners were six machine guns, Gatlings and Gardners, under Commander Rolfe of the *Euryalus*, and Lieutenants Graham and Stewart. A squadron of the 10th Hussars under Major Gough, were thrown forward as scouts, the remainder of the cavalry under Brigadier General Herbert Stewart being on the left rear of the square. In this formation the expedition proceeded in the direction of El Teb at eight o'clock.

At about a mile from Fort Baker, as the army was advancing across low sand hills dotted with scrub, some hundreds of the enemy could be discerned on the high ground in front and on the flanks. These opened fire about nine o'clock with their Remingtons, but at too great a distance to do any damage, and continued to fall back as the square came on. The mounted infantry, under Captain Humphrey, were thrown out on the left front, where the enemy showed thickest. The line of march, following the lower and more barren soil, and avoiding as much as possible the shrub-covered and broken ground, coincided with that of the retreat of Baker Pasha's routed forces a few weeks previous. Skeletons, half covered with flesh, dotted the track on either side for miles, polluting the air, and flocks of carrion-devouring birds rose and flew off slowly as the troops approached. On the spot where Baker Pasha's square had been broken these skeletons were literally strewn in hundreds, many of them in extraordinary attitudes, with fleshless fingers clutching the sand, and the majority with their faces to the ground, and spear wounds in the back, head, and neck, showing how they had met their fate.

Past all these horrors the square, with General Graham, Admiral Hewett, and Baker Pasha in its centre, tramped steadily forward, keeping well together, and halting from time to time in order to give the men a little rest, but without replying to the dropping fire of the enemy. The seven-pounder guns up to this point had been conveyed on camels, one animal being laden with the gun itself and another with its carriage. They were now put together and hauled along by the sailors and artillerymen. By half past ten the British force had advanced about three miles from Fort Baker, and were able to discern some earthworks, which the rebels had constructed, with mounted guns and standards flying above them. The dropping fire was ceasing, except



CAMEL ARTILLERY ON THE MARCH.

to the extreme right and left, but it was evident that the main body of the foe was now concentrated ahead. Stepping out, as if on parade, with the bagpipes playing gaily, the British troops swung on, in all the pride of physical strength, to within about 800 yards of the enemy's position. An old sugar-mill had evidently once stood here—a building of sun-dried bricks, and a large three-flued boiler marking the site—with a number of native huts; a kind of fort was also discernible. The mounted infantry and the scouts having done their work and run the foe to earth, fell back on the remainder of the cavalry some half a mile in the rear. The square was halted. Many of the infantry sat down, quite indifferent to the presence of the rebels, whose black faces could be descried peeping from behind every knoll of sand.

The plan of attack having been decided upon, the square was again ordered to advance, the object being to turn the left of the enemy's entrenchments. As the troops got into motion the rebels opened fire with the Krupp guns taken from Baker Pasha, and which were worked, as was afterwards ascertained, by artillerymen from the very Tokar garrison which the expedition had

been despatched to relieve. The first shell went wide over the square and threw up a cascade of sand half-a-mile beyond it, but the correct range was soon found, and shells began to break over the square, wounding several men. Baker Pasha was struck in the face by a fragment that caused an ugly wound; still he kept in the saddle till the close of the fight. Besides the fire from the Krupp guns, the rebels opened a rattling fusillade from their Remingtons, and bullets began to fly around the square by hundreds, but fortunately they were for the most part aimed too high. Every now and then, however, men dropped wounded, and soon a score or more had to be carried off on stretchers and attended to by the doctors who, as the advance continued, had their hands full. The troops meanwhile reserved their fire till the north face of the enemy's works was passed. Then after they had moved on about a thousand yards, a halt was ordered, and the men were directed to lie down. During this movement the York and Lancaster regiment on the left flank became the front line and suffered rather severely.

It was now about noon. The guns were run out and a brisk fire opened with these and with the Martinis, the

effect being soon apparent. The practice was excellent, and no sooner did the hoarse growling rattle of the Gardners and Gatlings awake the echoes than the enemy were seen to be falling in large numbers. The fire of the rebels slackened and gradually ceased, whereupon the bugles sounded the advance, and the troops rising and wheeling slightly round on the centre of the square, went for the enemy's works. By this manoeuvre the Black Watch in turn became the front line, facing the rebel entrenchments and the wells of El Teb beyond them. The Arabs clung to their position, which was really a strong one, with desperation, and fought like fiends. They were not drawn up in military order, but were scattered about, taking advantage of the abundant cover the ground afforded. A portion of the entrenchments consisted of a number of large deep holes or rifle pits, in which the rebels lay packed in readiness for their favourite tactic, a desperate rush. As the British advanced there were not more than a couple of thousand of them visible in front, though several hundreds more could be seen hanging on either flank of the square.

As the square moved on, firing the while, a host of rebels, most of them armed with spears, and others with huge cross-hilted swords, rose up boldly from their lurking places, within two hundred yards, and rushed on the troops at break-neck speed. It was marvellous to see how they came on heedless and fearless of death, shouting and brandishing their weapons. Right and left they fell before the withering fire of the Martinis, but even when wounded rushed on. A few got within ten paces of the square before they dropped, proving how many bullets it takes to kill a man. Sullenly the survivors fell back, and when the Martini fire had cleared the front, the British with a cheer rushed into the fort. Colonel Burnaby who had had his horse killed under him, and had been wounded in the arm, was the first to mount the parapet with some men of the Black Watch. He was armed with a double-barrelled shot-gun, a deadly and handy weapon at close quarters, and with this he wrought some havoc amongst the rebels hanging about the works. As explained, the entrenchments were honeycombed with rifle-pits, in which a number of rebels had hidden themselves side by side with dead bodies, with the intention of rushing upon the square and cutting their way into it. Concealed as they were, many actually escaped observation till the troops had passed them, and thus for a time the conflict became a hand-to-hand one, in which the Arabs made use of their spears, having discarded their rifles as the British came to close-quarters. When their hiding nooks were discovered they would rise and run at the troops spear in hand. A number of the British were wounded and several killed in this fashion, while standing in the ranks, and at times it was almost a *mêlée* of bayonet against spear.

A special act of bravery was performed by Captain Wilson of the *Hecla*, who was present at El Teb, as a volunteer. As the advancing troops closed on the battery, the rebels moved out on the corner of the square against the detachment who were dragging the Gardner gun. At this moment Captain Wilson sprang to the front and engaged in combat with five or six of the enemy, in the course of which he broke his sword at the hilt over the head of one of them. The others closed round him, but he kept them at bay with his fists, and did terrible execution with his sword hilt till aid arrived and he was rescued. By almost a miracle he escaped with a sword cut on the head which laid open the scalp, but after having his wound dressed he kept on with the troops.

After the fort was gained there was a slight halt

whilst the marine artillery turned the two Krupp guns with which it was mounted against the enemy's second position whence an active fire was still being kept up. The village of El Teb, hitherto hidden by the high ground, was now discernible. Some hundred yards in front was the brick building already mentioned, with the large rusty iron boiler, that must have found its way to El Teb during Ismail Pasha's improving days, lying on the ground before it. All around, thick as a rabbit warren, were shallow grave-like trenches evidently dug by the enemy to protect themselves. A number of Arabs were concealed in the building, and others lurked in every hole ready to jump out and charge. These pits continued to give considerable trouble, some of their occupants feigning to be dead till the first lines had passed, and then springing up and doing much mischief before they were dispatched. As the British advanced they shelled the building, which was loopholed, and from which the enemy kept up a heavy fire, but the guns were not heavy enough to break down the walls. It was at length carried by a charge, the men of the naval brigade, led by Lieutenant Graham, firing through the windows, whilst the Soudanese contested the neighbouring ground inch by inch. They seemed to swarm behind every bush, and could only be killed, not driven off. Scores were waiting, sword or lance in hand, to charge, but only to get shot or bayoneted. When the troops were quite close, three or four Arabs crept out from the boiler and rushed on with indomitable pluck but only to meet their doom. At least a hundred lay dead around this relic of civilization.

By one o'clock the rebels showed signs of bolting. As they ran the Gatlings and Martinis played havoc amongst them. Still pressing them, the British made towards the wells of fresh water at El Teb, where the Soudanese made their last stand. Here was their second breastwork, rudely constructed of sand bags and barrels. It was crescent-shaped and facing south, but as the troops advanced on it from the north, the guns, with which it was mounted, were turned in that direction. Two companies of the Gordon Highlanders, led by Captain Slade, carried this work, capturing two Krupp guns, a brass howitzer, a Gatling, and two rocket tubes. Despite the encouragement of their sheikhs, one or two of whom rushed at the advancing troops empty-handed, to show that they bore charmed lives, the Soudanese were now clearly beaten and on the move. Their camp, huts, and wells had been captured after from three to four hours' arduous fighting. Many, however, still continued to display the most desperate valour, jumping out of their holes as the square passed and charging savagely, so that to keep them off it was necessary to face in all directions. Lads of twelve, after fighting desperately, fell dead into the shelter-trenches, with their teeth set and their hands grasping their spears. It was almost impossible to save the wounded or to take prisoners, as the dying, even in their last throes, strove to thrust or cut with knife, lance, or sword. The troops as they pressed forward had to shoot or bayonet all they came near, for the wounded would start up and strive to kill or maim their foes, a grim pleasure lighting up their faces whenever they could bury their weapons in a soldier's body. After the battle was over, and when the troops were searching about the enclosure, a youth, lying unobserved amongst a crowd of dead and dying, started up and rushed with a drawn knife on a couple of soldiers, while another sprang like a cat upon the back of a third, and would have succeeded in cutting his throat but for an officer coming up in time to put a pistol-shot through the Arab's head.

To return, however, to the engagement itself. Whilst

the infantry were busy carrying the enemy's works, the cavalry had been actively occupied in another part of the field. Up to the time of the delivery of the first assault they had been disposed on the left rear of the infantry, at a sufficient distance to avoid masking the fire of the latter, and at the same time in readiness to move upon any given point when necessary. About twelve o'clock, as the square advanced, numbers of the enemy were visible in the plain beyond the ridge, and Brigadier-General Stewart, swinging his force round the infantry's right, gave the order to charge. The cavalry were in three lines, the 10th Hussars under Colonel Wood forming the first, the 19th Hussars under Lieut-Colonel Barrow, the second, and one hundred of the 10th mounted on English horses, under Lieut-Colonel Webster, formed the third.

This formation was maintained when the cavalry began to gallop, causing the rebels to split into two large bodies, one to the right, the other to the left. It was a gallop of three good miles before any of the retreating Soudanese were caught. The first was a woman, though her sex was unrecognisable, who miraculously escaped through the first line unhurt. Being discerned and spared by the second, she displayed her savage gratitude by firing a musket after the men who had saved her. The enemy were now very thin in front, and a halt was sounded, when news came that Colonel Webster, who, with the third line, had turned to the right, was being vigorously attacked. "Troops, left about," was sounded immediately. The enemy appeared in great force, some mounted, some on foot, and all armed with spears. Those on foot were lying among the tufted hillocks of which the whole plain was made up, though from a distance it presented an almost level aspect. Their comparative safety was therefore assured when the charge was made, shortly before one o'clock. On went Colonel Barrow, his squadrons as regular as if on parade, though they had a dangerous enemy to deal with, for they found themselves confronted by a large body of Soudanese, mounted on camels and horses, the former masking the latter, behind whom again considerable numbers of spearmen on foot were congregated.

Some thirty rebel horsemen, armed with two-edged swords, rode with full force and boldly against the whole advancing squadron, not a sign of trepidation anywhere among them. Three came straight through safely, and undismayed either by the shock they had survived, or the equal peril of the second line sweeping down upon them, wheeled their horses, which they were riding barebacked, with wonderful rapidity, and did not hesitate to follow in full pursuit the squadrons whose superior power they had so narrowly escaped. Very little harm however resulted from their daring. The real opposition came from the spearmen who lay scattered among the hillocks and mounds of sand, and who, rising at the precise moment, attempted to hamstring the horses of the cavalry as they leapt over them or swerved aside, or else drove home their heavy spears, throwing them whenever they were unable to reach their foe by hand. The spears were like Zulu assegais in form, except that, being weighted with a roll of iron at the extreme end of the shaft, they had a greater momentum and piercing power. The hussars' swords were too short to reach the crouching foe, and were moreover badly tempered compared with the Arab spears, which would have proved most effective weapons in a cavalry pursuit. General Stewart in fact saw this, and after the fight procured about six hundred of these spears, and armed the cavalry with them.

Colonel Barrow, whilst leading the charge with the

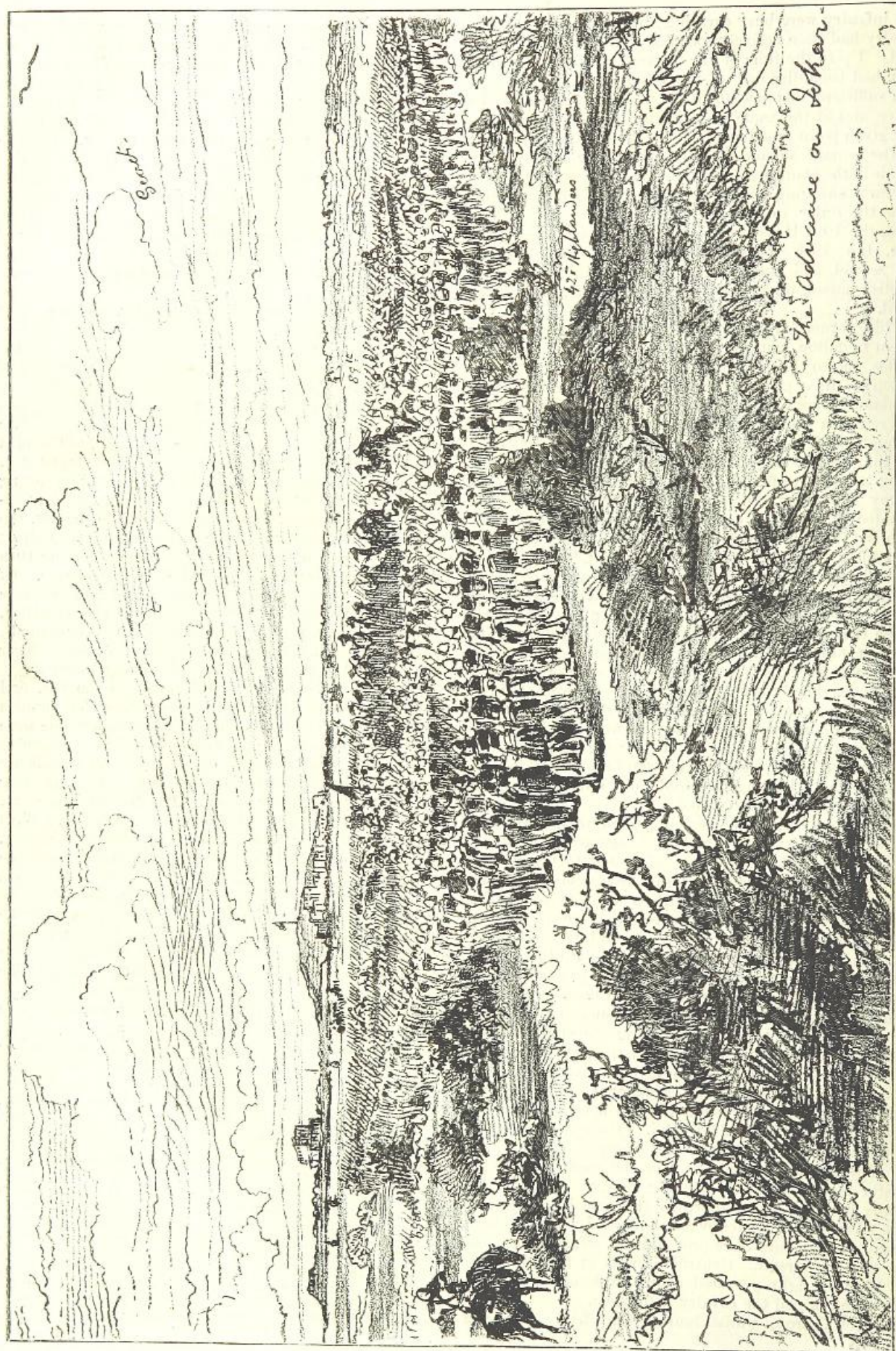
10th Hussars, was struck by a thrown spear that pierced his arm and side, still he rode on until his horse fell. The colonel's trumpeter, coming to his rescue, was severely mauled; two sergeants and a trooper, however, with great courage, succeeded in saving their wounded commander. One, sergeant Marshall, caught the colonel as he was falling, and, seizing a loose horse, sought to place him upon it. The horse, however, fell, and at this moment trooper Bosely, to whom it belonged, came up, and, on foot, and under a heavy fire, aided by sergeant Fenton, he supported the wounded officer through masses of the enemy into the infantry lines. The gallantry of this act may be inferred from the circumstance that no other seriously wounded officer or man escaped death on that day.

The first line, missing its commander, and not fully realising the position, swept straight on, whereas its lost leader would no doubt have wheeled it to the right. General Stewart, who was riding somewhat in advance of the left flank of the second line, noting at once the flaw, drove spurs into his horse, and with his staff galloped hard to bring round the erring squadrons. It was a race between this small band, the general and staff, and a cloud of Arabs rushing from the right. The former won, and caught up the first line; but in this conflict, during the unfaltering sweep of the 10th Hussars, as they followed, wheeling with admirable precision to the left, the most mournful casualties of the day occurred. Lieutenant Probyn of the 9th Bengal cavalry, attached to the 10th Hussars, was among the first to fall in this charge. Of the General's four orderlies one was killed and two were wounded. Major Slade, as fine a soldier as ever breathed, was found lying dead, pierced with seven spear wounds, and his horse hamstrung to the bone. Another officer who perished in the conflict was Lieutenant Freeman.

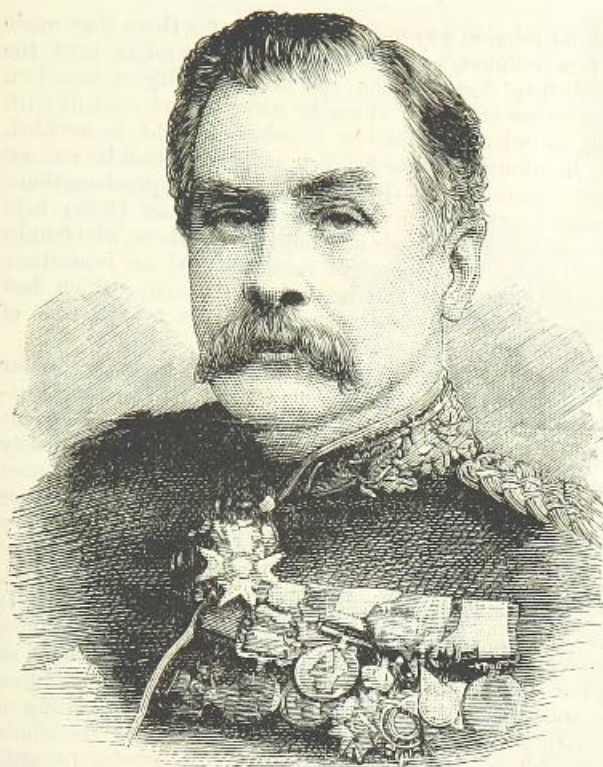
The enemy were now in full flight to the left, and since the chase of them would have brought the pursuers across an infantry file, the men of the leading line were dismounted so as to use their carbines. The main effect of the cavalry action was to disperse and cut the enemy in two, forcing them from their line of retreat, and giving support to the infantry attack. The Mounted Infantry, on their part, earned distinction in the battle. With two-thirds of their hundred men dismounted for firing, they, with the left, held the enemy in check while the infantry square advanced, and afterwards, taking up a position on the left flank of the square, maintained an effective cross fire. The value of this corps may be judged by the fact that, whereas the men fired an average of eighty rounds a man, not a single life among them was lost, and only two of them were wounded. The system pursued of disposing the horses and rifles in scattered order under all available cover, contributed to this excellent result.

The British loss at the battle of El Teb amounted to no more than thirty killed, and about one hundred and fifty wounded. Among the former were Major Slade, Lieutenants Freeman and Probyn; Quartermaster Wilkins and Lieutenant Royds of the Royal Navy. The principal officers wounded were Baker Pasha and Colonel Barrow. General Graham* constantly exposed himself,

* Major-General Sir Gerald Graham, K.C.B., V.C., was born in 1831, and educated at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He entered the Royal Engineers in 1850, and was in the Crimean War, at Alma and Inkermann, and at the assault on the Redan; was twice wounded, and twice mentioned in despatches; was employed in destroying the docks of Sebastopol, and received the Victoria Cross, with all the medals and decorations for that campaign. In the Chinese war of 1860 he was at the attack of the Taku Forts and at the surrender of Peking, and was again severely wounded. He com-



BRITISH TROOPS ADVANCING IN SQUARE ON TOKAR.



GENERAL SIR GERALD GRAHAM.

he and his staff being frequently in the thickest of the fight. He rendered himself a mark for the enemy by a large red flag, which was carried beside him, and which attracted a heavy fire. The loss sustained by the rebels was terribly severe, as many as 2300 of them, it was said, being buried on the field by the British troops. Funeral honours were rendered by the latter to the bodies of such officers belonging to Baker Pasha's army as could be identified.

The troops left El Teb at nine the next morning, the cavalry being disposed on the right rear, with scouts thrown out on the right and left flanks. At a quarter-past eleven a halt was ordered for the purpose of searching the bush on the left, which had been gradually thickening. As this was found to be unoccupied, the force advanced without any change, the scouts sweeping a large area on both flanks until one o'clock. As by this time Tokar should have been in sight, two squadrons of the 10th Hussars, under Lieutenant-colonel Wood, were sent to the front to endeavour to find the town. After the squadrons had galloped about a mile, the scouts reported that Tokar was visible more to the left and east than had been estimated. The directions as to the necessary change in the line of advance having been sent back to the General, the squadrons continued to move forward. A number of natives were now seen running in from the town into the bush, whence they opened fire on the scouts. At three o'clock the infantry came up, and as the square advanced the cavalry wheeled round from the right, until it

encircled the west side of the town. The march under a burning sun, over sand and parched earth, was very trying, but only one man fell out, and he, after a time, rejoined the ranks. The distance covered was probably about eleven miles. Before the town of Tokar, is a bare plain about a quarter of a mile across. At four o'clock, General Stewart trotted out from the bush into this plain with his staff and half-a-dozen men. He had barely advanced a hundred yards when a man was seen running from the town towards him. It was then evident that the enemy had retired and left the relieving force to join hands with the beleaguered garrison, of whom only about seventy remained. The besieged, it appeared, had made certain terms with the enemy, purchasing their lives by surrendering their arms and giving the rebels help in their work. Some couple of hundred fugitives from the battle had reached the town, but fled as the British approached. The troops bivouacked on the plain in front of Tokar, where all remained quiet during the night, there being no trace whatever of the enemy. About nine o'clock a large convoy of camels with provisions and water, arrived safely from Fort Baker, causing general gratification.

On Sunday morning, March 2, the cavalry and mounted infantry, with the generals and their respective staffs, started to visit a large rebel village named Dubbah, some five miles beyond Tokar, where it was rumoured a number of the enemy had collected. The statement was found to be incorrect, for on nearing the place the scouts reported that nothing living was visible, excepting some goats and cattle. Dubbah proved to be a large, straggling village, of circular form, covering a mile in area. The huts were built of straw, canvas, canes, and matting, and were all in a woeful state of dilapidation. As the troops drew near a singular sight met their eyes. Outside the village, in some large huts, were stacked a quantity of rifles, and close by were Baker Pasha's missing Gatlings and mountain gun, brought there from Tokar. Round about, and in every hut lay more rifles, heaps of bayonets, cartridges, portmanteaus, saddlery, clothes, stationery, and objects of various kinds—all forming part of the equipment of Baker Pasha's army. Uniforms were there, pierced with spears, papers, medical instruments, band instruments, and all manner of articles utterly useless to the rebels. The latter had evidently lately been in Dubbah, for in a hut there was found the forage cap of a hussar, killed in the cavalry charge of the preceding Friday. From the confused state in which things were found it was evident there had been a hurried search for objects of value. Here and there in the huts were recently dug holes, showing where valuables had been hidden. Great quantities of dhurra together with other provisions were stored in the place. The number of rifles discovered exceeded 1500, and these were at once destroyed by the soldiers.

From the general appearance of the walls of Tokar it was evident that no serious attempt had been made against the town. The day following the arrival of the troops, many of the inhabitants who had fled when the rebels were fighting at El Teb or had gone off in company with them, returned to Tokar with their families and property. The men of the garrison stated that since their surrender they had been badly treated by the rebels, whose servants they had agreed to become. A wounded Egyptian artilleryman said that he and seven others had been dragged with ropes from Tokar to El Teb to work the guns. All the others were killed, and he, on trying to escape, was shot in the back by the Arabs, but managed to crawl to Tokar during the night.

manded the 2nd Brigade in the army of Lord Wolseley in Egypt, and had the brunt of the fighting. He landed the first troops at Ismailia, fought at El Magfar and Tel-el-Mahuta, led the advance to Mahsaneh and to Kassassin, where on August 27, 1881, with 1700 men and three guns, he withstood and beat off the attack of 10,000, with fifteen guns, showing the highest qualities of a General, caution, firmness, patience, pluck, and determination. In the second battle of Kassassin, on September 9, and in the final battle of Tel-el-Kebir on the 13th, General Graham also took part.

He stated that a great number of Arabs escaped in a wounded condition. According to this man and others, the rebels alleged that they were deceived by Osman Digna, who told them it was untrue that the English were coming, and assured them that they would only have to meet and defeat another Egyptian army.

The troops re-embarked for Suakim on March 5, after General Graham had issued a farewell order at Trinkitat, recording his sense of the gallantry and discipline displayed by all arms, and stating that they deserved well of their country. Two subsequent incidents in connection with the expedition may be here recorded. Some few weeks afterwards, Lieutenant Wilford Lloyd, who had been engaged at El Teb, attended at Windsor Castle, and presented to the Queen, on behalf of General Sir Gerald Graham, the Mahdi's standard, captured by the British troops at the relief of Tokar. The standard was about two and a half yards long by two yards wide, and was composed of red and yellow silk, with an inscription in Arabic on one side stating that it was presented by the Mahdi to the Governor of Tokar, and on the other the well known text from the Koran: "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is His Prophet. Everyone professes the knowledge of God." The other incident was the decoration at Southsea, of Captain Wilson of Her Majesty's torpedo ship *Hecla*, with the Victoria Cross for the special act of bravery performed by him at El Teb, when, as already mentioned, he engaged in a hand to hand fight with several of the enemy, continuing it with his fists after his sword had snapped off at the hilt.

CHAPTER XI.

Proclamation by Admiral Hewett and General Graham to the Tribes.—Osman Digna's reply.—Advance of a British force to Tamai.—The enemy sighted.—Night bivouac.—A daring reconnaissance.—Sharp rifle fire against the British camp.—The next morning's advance.—The Arabs charge the weak points of the square.—Desperate nature of their attack.—Bravery of some men of the Black Watch.—Retreat of the 2nd Brigade with the loss of their guns.—Advance of the 1st Brigade to the rescue.—Their artillery execution upon the rebels.—The captured guns re-taken.—Fresh Arab charge.—Deadly repulse of the rebels.—The wounded Soudanese attack all who approach them.—The troops continue their advance to the Tamai Wells.—British and rebel losses.—The night after the battle.—Burning of Osman Digna's camp.—Reward offered for Osman Digna dead or alive.—A copy of the proclamation sent to the rebel chief.—Fresh attempt to capture Osman Digna.—Fruitless efforts at parleying with the rebels.—A few shots exchanged.—The troops retire amid the jeers of the Arabs.—A new advance ordered to the village of Tamaniab.—It is found to be deserted.—The village is burnt and the troops return to Suakim.

AFTER the battle of El Teb and the relief of Tokar General Graham and his troops, with the garrison and Egyptian inhabitants of the last mentioned place, returned to Suakim. From here the following proclamation was conjointly issued by Admiral Hewett and General Graham to the tribes:—

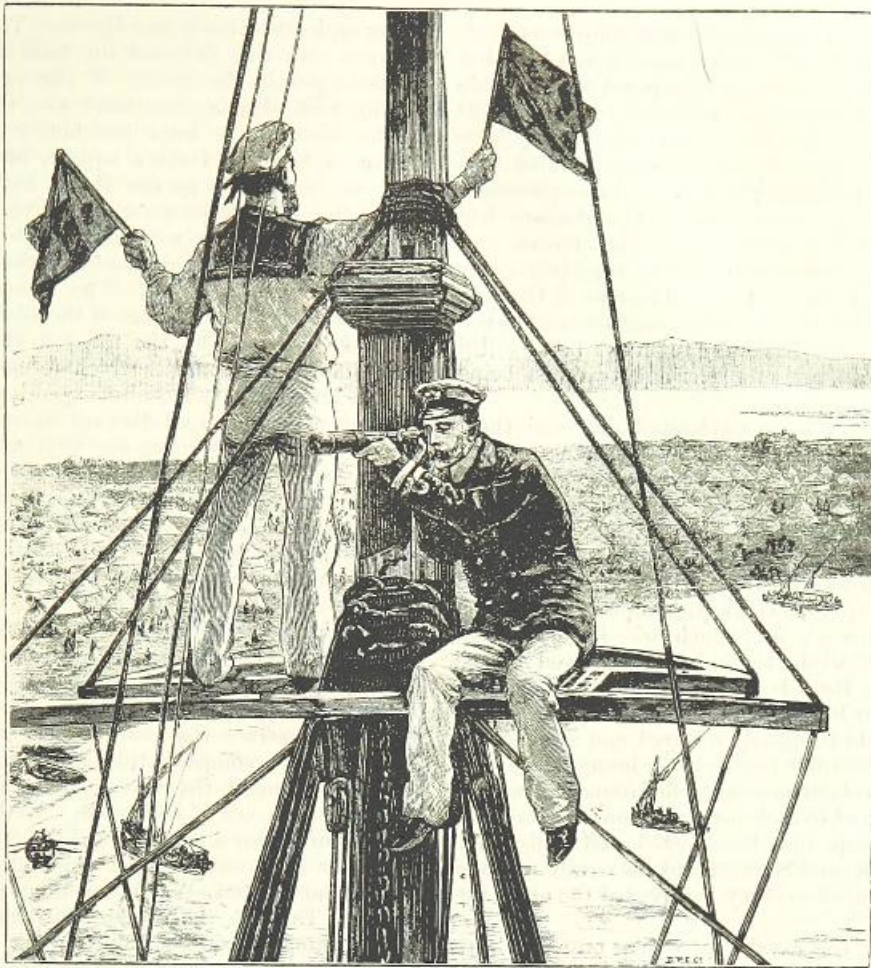
"You have already been warned that the English forces have come here, not only to relieve the garrison of Tokar, but to redress the wrongs under which you have so long suffered: nevertheless, you have gone on trusting that notorious scoundrel Osman Digna, well known to you all as a bad man, his former life in Suakim having proved that to be the case. He has led you away with the foolish idea that the Mahdi has come on earth. The great God who rules the universe does not send such scoundrels as Osman Digna as His messengers. Your people are brave, and England always respects such men. Awake, then; chase Osman Digna from your country. We promise you that protection and pardon shall be granted to all who come in at once; otherwise the fate of those who fell at El Teb shall surely overtake you."

This proclamation had been preceded by letters from the Sheikh Morghani, telling the tribesmen that because

the old religion was not good enough for them they made a new religion, and that God had therefore sent the English to destroy them and the new religion together. He further entreated them to come in and consult with him, in order that further bloodshed might be avoided, but he admitted to the English authorities that he was not very sanguine as to the success of these proclamations, since the tribesmen who were with Osman Digna held themselves to be better and holier than those who fought at El Teb. He therefore recommended an immediate movement against the rebel leader's camp, which had been established some seventeen miles to the east of Suakim, in the valley of Tamai.

A few tribes sent in deputations, but the rebel leader still held firm, and forwarded a reply to the proclamation to the effect that there was no other settlement but the sword. The Admiral and General having formally stated in a second proclamation, addressed to Osman Digna, that the English army was about to advance against him unless he submitted, it became necessary for them to keep their word. The troops accordingly marched out of Suakim, and on the night of Tuesday, March 11, reached the spot known as Baker's zereba. It was midnight before the infantry brigades and artillery arrived and bivouacked, the regiments lying down in square formation. The Mounted Infantry and Abyssinian scouts were sent out at seven o'clock the next morning to beat up the enemy, and after an early dinner the whole force fell in and moved out from the zereba towards Tamai, starting about one. Cavalry scouts covered the advance, extending two miles on the front and flanks, the main body, under General Stewart, walking in rear of the infantry, which moved in two squares, side by side, presenting an oblong front and rear. One half-battalion of the Black Watch was in line behind the left rear, the other half battalion being in column. After an interval of twenty paces came the York and Lancaster, in the same formation, and in rear of both regiments the Marines. The ammunition and water were in the centre of the square, while the Naval Brigade was on the left corner front; the whole forming the 2nd Brigade under General Davis. On their right, with an interval of twenty-five paces, came the Royal Irish Fusiliers; then, after another interval of twenty paces, the Gordon Highlanders, in the same formation as the two leading regiments of the 2nd Brigade. In rear of the Fusiliers and Highlanders were the King's Royal Rifles. These made up the 1st Brigade under General Redvers Buller. In the centre of the 1st Brigade square were also ammunition and water. On its left was the nine-pounder battery; on the right the seven-pounder battery; and behind each battery the Royal Engineers. The guns were mostly dragged by men.

The line of march was south-west towards some low dark hills of red granite and syenite, that could be seen looming up six miles away. The Mounted Infantry having reported that these hills were clear of the enemy, it was deemed advisable to occupy their vicinity before dark, and if practicable attack the enemy and drive them out of their camp at the wells. A runaway mule gaily led the advance through grass, scrub, and underbrush, the mimosa and cactus in some places being seven feet high. There were few halts, the infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with a front of about 400 yards going steadily on, and scouts of the 10th and 19th Hussars, under Lieutenant Fanshawe and Major Gough, searching the bush, but without finding any traces of an enemy, and pushing on at times a mile in advance of the squares. Generals Graham and Stewart with their staffs rode on behind the scouts. By half-past three the cavalry



SIGNALLING THE POSITION OF THE ENEMY AROUND SUAKIM.

circled and then ascended the outlying low hills. Before them was spread out the valley of Tamai; on the further side of this, some two miles off, were low ranges of similar hills to those already discerned, extending to the foot of the chain of the Soudan mountains. On these ranges the enemy could be plainly discerned clustering thickly on the more prominent points, some on foot, and others on camels and on horseback. The cavalry scouts were pushed forward to unmask the enemy's position, and as they advanced the Arabs showed in large numbers and fired several shots. Meanwhile the infantry square had arrived at the foot of the hill where the outlook had been established, and facing south, marched to a sandy tract dotted with a few bushes, but clear of the rocks and stones abounding at the base of the hilly range. The cavalry scouts having ascertained the enemy's position, fell back, and General Graham issued orders for the infantry to bivouac where they stood, and for bushes to be cut and a zereba made, advantage being taken of the semi-circular crest of the sandy ridge.

The cavalry were sent back to Baker's zereba to water their horses, and to remain there all night, and shortly after sunset the infantry were formed into one large square, the intervals being carefully closed. Fires were lighted and coffee made for the evening meal. Some parties of the enemy were observed about a thousand yards off, and by the General's orders half a dozen shots were fired at them from the nine-pounders, the shells bursting over their heads with apparently some execution, and causing them to disperse rapidly. As darkness came on,

the fires of the enemy's camp, about a mile and a half off, were plainly visible. Shortly after eight o'clock Commander Rolfe, R.N., having obtained permission, stole out to reconnoitre, a most daring action, as no one could say where the enemy might be lurking in the bush. He made his way to the spot where one of the shells had burst, and found three Arabs lying dead, a proof of the accuracy of the gunner's aim. Creeping amongst the bushes to the top of the ridge he could make out the enemy's watch-fires with pickets sleeping beside them. He returned at nine o'clock to camp, and as it appeared from his report that the enemy were not meditating an attack, the men were ordered to lie down and get what sleep they could, the fires being extinguished.

At a quarter to one in the morning, however, several parties of Arabs who had approached to within a thousand yards of the camp suddenly opened a sharp rifle fire on the square. The shots were mostly too high, but one or two animals were hit. The troops at once stood to arms and then laid down, Martini in hand, ready to receive the Arabs. It was bright moonlight, and as objects were visible for a considerable distance, a sudden rush could have been effectually checked. Orders had been given for the men to lie quiet and not to fire a shot till the foe came close, but at the first alarm an Egyptian camel driver jumped over the prickly mimosa bushes piled outside the square, and being taken for an enemy as he bolted past the lines, was shot at, and fell pierced with half-a-dozen bullets. Three men also received bayonet wounds from their comrades by accident when rushing to

the front; but within the square there was no commotion, as even the Egyptian drivers and carriers recognised that a thousand British bayonets were interposed on every side between them and the enemy. All night long the rebels kept up their fusillade, the bullets sweeping thickly overhead. They aimed especially at the high rounded tops of the two hospital waggons which showed conspicuously in the moonlight, and consequently the doctors had several narrow escapes, whilst the camels, horses, and mules huddled together in the centre of the square were occasionally hit by bullets. Owing however to the men continuing to lie down the casualties were but slight, one private of the York and Lancaster regiment being killed by a shot in the head, and an officer and two men being wounded.

Still the position was an unpleasant one, and there was a general feeling of relief when day began to dawn and the long anxious hours of watching were brought to a close. At four o'clock Wyld and his Abyssinian scouts crept out to the left, and found that the firing party there was composed of about a hundred and fifty men, supported by a much stronger force. They were observed and fired at, but managed to get back safely. Sunrise brought no relief from the enemy's fire, which was kept up with increasing strength, whilst the immunity enjoyed by the Arabs so added to their boldness that they advanced to within three or four hundred yards of the square. This was more than could be quietly endured, and at about six o'clock a Gardner and a nine-pounder were brought into play. The guns made excellent practice, a few rounds dispersing the Arabs, who retired to their main position near the wells of Tamai. The troops then breakfasted, and whilst they were so occupied General Stewart and his cavalry arrived from Baker's zereba, where they had passed the night unmolested.

At seven o'clock the cavalry were sent on ahead with strict injunctions to act as mounted infantry only, and on no account to be enticed into a charge. They searched the bushes in front thoroughly, but only small parties of the enemy showed themselves, and the opinion that the tribesmen did not mean to fight after all began to prevail. An hour later the infantry formed up outside the zereba in two echeloned squares. In front was General Davis's Brigade, consisting of the Black Watch, and the York and Lancaster regiment, with the Marines on the rear face. The Naval Brigade with their machine guns, as well as General Graham himself, were in the centre of the square. General Buller's Brigade, also in square, was echeloned on the right rear, being made up of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, Gordon Highlanders, and the King's Royal Rifles. General Stewart's cavalry, more especially the mounted infantry and a troop of the 10th Hussars, sent out to the left front, had meanwhile discovered the enemy, and some sharp firing was in progress. As the infantry advanced over a kind of plateau dipping towards the east—exactly the sort of ground among which large numbers of rebels might conceal themselves—they saw the cavalry falling back, and the enemy in great force following them. Right in front about a thousand yards ahead a group of Abyssinian scouts were exchanging shots with the advancing foe, and parties of cavalry in skirmishing order were similarly engaged in the same quarter of the field. The cavalry cleared off to the left, and the enemy could now be discerned in crowds over the bush in front. Davis's Brigade halted, and tightening up in square opened a heavy fire with the machine guns and rifles upon the advancing mass of Arabs. This checked them for a short time, but encouraged by their wild sheikhs they steadied them-

selves and again came rapidly on. They heralded their advance with rifle fire, and the bullets thickly pattered on the sand in the centre of the square, whilst their hissing and whizzing overhead was terrific. In recent battles there have been few hotter corners than the centre of General Davis's square, and had the Arabs been as good shots as the Boers, not a tenth of those composing it would have escaped alive.

The British troops now advanced to meet the enemy, and in doing so the weak points of the square formation at once became apparent. The companies of the York and Lancaster regiment, and of the Black Watch in front, swept forward against the foe, but the remaining companies of these regiments which formed the sides of the square, and which were also expecting attack, failed to keep up with the rapid forward movement of the front face, and the consequence was that many gaps appeared in what should have been a solid wall of men. As the front line approached the rebels the troops began to cheer, and with fixed bayonets advanced at the double, thereby still further increasing the gap between them and their companions forming the sides, and at this moment immense hordes of Arabs were seen charging down on the right face of the square. The front line was halted, and the officers of the companies of the York and Lancaster regiment which fronted the foe, now pouring down, made every effort to close up the gaps, and steady the men to receive the charge. The time, however, was too short to accomplish this, and the rolling fire which was opened upon the enemy both in front and flank drowned the voice of command. With a fierce rush the Arabs burst down on the right face. The York and Lancaster men wavered and began to fall back on the Marines and Black Watch, opening great gaps in the square. Through the smoke the dark figures could be seen rushing on, unchecked, even for an instant, by the hail of bullets, and in another minute the fight became a hand-to-hand one.

The Arabs crawled on their hands and knees beneath the bayonets and the muzzles of the Gardners and Gatlings, and thus got within the square, when they commenced stabbing and slashing, doing terrible execution. At close quarters with the cold steel the troops were no match for these powerful savages, who would dodge the bayonets, or turn them aside with their shields, and then deliver two or three spear thrusts before the man armed with the bayonet could recover. Another point in their favour was the poor quality of the steel of which the cutlasses and bayonets opposed to them were made. If these weapons touched a bone they bent like hoop iron without piercing the body, whereas the spears and swords of the Arabs, sharp as razors, cut through bone, sinew, and every obstacle without turning the edge of the weapon. The rebels, too, made better use of their weapons than the troops. When they gave a thrust it was invariably directed against a vital part, whereas many a soldier, after missing his man at short range, too often struck at him in such a way as to inflict only slight flesh wounds. Two officers of the Black Watch, however, killed several of the enemy with their claymores, running the blades well up to the hilt, and one of the finest and strongest men in the regiment, big Jamie Adams, with nineteen others of his company, having charged up to the edge of the ravine wherein the bulk of the Arabs had been lying concealed, opposed steel to steel, fighting with a prowess superior even to the sinewy strength of the swarthy savages opposed to them. He and colour-sergeant Donald Fraser made over a dozen of their adversaries bite the dust before they fell from loss of blood due to wounds

from spears thrown at them. Another man of the same company, Private George Drummond, who came out alive with three wounds, was, whilst bayonetting an Arab, cut over the head by a horseman armed with a huge cross-hilted sword. Drummond's helmet and the swerving of the horse saved him, and though partially stunned, he instantly rallied, and drove his bayonet through the body of his assailant, who was afterwards identified as Sheikh Mohammed, a cousin of Osman Digna. Whilst Drummond was tugging at his bayonet to withdraw it, another Arab, the fallen sheikh's wakil, or steward, rushed at him spear in hand, but was shot down by the Highlander's chum, Kelly. Kelly fell himself the next minute, and out of the twenty men who went up to the edge of the ravine, only three came back alive.

The breaking up of the square by the recoil of the York and Lancaster regiment threw both the Marines and the Black Watch into confusion, and the square no longer existed. The enemy pressed upon the front as well as on the right flank, dashing in upon what was now a confused mass of troops, spearing many and themselves falling victims to bayonet and bullet wounds. In spite of the efforts of the officers the whole body of troops now began to retreat. The Naval Brigade, hemmed in, had no time to use their guns, and, as the mass fell back, they were compelled to leave these behind them. The men who stuck to the guns to the last and tried to drag them off, suffered exceptionally, three officers—Montessor, Almack, and Houston-Stewart—being among the killed. As the wild ruck of reckless savage Arabs dashed onwards, the Highlanders and York and Lancaster men continued pressing on the rear, and for a few moments the scene suggested a strange resemblance to that at El Teb, but there was this difference. The Highlanders and their comrades were retreating like lions at bay. Several hundreds of them and the Marines fought back to back, firing and retiring in excellent order, and to their great coolness and steadiness is largely due the final success of the day. Though retreating, the men literally mowed down their assailants. In the smoke and dust of the battle, amid the bright gleam of their myriad spear-heads, the semi-nude, brown-skinned, black, shaggy-haired warriors were falling down in scores.

All this time Buller's Brigade, 500 yards on the right rear, were moving forward in perfect order, and advancing to the assistance of Davis's broken square, with the steadiness of troops on a parade ground. In front of them were the guns of the Marine artillery, and these opened fire upon the Arabs who were assailing Davis, but without checking them. Buller's brigade had been assaulted in the same wild furious manner as Davis's, but had replied with a tremendous fire which killed every living being within reach of it. In other words, the enemy never even got near this brigade. Not only did the rank and file calmly and strenuously hold their ground, but the guns inside played havoc among the enemy's ranks, speedily throwing them into hopeless confusion. Altogether, General Redvers Buller handled his brigade splendidly, and his artillery made capital practice, sending shell after shell bursting among the rebels gathered on the ridges.

Upon getting back in line with Buller's steady brigade, and covered by their fire, Davis's Brigade rallied at once and the men very speedily resumed their formation, and, as if determined to retrieve the disorder into which they had been thrown, advanced manfully side by side with Buller's square. So terrible was the fire which the united brigades poured into the enemy that their advance was at length checked, but there was no retreat. Of

all the impetuous Arabs who had surged down, only a few turned face to the rear, nearly the whole being swept away by the deadly fire. On reaching the point where the enemy had charged down upon the leading brigade, the guns which had been abandoned when Davis's square was broken were recovered within a quarter of an hour from the time when they were lost. After the Gatlings had been recaptured the sailors had several chances of turning their fire on the Arabs, and proceeded to do so with telling effect.

Almost at this moment a fresh body of the enemy were seen issuing from a broad, deep, rocky ravine, in which they had been lying concealed, this time in even denser numbers than before. The troops met the new onslaught with the utmost steadiness. It was a repetition of the battle of El Teb, but the charges sustained were made by larger bodies of men, and were even fiercer and more determined than upon that occasion. Of the brave natives who swarmed down upon the British square, few went back; it was for the most part, death or victory with them. The masses melted away under the most terrible fire, leaving a trail of dead bodies behind. Thus the breechloaders prevailed over valour as brilliant and heroic as ever was witnessed. The thorough defeat of the Arabs in this part of the battle field was completed by the cavalry, who, sweeping round the left flank, dismounted, and poured volley after volley into the retreating enemy. The latter, in fact, had attempted to rally and take the troops in flank, but the sudden movement by the cavalry defeated their object. This check effected, the square advanced to the edge of the plateau, below which extended a broad ravine. Here numbers of tribesmen were to be seen retreating rapidly, some up the opposite side, others along its depths. A hot shell and rifle fire scattered them still more, but even then there was no sign of panic in the retreat of these gallant savages, for they halted and fired from time to time with perfect coolness. The battle was virtually over, yet it was dangerous to move about the battle field, owing to the wounded natives lying thickly among the bushes. They positively refused to accept quarter, and such as were able continued loading and firing at any one who came near them, or thrust with their spears at all who passed by. In the bush, too, were many unwounded men, who, when they saw an opportunity, leapt to their feet and attacked any soldiers who came sufficiently close. The infantry halted after the ravine was cleared, and the cavalry were ordered to clear the bushes. During the fight they had been echeloned on the left flank, and were about to charge upon the enemy who were assaulting Davis's retreating brigade when the rally of the latter on reaching Buller's square rendered cavalry action unnecessary.

At half-past ten General Graham re-formed his troops preparatory to advancing on the wells of Tamai, which were about three miles from the battle field, and the capture of which was the immediate object of the expedition. Parties of the enemy were visible on all points of the horizon, equally loth, as at El Teb, to quit the spot where they had maintained such a gallant struggle. When after a short rest the troops resumed their advance, the enemy gathered again, and it seemed as if they intended to renew the battle. A halt was ordered, and the guns opened fire on the distant foe. The latter attempted to reply with their rifles, but the distance was too great. The gunners continuing to shell the enemy with neat precision, the troops soon had the satisfaction of seeing the hostile groups break up and disperse, the greater part taking to the hills. Ere long a few scattered



RECAPTURE OF THE GUNS AT THE BATTLE OF TAMASI.

bodies of retreating Arabs were the sole remains of the forces with which Osman Digna had so confidently awaited an attack. But though the enemy fell back to the hills, they made off slowly and sullenly, some of them walking leisurely as if sauntering down the bazaar, with their arms folded or swinging by their side. Often they were shot down as they thus withdrew, but that did not deter others from following their example, or make them increase their speed. When the 2nd Brigade came up, and, after marching a little more than a mile, reached the wells about midday, only a few straggling parties of the foe were visible. As they disappeared into the mountains men and horses—hot, dusty, thirsty, and weary—refreshed themselves at the springs. The force then moved forward to Osman's camp. This was found to be entirely deserted, and while Buller's Brigade remained to set fire to it, Davis's Brigade was marched back to the zereba. Scattered groups of the enemy again made their appearance, and fired at long distances at the retiring column, but carefully abstained from any nearer approach.

The British loss in this battle comprised Major Aitken, Captain Ford, and Lieutenants Montessor, Almack, and Houston-Stewart, besides a hundred and five men killed, and eight officers and about a hundred and twenty men wounded. The Arabs were estimated to have numbered between ten and twelve thousand, and more than a fourth of them remained on the field. Six hundred were counted at the spot where the square was broken, and where the united brigades had advanced they lay in heaps as the Egyptians did on the scene of General Baker's defeat. Alongside them were the skeletons of the men belonging to the black regiment which had been annihilated some three months before, and was now so amply avenged. No prisoners were taken during the fight, any such proceeding being impossible, for while life lasted the wounded Arabs would lie still, rarely uttering a cry or a moan, but watching their chance to strike with knife or spear at the victors as they advanced. For the latter it was like walking among wounded vipers. At Osman Digna's camp three wounded Arabs killed a Marine, and another wounded man drew a knife and attempted to stab General Stewart, while the General's aide-de-camp was offering him water. Soldiers who fell, even for a few minutes, into the enemy's hands, were, as at the battle of El Teb, dreadfully cut and gashed by sword and spear, but not otherwise disfigured.

Some wounded rebels, who were subsequently brought into Suakim, stated that Osman Digna himself was in Tamanieb during the first part of the battle, but on seeing that his forces were being speedily beaten, he retreated to the hills to some holy spot, in order to pray for the success of the tribes.

At the zereba near the battle field a dismal night was passed. The air was full of melancholy sounds. First there were the low moanings of wounded men and animals; then came the volleys fired over the dead, who were buried near the camp; then, later on, parties of Arabs could be seen in the moonlight, wandering over the field, and giving vent to the most heartrending cries of grief as they came across the heaps of dead and dying. These sounds continued all night long, with scarce a minute's interruption, but in the morning none of the enemy were visible, all having dispersed before daybreak. The great event of the morning was the completion of the conflagration of Osman Digna's camp. The British force marched out of the zereba at eight o'clock, and, penetrating some distance beyond the point reached on the previous evening, arrived at another and larger village. The cavalry, who were in front, were guided by

an Egyptian soldier, who had been a prisoner with the enemy since the surrender of Tokar, and had come in during the night. This second village was about two miles beyond the one reached the day before, and was called Tamasi. Immense quantities of Krupp cannon ammunition were found there, with other loot, most of which had been captured at Baker Pasha's defeat. One gun and four carriages were discovered, the other guns having probably been buried in the ground.

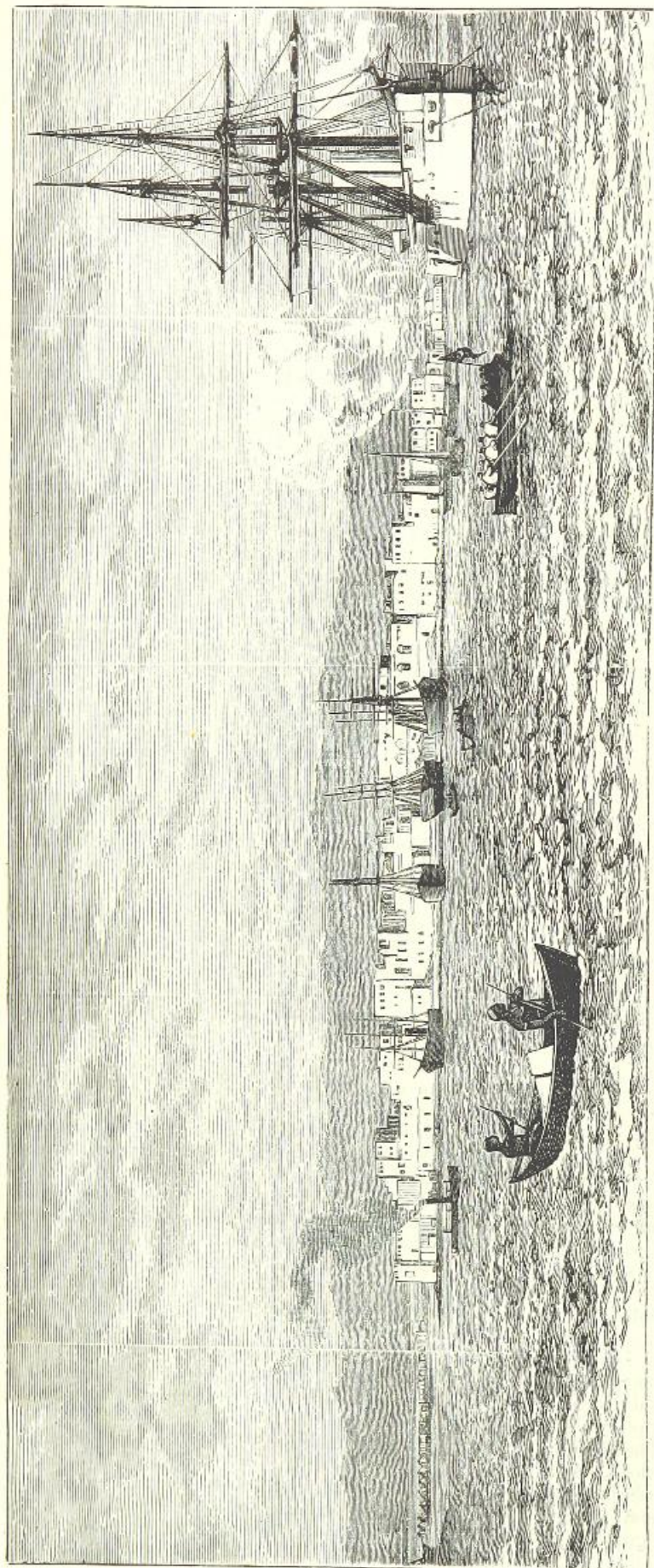
Parties of the Engineers were told off to complete the destruction of the rebel camp, which extended over a level plain of about two miles in length, surrounded almost on all sides by naked rocks. The encampment, including the huts and stores, was speedily ablaze in scores of different places, the red flames shooting up to a great height, and volumes of smoke obscuring the view between the camp and the distant hills. A curious feature of the scene was the explosion of the magazines, containing about 600,000 rifle cartridges looted at Baker Pasha's defeat, besides a large amount of Krupp and machine-gun ammunition. When this magazine ignited a fusillade commenced which lasted without intermission for half an hour. Away in the hills the remnants of the Arab host were watching how the glory of Osman Digna, the invincible, was vanishing in smoke. They offered no opposition beyond a few dropping shots, by which one man of the King's Royal Rifles was wounded. The camp destroyed, the order was sounded to retire towards Suakim, and the return march of the army commenced, past the wall of dreary naked rock, and through a labyrinth of sand hills and dry river courses. After twenty minutes' marching the encampment of the night preceding the battle was reached, when the sick and wounded were put into ambulances and on stretchers for conveyance to Suakim and thence to Suez. From Tamai the troops brought back Osman Digna's standard, together with Tewfik Bey's standard, captured at the time that Tewfik Bey and his valiant band were annihilated.

On March 17, Admiral Hewett issued another proclamation which ran as follows:—

"I, the English Governor and General civil and military of Suakim, make known that whoever will bring in the rebel Osman, the murderer, who has by his lies caused the blood of the tribes to be spilt at El Teb and Tamanieb, alive or dead, shall receive five thousand dollars reward."

This proclamation excited a strong feeling of indignation amongst a certain section of the Liberal party in England, and three days later the admiral, acting under instructions from the Government, withdrew the objectionable document. Reports from spies seemed to establish the fact that Osman Digna had only a few followers remaining with him, and that he was moving his camp daily in the hills, so as to render it difficult for the cavalry to follow him. He was said to be drawing his supplies of grain from Tokar. Some native messengers sent out to him with one of Admiral Hewett's proclamations remained a couple of days in his camp, during which time more than a hundred wounded rebels died. They gave the proclamation to some sheikhs, who took it to Osman, saying that if it was good for them to learn what it contained he would tell them. Osman having read the proclamation, burned it, after telling the sheikhs that it contained nothing but the usual order from the Governor for them to surrender.

General Graham resolved upon making another attempt to bring Osman Digna to bay, and marched out from Suakim on Tuesday March 25, with two infantry brigades. The eleven miles march to Baker's zereba, where the first halt was made, was a most exhaustive one.



SUAKIM FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR.

There were many cases of sunstroke, and altogether more than a quarter of the force fell out, the rear of the column resembling a routed army. Much of this falling out was ascribed to the men having dined and drunk copious draughts of canteen beer just before starting, but a night's rest so far brought them round, that with the exception of some half dozen they were able to resume duty the next morning. A body of friendly natives with Sheikh Morghani, accompanied the troops. General Graham on the morning of the 26th, sent on General Stewart with the entire cavalry force, comprising the 10th and 19th Hussars, the Mounted Infantry, and the native auxiliaries to determine the whereabouts and strength of the enemy's position, with orders to fall back without fighting as soon as this was ascertained. For the first five miles the advance was over a sandy plain sparsely dotted with mimosa, but on reaching the foot-hills, the ground was found strewn with sharp fragments of splintered stone that lamed several of the horses. Here a heliographic station was established on a conical isolated hill, and the advance was continued, small parties of Arabs, mostly on foot, but some half-dozen on fleet-footed dromedaries being now observed on the front and flanks. These retired as the troops advanced. Half-a-dozen native auxiliaries were sent to the front with instructions to tell the Arabs that the English troops had no quarrel with them, and would not injure anyone unless fired upon, whilst if Osman Digna would come in and surrender, his life would be spared. They were, however, distanced by the enemy's scouts, and had no opportunity of even shouting their message of peace.

After another five miles had been traversed the cavalry found themselves well among the hills, which rose up on every side, the loftier peaks being between 3000 and 4000 feet high. Here a second signal station was placed on a boldly-defined hill, from the top of which could be seen the enemy's position at the foot of a long range of white hills, streaked with quartz, a little over two miles distant. Behind were the wells and running waters of Tamanieb Khor. Heaps of stones, like Highland cairns, probably monuments and graves to departed sheikhs, marked the ridges for miles, and stood clearly out against the sky. Major Chermiside and two natives went within half a mile to try and talk with the Arabs, but his overtures were received with a volley from their Remingtons, which in an instant put to flight all hope of their submission. It was now about half-past one o'clock, and in a few

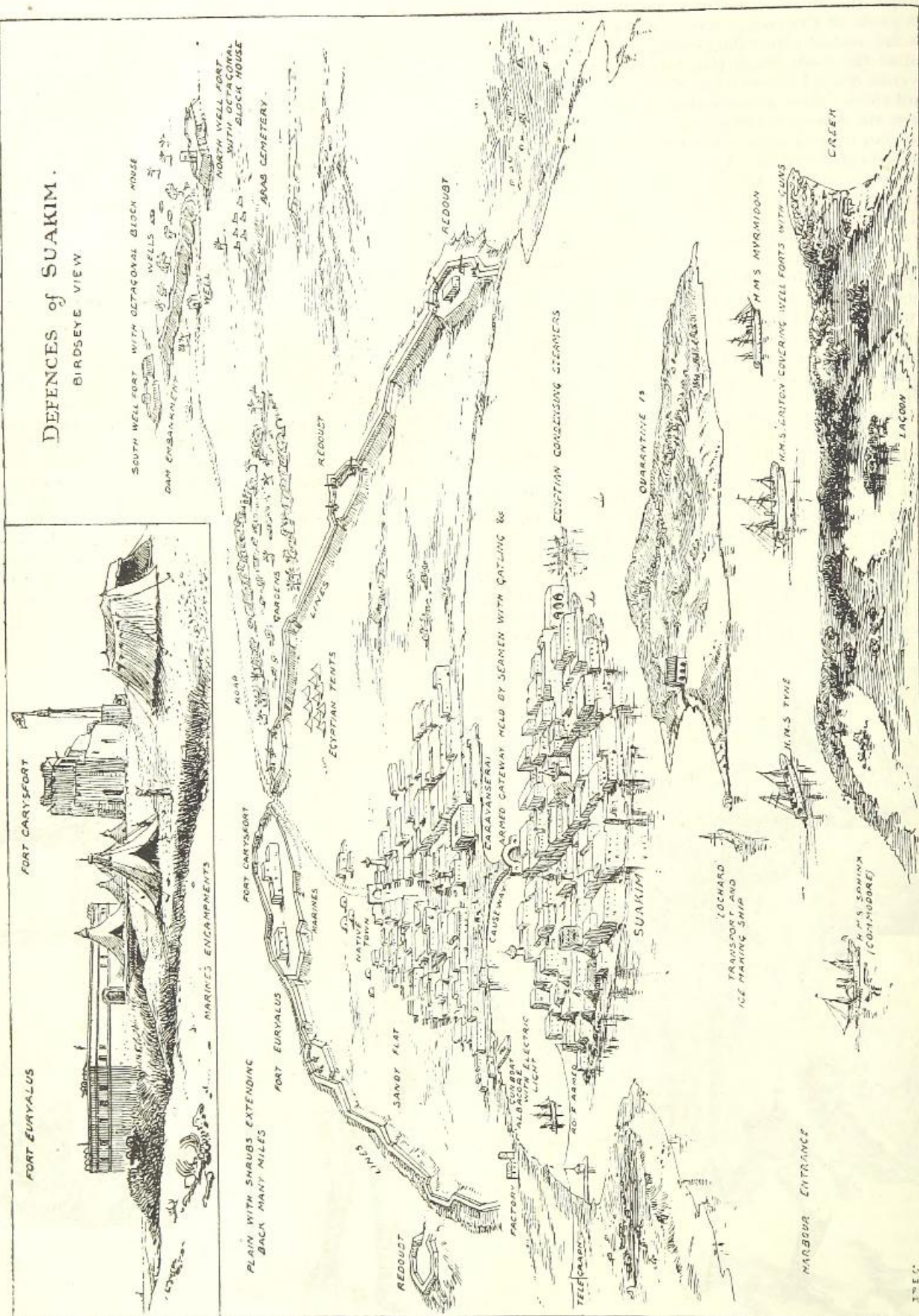
minutes the Mounted Infantry, pressing up to within 700 yards of the enemy, who was keeping up a sharp rifle fire, replied with telling effect. Several volleys were fired at the Arabs where they had gathered thickest on the crest of the hill, and a few of them were seen to drop. Until three o'clock a lively skirmish was carried on between the Mounted Infantry and the rebels, the latter soon showing very little of their swarthy forms, but firing from behind the rocks. The object of the reconnaissance having been secured, General Stewart directed the withdrawal of the troops. As the Mounted Infantry fell back at a slow pace, the Arabs jeered at them; but, all the same, they seemed chary either of showing themselves in force, or pushing the troops as they retired, and though having a very strong position, they displayed little of their former eagerness for battle. General Stewart and his troops returned to the first signal station, and were there met by General Buller, who had advanced with the Gordon Highlanders and Irish Fusiliers. The news from the front had also the effect of bringing General Graham and his staff out; and, in the afternoon, orders were issued directing the whole force, excepting the York and Lancaster regiment, and sick or invalid men, to move forward together with all necessary supplies, and join General Buller.

At six o'clock—a few minutes after sunrise, on the following day, the march of the entire force began towards the enemy's position, General Buller's brigade leading. The troops, now that they believed Osman Digna to be close at hand, were impatient to settle him and to finish the campaign. The column marched up the valley along the bed of a dry and winding watercourse, thus enabling the guns to avoid the broken stony ground. The cavalry

reconnoitred all round in their usual intelligent fashion. As the troops advanced, every distant knoll was crowned in turn by cavalry scouts suddenly showing on the skyline. At a few minutes after seven they became engaged with the enemy. The Mounted Infantry at once pushed forward, and soon, by dint of well-directed volleys at long range, forced the rebels back. At length the Arabs halted on a line of rocky heights, with precipitous mountains on either flank. The small guns were at once advanced, and brought to bear upon the position, and two rounds were fired. The shells flew too high to do any damage, but were quite sufficient for the enemy, who promptly disappeared. From this time forward the Arabs fired only distant shots from neighbouring heights, which did no harm.

The troops had now gained the village of Tamanieb, which showed evident traces of recent occupation by Osman Digna's force. There were numerous signs that men and cattle had retreated to the mountains, where it was impossible to follow them, and as nothing further could be done, General Graham ordered the huts to be fired. The troopers set to work with a will, and in a quarter of an hour some three hundred huts were sending up long forks of flame and volumes of smoke to show the Arabs that English soldiers had actually put their feet in the village of Tamanieb. It was now one o'clock, and the pursuit of Osman's force or the capture of that rebel chief being regarded as equally impracticable, the General commanding directed the troops to return to Suakim. A start was soon made, and in a long sinuous line of cavalry, infantry, and baggage animals, the forces moved through and out of the valley and back towards the sea. The campaign was at an end.





CHAPTER XII.

The rebels round Suakim defeated but not dispersed.—Admiral Hewett starts for Abyssinia to negotiate for the relief of Kassala.—Gordon appeals for Zebehr or the Turks to be sent.—Berber invested and Korosko threatened.—Concentration of Troops at Assouan.—Major Kitchener's explorations and outposts.—The Surrender of Slaten Bey and Saleh Bey.—Mr. Cuzzi captured at Sherig.—Blue Jackets to the front.—Fall of Berber.—The Treaty with Abyssinia.—Ghia and Gadaveef capitulate.—Fighting at Suakim.—Wavering of friendly Arabs and mutiny of Turkish battalion.—Victory over the rebels by the Mudir of Dongola.—The defence of Khartoum.—Operations of Gordon's armoured flotilla.—Scarcity of provisions.—Long letter from Gordon on the situation.—Declares he will not leave Khartoum.—Parliament votes £300,000 for a relief expedition.—Lord Wolseley appointed to the command.—The military preparations.—Departure of Lords Wolseley and Northbrook for Egypt.—Gordon gains a great victory.—The Arab camp captured and the Commander-in-Chief slain.

THE departure of the British forces from Suakim, after the barren victories of El Teb and Tamai, at once dissatisfied the friendly natives and emboldened the Mahdi's partisans. The latter had been defeated but they were by no means conquered, for scarcely had General Graham embarked on board the *Orontes* than they attacked the "friendlies" a few miles outside the town, captured a large number of camels, and gathered in force around the wells of Handoub and Tamanieb, in view of cutting off the water supply of the loyal tribes. Mahmoud Ali, the Fadlab sheikh, who had previously interested himself in the fate of Sinkat, took prompt measures to oppose the rebels, and on April 11, the meagre garrison left at Suakim after General Graham's departure, was reinforced by Colonel Chermide's battalion of Egyptian troops. The *Briton* and the *Ranger*, anchored in the harbour, were moreover, kept cleared for action, and preparations were made for landing marines and blue jackets in the event of an attack.

Already on April 2, Admiral Hewett had started for Massowah in view of negotiating with King Johannes of Abyssinia, for the relief of Kassala and the other beleaguered strongholds south of Khartoum. This able officer, who was gazetted as a Rear-Admiral in 1878, when only forty-four years of age, had already performed many distinguished services in different parts of the world. His conspicuous gallantry at the siege of Sebastopol and at the battle of Inkermann, had won him the highly prized Victoria Cross; and for his share in the Ashantee war, when he commanded the naval brigade at the battle of Amoaful and the capture of Coomassie—he had been made a Knight of the Bath. At the time of his departure for Massowah, en route for the Abyssinian frontier, the situation of Kassala was becoming most critical. The Hadendowa tribe was besieging the city, the Bashi-Bazouks, forming a part of the garrison, were deserting, and the governor was constantly pleading for British relief. The Admiral had in fact barely reached Massowah before the telegraph wires were cut and the news arrived that Kassala was completely invested.

While Sir William Hewett was hastening with Mason Bey, the governor of Massowah, and an escort of 200 Bashi-Bazouks, towards Adowa, where King Johannes was awaiting his arrival, Zebehr Pasha, the old slave hunter of Khartoum, and now detained at Cairo by the authorities, received a despatch from General Gordon, appointing him assistant-Governor General of the Soudan. "You will advise me on your arrival at Berber," wrote Gordon in the most confident strain, "and if possible I will send you two steamers. These with the other two steamers at Berber, you will provide with iron parapets in order to protect the troops on board. Take also as many as you can of the Galyieen tribe, and make frequent

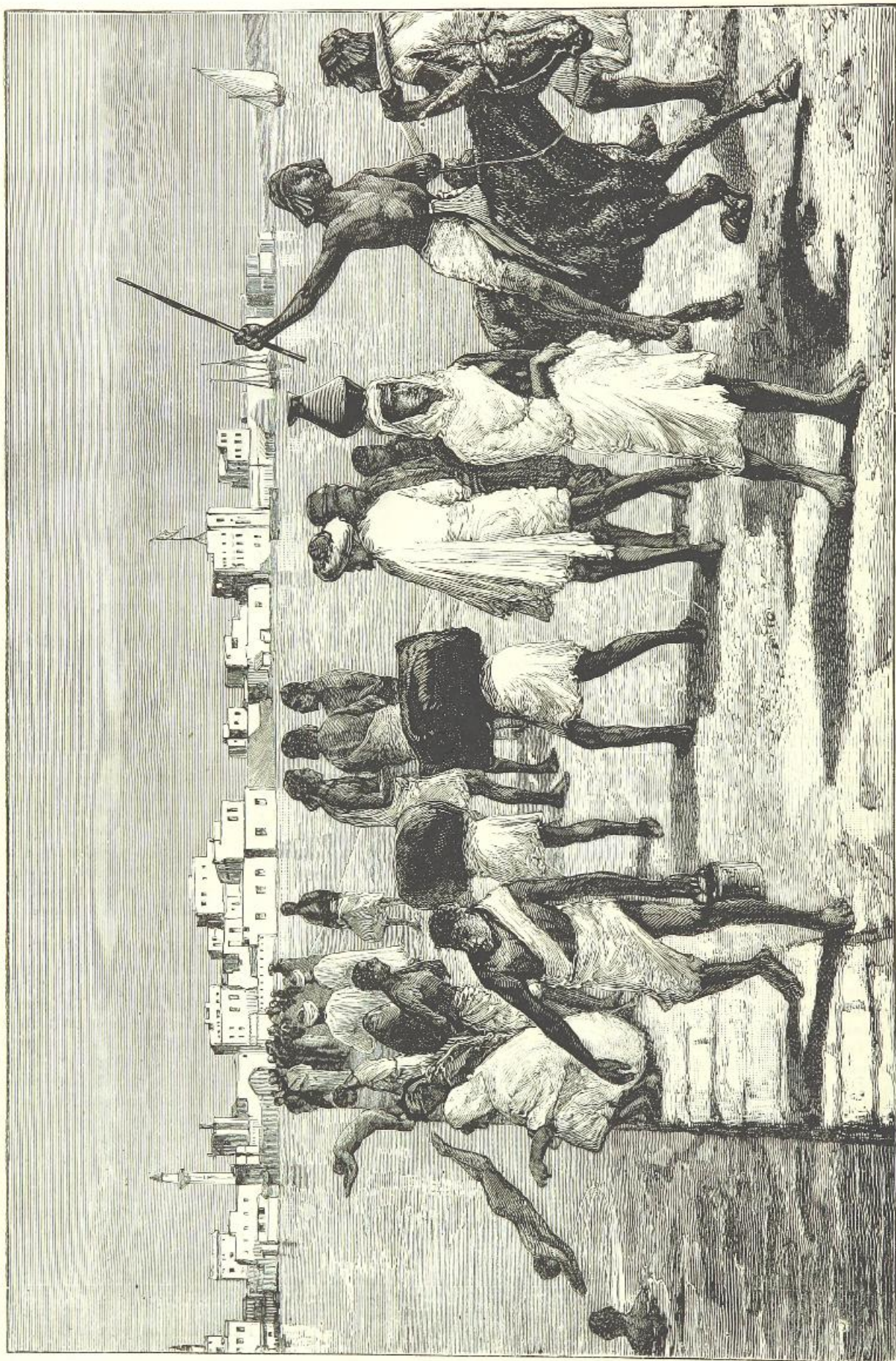


REAR-ADMIRAL SIR W. HEWETT.

skirmishes but do not expose yourself." Zebehr was not disposed or perhaps not allowed to accept this appointment, which came most unexpectedly—for Sir Evelyn Baring had previously informed General Gordon that the old dealer in human flesh and bones would in no wise be permitted to proceed to Khartoum. Nevertheless the appeals for his presence were constant and pressing. Colonel Stewart added his own solicitations to those of his superior, and Mr. Power wrote that without Zebehr it would be impossible to beat the rebels. While asking for the appointment of his old foe General Gordon furnished some information respecting his own position at Khartoum, and in a letter to Sir Samuel Baker dated April 8, he mentioned that he was provisioned for five months, but that he was hemmed in by some "500 determined, and 2,000 tag-rag Arabs."

At this date Gordon had learnt from Sir Evelyn Baring that the British government did not intend to send British troops to clear the route to Berber, but that negotiations were proceeding with the Arabs for opening the road. Gordon rightly attached little or no value to these negotiations, and in default of British troops he suggested the despatch of Turkish soldiers. "Do you think," he asked Sir Samuel Baker, "that if an appeal were made to the millionaires of England and the United States £200,000 would be available? Herewith you might obtain the permission of the Sultan of Turkey to lend us two or three thousand Nizams, and send them to Berber. With these we would not only settle our affairs at Khartoum, but also do for the False Prophet, in whose collapse the Sultan is necessarily interested."

On April 16, a week after the dispatch of the letter quoted above, General Gordon telegraphing, this time to Sir Evelyn Baring, said: "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



MASSOWAH FROM THE SECOND ISLAND, SHEWING THE CAUSEWAY.

can, and if I can suppress the rebellion I shall do so. If I cannot I shall return to the Equator and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Senaar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will eventually be compelled to smash up the Mahdi, under great difficulties, if you would retain peace in Egypt."

The plan of retreating to the Congo, which Gordon mentioned in this despatch, was the only chance now left to the defenders of Khartoum if they remained unassisted. They had already been trying to run a steamer through the rebel lines to Berber, but the fire was so severe that the vessel had to return on April 6. According to Mr. Power, the city had become the centre of a vast rebel camp. The enemy's tents were within sight and their bullets constantly struck the palace. On the other hand, the plain in front of the fortifications had been mined in view of coping with an advance; and an attack upon Omdurman had been successfully repulsed. Still it was discouraging to learn that the store of Krupp ammunition was running short.

Not only had a retreat upon Berber now become impracticable, but attention was soon drawn to the position of Berber itself. Hussein Pasha, the Khalifa or governor there, telegraphed on April 20 that the population was assuming a threatening attitude, and that the town would shortly be surrounded on all sides by the rebels. A council was thereupon held at the British agency in Cairo, and Sir Evelyn Baring, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Mr. Egerton recommended sending a mixed expeditionary force of English and Egyptian troops to the relief of the threatened town. On April 25, Mr. Cuzzi, the English agent at Berber, reported that the situation there was desperate, and the Khalifa despatched a second telegram describing the approach of the rebels along both banks of the Nile, amid the lofty palms and umbrageous acacias with which the town is embowered. It had now become impossible to send either telegrams or letters to Khartoum, for all the messengers were obliged to return, finding no means of traversing the rebel lines. On April 28, Mr. Cuzzi reported that he had left Berber for Korosko, and that the Mahdi's partisans were already entering the houses on the south and east of the town. Hussein Pasha Khalifa remained surrounded in the citadel, and it was rumoured that the rebels, not content with investing Berber, also contemplated a dash upon Assouan, in the hope of finding loot there. At Korosko, which they were expected to attack on their way, the alarm became so great that thousands of people fled northward. More fortunate than the refugees from Shendy, who were massacred by the Arabs, when their vessel ran upon a sandbank at El Baala, these Korosko fugitives ultimately reached Assouan in safety.

The critical state of affairs in the Soudan had by this time roused the British government to some sense of duty. On April 23, Earl Granville telegraphed to Mr. Egerton at Cairo, instructing him to forward a cypher message to General Gordon asking what would "be the force necessary to secure his removal, its amount, character, the route for access to Khartoum, and time of operation." Early in May active war preparations were commenced in England, and on the 10th of the month the military authorities in Cairo received instructions to prepare for the despatch in October of an expedition for the relief of the Soudanese capital. Twelve thousand camels were ordered to be purchased and held in readiness for the forward march.

But if Khartoum, defended by General Gordon, was able to wait for relief until the autumn, such was not the

case with Berber and Korosko, and in the hope of preventing them from falling into the power of the rebels the Egyptian government immediately dispatched 1400 men to Assouan. Dongola also claimed attention, for on May 12 the Mudir, Mohammed Hussein Khalifa, Sheikh of the Ababdeh and Bisharee tribes, telegraphed that a great panic prevailed among the inhabitants, and that he had only four companies of troops and 200 Bashi-Bazouks at his disposal. In reply to his appeals for help, he was informed that no reinforcements would be sent to him, and that if his forces did not admit of his making a stand against the rebels, he and his men had better withdraw from the town. The Mudir, who subsequently figured so prominently in connection with the Gordon relief expedition, pluckily declined to retreat, and again applied for reinforcements, declaring that if his request were granted he would be able to reconquer all the disaffected provinces. Finally, on May 16, a half-battalion of Egyptian troops, under the command of Colonel Trotter, and subordinate English officers, was sent by steamboat and barge from Assouan to Wady Halfa in view of supporting the Mudir's forces at Dongola.



MAJOR H. H. KITCHENER, R.E.

A considerable number of men had now been gathered together at Assouan, and here all the military operations were combined. Curiously enough the Cairo authorities exercised but little sway beyond this picturesquely situated town which rises amid crags and palms on the right bank of the Nile almost in front of the famous Isle of Elephantine, the furthest limit of Egypt under the Roman dominion. Assouan now became the starting-point for the relief of Korosko and Dongola, and a few days after the dispatch of Colonel Trotter and his Egyptians to Wady Halfa, where they ejected the Bashi-Bazouks from the fortress and took possession of all the arms and ammunition, Major H. H. Kitchener set out for Korosko on a reconnoitring journey.

This able officer, who rendered such good service during the Soudan war, was born in 1850, and obtained his first commission in the Royal Engineers in 1871. Prior to his Egyptian experiences he had taken part in the topographical survey of Western Palestine, and he was admirably fitted for the task of exploring the Korosko desert, which was that originally assigned to him. Appointed early in the month of May he had succeeded, three weeks later, in securing the services of over 2000 Arabs, and establishing a chain of outposts extending to the Red Sea, in view of stemming the tide of the rebellion.

However, if the revolt was prevented from spreading to the northern limits of the Soudan, the Mahdi's partisans had achieved several successes in the south. Already on May 16, it was reported at Assouan that Slatin Bey, who commanded the stronghold of El Fashar in Darfour for the Khedive, had been obliged to surrender early in the month of April, and on May 27 a letter came to hand from the luckless commander, in which he said:—"After contending against the rebels for two years, and after exhausting my supplies of provisions and ammunition, I was reduced at last to the expedient of casting copper bullets, which had no effect upon the enemy. Having waited in vain for the assistance which I had repeatedly applied for, I at length surrendered in order to avoid further bloodshed." The fall of El Fashar had, moreover, been followed by that of Mesalamia on the Blue Nile, where Saleh Bey, the commander, surrendered fifty shiploads of food, seventy boxes of cartridges, 2020 rifles and a steamer, the *Mehemet Ali*. At the same time as this bad news came to hand a Berber refugee reported the capture of Mr. Cuzzi, at Sheriz, on the road to Korosko. The Sheikh Hassan, nephew of the Khalifa of Berber, who had accompanied the English agent in his flight, was allowed to proceed on his way, but Mr. Cuzzi himself was sent to Kordofan, where, to save his life, he had to turn Mussulman and profess a belief in the divine mission of the Mahdi.

Meanwhile a vigorous defence was kept up at Khartoum. Mr. Power wrote to *The Times* newspaper on April 28:—"Yesterday and to-day the rebels came down to a village opposite and fired heavily on the Palace. We returned the fire with artillery and musketry, and on both the occasions the Arabs soon retreated. There was no loss on our side. The town is quiet. Over half the population before the siege began went over to the rebels, thus weeding out all bad characters. General Gordon is issuing rations to the poor. Food is very dear. We have corn and biscuits for about four months. General Gordon has issued paper money, as our treasure is still at Berber. The merchants accept it as money, and all the arrears to the soldiers can be thus paid off. General Gordon has sent emissaries to offer to all the slaves of the rebels their freedom if they abandon their masters and come in. A messenger from Syud Mahomet Osman, of Kassala, who is an Emir of Mecca and chief among the Mussulmans in the Soudan, has come in bringing a letter. The Syud says he has beaten the rebels around Kassala, and he tells General Gordon to be of good heart and he and all his men will come to his relief. In such respect is this man held that the rebels did not dare to stop the bearer of the letter."

In reference to the defences of the town Mr. Power added, that besides such obstacles as crows-feet, broken glass, wire entanglements and *chevaux de frise*, there were then three rows of torpedoes or percussion mines around the lines. These caused great loss of life among the Arabs at each attack; and, moreover, Colonel Stewart effectually kept them at bay with his splendid gunnery. On

May 7 he drove them out of their principal position with a couple of well-directed shots from a Krupp 20-pounder; but three weeks later he was, unfortunately, wounded by the rebel fire while working a mitrailleuse at the palace battery, and was disabled for a time.

We have a picturesque description of the daily life at Khartoum at this period of the siege, in the narrative of the Egyptian soldier to whom we have previously referred. "You would like to know the story of our lives from day to day," he said, to the *Daily News* military correspondent at Korti, "but every day was like yesterday and yesterday and to-day like to-morrow; therefore perhaps I may not tell you correctly in order as things occurred. Who could? There were days and nights of watching; we were like dogs guarding sheepfolds from the wolf or hyæna; but we were not down-hearted. Gordon kept saying to us, 'Patience, the English are coming—are coming. God watches over you.' He was a good man. 'My faith in God never fails,' he said; 'neither let yours.' In the morning the band would play to him early as he used to sit in the kiosque you will remember across the road at the wall, over the Nile. He took his coffee there; he then walked up and down on the top of his house. After this he commenced the business of the day in the rooms of the first storey of the Palace. Many officials now visited him; among others the big European Doctor, Macolopo Bey, the Austrian and French Consuls, Giorgio Demetrio (the Doctor), the Mudir of the Mudirieh, Ali Jeleb, and the Vakeel Mahomet Abdullah. The former stayed to the last; the other was killed with Gordon. Then came the chief butchers and bakers. Often a woman visited him called Zenoba. She was very wealthy; she used to pay into the Mudireah some sixty or seventy thousand dollars at a time; lent to Government on Gordon's security or note of hand. She owned many shops, mills, and nuggars. She was an Egyptian, wife of Hadj Mahomet, wood-turner. Suleiman Esyah, too, a chief merchant in Khartoum, used to lend money. He occupied two houses in the upper market. After this, at midday, Gordon Pasha took his lunch. Business was renewed in the afternoon. At evening time he would ride along the entrenchments from Blue to White Nile. The enemy were always firing in a desultory way. By accident people used to be hit day after day.

"Soldiers lined the trenches all day and night. There were four guns there, two pointing towards Bahr Abeh, one facing from the iron gate near the cemetery, one facing the village of Burdi. Of the crowds of blacks you speak of living in the poor quarters of Khartoum Gordon made soldiers. All men were compelled to carry arms, regular soldiers got rations of dhoora, the others got Government biscuits.

"As it was at the time of the *Tou el Kebeah* (great flood); as it will be at El Achrah (last day); as it has often been when in cities of the earth enemies have been knocking at the gate without, they bought and sold; they married and were given in marriage; yes, there were the usual nuptial rejoicings—the brides soon, alas, to be sold into slavery! Mashallah! It was their kismet. There were the same gatherings round fires you remember witnessing when the *Ihrunnahgah* (dancing girls) danced in the middle their ghan-ah-ghat to the tune of the *terbukut*. The festivities and feasting took place nightly. The Soudanese are a light-hearted people even when a cloud hangs over them. You would have thought nothing was going amiss. It is true they believed the English were coming.

"We had still tobacco and shoes, for there were shoemakers in the city. We strolled when off duty through

the bazaar as usual. Some would gamble with dominoes; some drink merissa, and the young men would dress to please the young girls—with cane under arm and cigarette in mouth. Bargains would be struck, and houses sold, as if the end was not. I am told it has been so with great cities in time of siege. It was so, a Jew told me, with his city in Syria. Do not blame me when I dwell on this: I am a different man. Have I not lost a wife—I had only one—and children? With the young girls, too, there was plaiting of hair and anointing with butter, and ornamenting necks, ankles, and arms with gold chains and shells. They would sit in the bazaar selling onions and eggs and melons, and butter and sweetmeats up to the day I left, and would laugh and joke with their admirers, and courtship would go on, like butterflies, heedless.

"Gordon's paper notes went round like cash. They were looked upon as money. They were mostly one-piastre notes; others for five and ten piastres (a real, or guinea) up to 500 piastres. All mine are gone. I spent them in the desert, where I would buy water, a cup for ten piastres. The schools went on as usual, Moham-medan; also at the Genesi, till the priests (Italian) left. We went to mosque, too, crowds of us, and the 'zikkah' was said (in remembrance). We pray for departed spirits—that they may be in luxury. Why not?"

Although General Gordon was at this period quite able to resist the efforts of his assailants, the question of his ultimate safety was attracting increased attention on all sides. Zebehr Pasha, after fruitlessly suggesting that he himself should be appointed hereditary Viceroy of the Soudan with the Khedive for his suzerain—on which condition he engaged to "bring back Gordon safe and sound together with his suite to Cairo"—consented, at Mr. Egerton's request, to dispatch messengers to Khartoum, with letters insisting on Gordon's immediate return, and he at the same time issued a circular note to the rebel chiefs asking them to allow the General and his friends a free passage to Korosko. The French Government profited by the departure of these messengers to send letters of recall to their consul, M. Herbin, a former editor of the scandalous *Bosphore Egyptien*, who had only been in Khartoum since March.

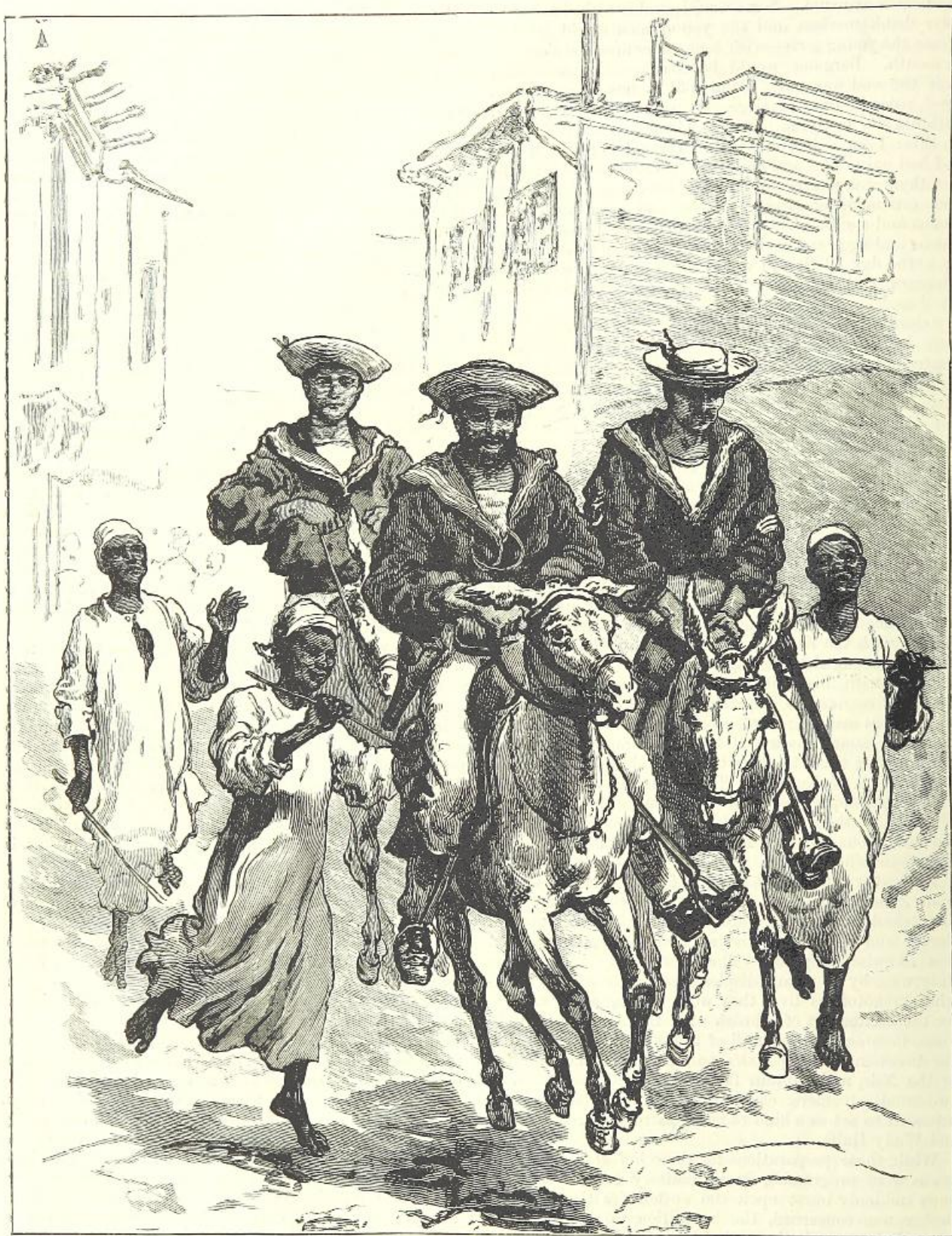
Evidently little confidence was felt in success resulting from Zebehr's mission, for more Egyptian troops were dispatched to Assouan, ostensibly for the relief both of Berber and Khartoum, and an English naval expedition was likewise prepared. The blue-jackets told off for duty were by no means displeased to exchange the somewhat monotonous lives they were leading at Alexandria for the excitement of a brush with the Arabs. Early in June, Commander Hammill of the *Monarch*, proceeded in the direction of Wady Halfa, to report upon the condition of the Nile, and Captain Bedford reached Assouan with two small steamers, each armed with a Gardner gun, intended to act as a kind of naval patrol between Assouan and Wady Halfa.

While these preparations for the relief of the besieged towns were progressing in a desultory sort of way, the news suddenly burst upon the authorities that so far as Berber was concerned, the expedition would arrive too late. Beleaguered since the last week in April, the garrison had resisted the onslaught of the rebels for a month. Major Kitchener had learnt that the large force operating against the town formed part of the Mahdi's regular Dervish army, which was under the strictest discipline, and effectively organised; and other reports stated that it was commanded by the rebel Ameer

Abdullah. The devoted garrison comprised merely 2300 men, with two steamers and one gun. From statements subsequently made by some soldiers who escaped, it appeared that the rebels threw up earthworks around the town, and that skirmishes went on for several days. Finally, at three o'clock on the morning of May 26, a general assault took place. The northern lines were first attacked, and then under cover of the fire, the rebels "rushed" the south side, coming on mainly with sword and spear. The colonel of the Bashi-Bazouks was among the first killed. His men, with the Egyptian infantry and the Fagara Arabs, fought desperately for their lives, but they were soon overpowered by the swarming foe. It was stated at the time that they were all mercilessly put to the sword, and that a similar fate overtook 2000 of the male civilian population, the women and children alone being spared. Subsequently, however, the Mudir of Dongola informed Major Kitchener that 600 officers and soldiers from Berber were in the hands of the rebels, who treated them as slaves. These may have partly been the men who during the fight contrived to cross the river under Said Bey, and who were compelled to lay down their arms after another week's resistance. The statements as to the conduct of the governor, Hussein Pasha Khalifa, were altogether conflicting. While the escaped soldiers declared that the town had fallen through his treachery, some civilian fugitives affirmed that he had been severely wounded in the leg, thrown into prison, and badly treated there. At the time of the capture of the town he held, it appears, £80,000 of government money intended for General Gordon, and this was taken possession of by the rebels.

The news of the fall of Berber rang like a warning note though Europe, and but slight compensation was found in the intelligence that Admiral Hewett had succeeded on June 3, in negotiating a treaty with King Johannes, who promised to relieve the beleaguered strongholds situated near his frontier. General Gordon had strongly deprecated any such intervention, declaring that it was like a big boy getting a little one to fight his battles. However Mason Bey telegraphed on June 16, that the Abyssinian monarch had promised 30,000 men of the Gallas tribe to make a descent along the Khor Baraka; but in point of fact nothing came of it, and before long one learnt that Ghia, near the Abyssinian frontier, had fallen into the hands of the rebels with its garrison. News of the surrender of Gadavef speedily followed.

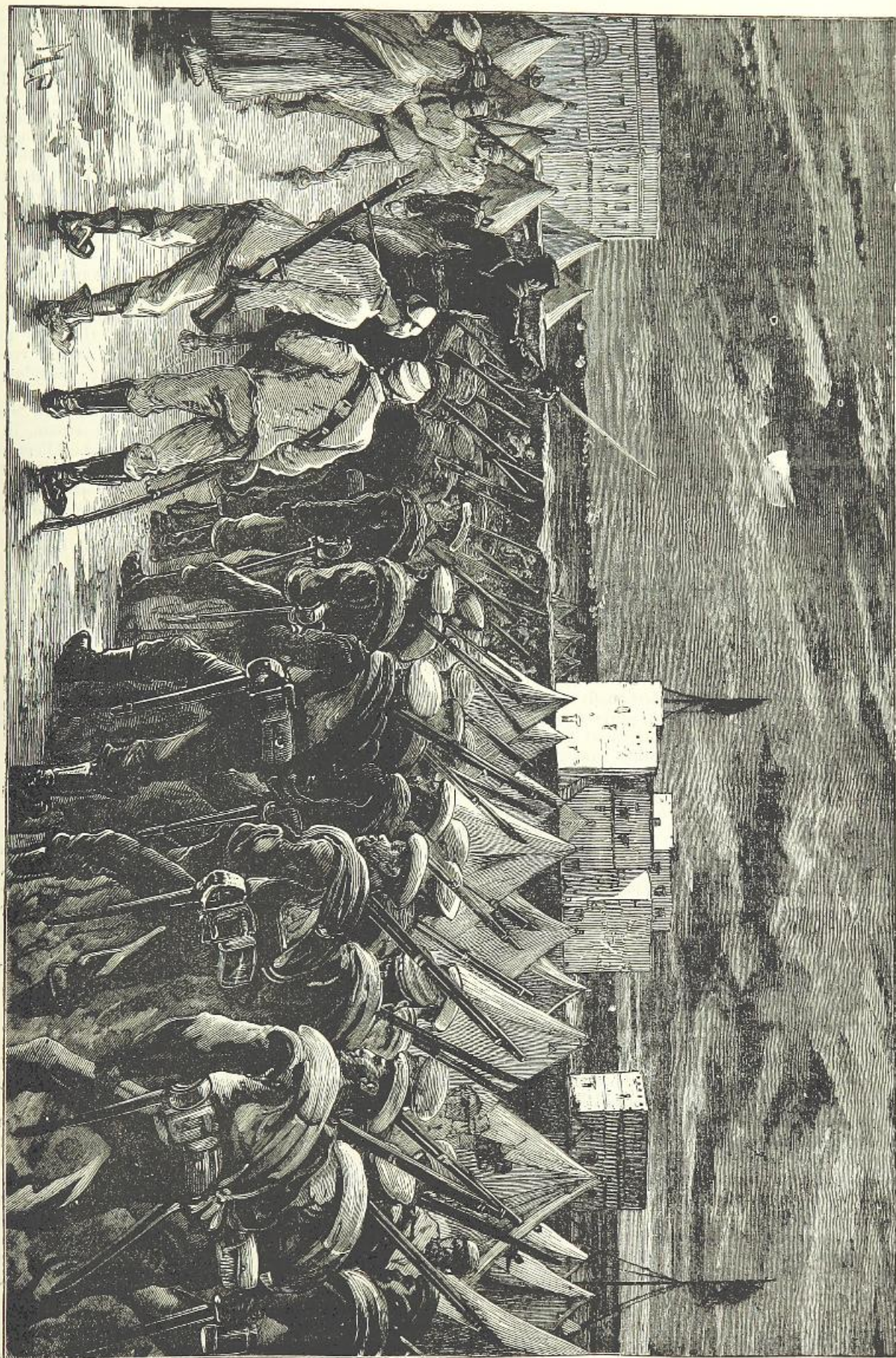
Emboldened no doubt by the fall of Berber, the rebels became more daring in their attacks upon Suakim, where there had been frequent alarms throughout the month of May. On one occasion a number of women belonging to a friendly tribe, were carried off by Osman Digna's men, who, another time, swooped down from their fastnesses in the hills about Tamai, and drove off a thousand head of cattle. These menacing proceedings led to the adoption of efficient measures for the protection of Suakim itself. The town is built partly upon the mainland, and partly on a low island occupied by the Government offices, merchants' storehouses and mosques, and connected by a narrow causeway with the Arab town, where a few square flat-topped buildings rise up amid a number of huts. The ground beyond, enclosed in a semicircular line of earthworks, two miles long, is defended by some old redoubts and by forts Euryalus and Carysfort, erected by the British authorities. Commodore Molyneux, who commanded the squadron in May, originally had the *Sphinx*, the *Briton*, the *Tyne* and the *Myrmidon*, under his orders, but the night attacks became so frequent that the *Albancore* was dispatched to him from Alexandria as a rein-



BRITISH SAILORS ENJOYING A GALLOP.

forcement. This vessel, which was armed with four guns and provided with the electric search light, reached Suakim on May 27, and at once took up a position commanding the approaches to the town and cattle-ground.

On the night of the 28th heavy firing was heard across the plains; and, by means of the search light, the enemy were discovered, whereupon the *Albacore* immediately opened fire and with such good effect that in less than an



LANDING OF THE NAVAL BRIGADE TO REPEL A NIGHT ATTACK AGAINST SUAKIN.

hour the rebels were in full retreat. Forts Euryalus and Carysfort had already been garrisoned with marines, and, as an extra precaution, additional marines and a number of blue-jackets were landed every night. The expediency of this course was soon shown, for the rebels became more and more aggressive, and during the earlier part of June night attacks were of regular occurrence.

Meanwhile the Rabatab tribe, which had carried off Mr. Cuzzi, again threatened Korosko, although a considerable force was stationed there, and fears were entertained that Major Kitchener's Bishareen Arabs, located at the same place, would go over to the enemy. They at first certainly refused to proceed beyond Korosko, or to engage in any kind of warfare; but ultimately the major prevailed upon them to accompany him through the desert on a reconnaissance, which he extended to within two days' journey of the Red Sea. On this occasion hearing that Shamyun, one of the principal rebel leaders, was near Akheimer Wells with a large force trying to induce some loyal Abbabdah to join the Mahdi, the major endeavoured to capture him with the help of the friendly sheikh, Jibran, but Shamyun got wind of the advance and fled precipitately. The major having little confidence in the Bishareen Arabs who accompanied him, did not hazard a pursuit, for fear that his escort might join the rebel ranks.

At this juncture fears were not merely entertained concerning the loyalty of the few Arab tribes, which, for love or money, had so far remained faithful to the Khedive. The Turkish battalion dispatched from Cairo to Upper Egypt fairly mutinied at Assiout on July 16, and, but for the resolution of the English officers, serious consequences might have ensued. The men had been paid up to the end of June, but when ordered to proceed to Assouan, they stipulated for an advance of three months, which was refused. Eventually their officers, with the sanction of the Egyptian government, promised one month's pay in advance on arrival at Assiout. This offer was apparently not tempting enough, for only eighty men reached that town out of two hundred paraded at Cairo. Influenced by a few ringleaders, they immediately refused to embark for Assouan, and informed Colonel Grant that they would seize the ammunition if he did not comply with their demand for a three months' advance. The assistance of the native police was then obtained, and all the ammunition-boxes were transferred from the train to the station. The mutineers did not, however, carry out their threat, but thirty of them bolted to the right bank of the river, where Colonel Grant, accompanied by five native police, eventually found them, installed in the sheikh's house in the village of Beninun. The colonel boldly entered the house, and as the men made a rush for their arms he fired at them with his revolver, wounding two of them. The deserters thereupon deliberately formed in skirmishing order in the open, and fired at their colonel, who meantime quietly returned the fire until the mutineers laid down their arms. They were at once lodged in prison, but their fate seemingly had no terrors for their comrades, who, after remaining quiet on this occasion, thought fit to mutiny the next day. They refused point blank to proceed to Assouan, until twenty-five soldiers of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry appeared on the scene and restored order. The ringleaders having been sent to Cairo, two of them were condemned to death, and shot, and six were sentenced to penal servitude for life.

The Cornwall regiment which has just been referred to, was at this period stationed at Assouan, together with part of the Sussex regiment and the 35th. The various

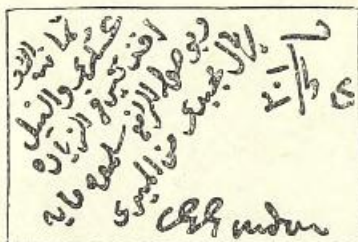
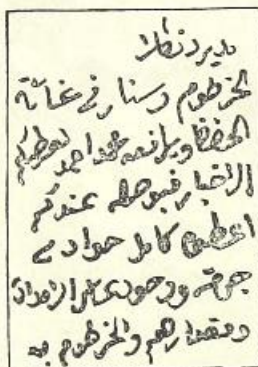
British detachments furnished a strength of 1900 men, and, in addition, 3500 Egyptian troops had been supplied for the defence of Upper Egypt, together with two camel batteries, six Gatlings, and ten Krupp guns. The chief command was vested in General Grenfell, who, early in July, started up the Nile to fortify Wady Halfa and Korosko. About the middle of July the Mudir of Dongola telegraphed the contents of a letter in Arabic which he had received from General Gordon. This note, the first of its kind sent out from Khartoum, was written on both sides of a very small piece of paper. A fac-simile of the exact size of the original, together with an English translation, is given below:—

Mudir of Dongola!

Khartoum and Senaar in perfect security; and Mohammed Ahmed carries this, to give you news; and, on his reaching you, give him all news as to direction and position of relieving force, and their number. As for Khartoum, in it are eight thousand soldiers, and the Nile has risen rapidly. On arrival of messenger, give him one hundred reals Medjidieh, from the State.

C. G. GORDON.

1301 Shaban 28. (June 22, 1884).



The concluding portion of the note was written at the back, diagonally as here shown.

A blue stamp with the letters L.S., was affixed to the document.

Soon after the receipt of this diminutive despatch Major Kitchener pushed forward to Dongola, which he reached on August 3. The Mudir had previously telegraphed to Cairo that he had won a great victory over the rebels, commanded by the Sheikh Ahmet El Hoda. The Arabs, 13,000 strong, had attacked the fortress of Debbah, garrisoned by 500 Bashi-Bazouks, but had been completely defeated and compelled to retreat towards Ambukol. The Mudir thereupon pursued them with the Bashi-Bazouks, two companies of infantry, 4000 armed volunteers, and two mountain guns, and gained a signal victory, the sheikh El Hoda flying into the province of Berber with his remaining partisans. On reaching Dongola Major Kitchener proceeded to the battlefield and reported that the Mudir's statements, concerning which great doubts had been entertained by the Cairo authorities, were true.

The messenger who brought Gordon's letter to the Mudir—the only one received for several months past—had been previously sent to Berber with a letter for Hussein Pasha Khalifa. He had witnessed the fall of the town, which he declared was due to the treachery of the governor, who had "placed a number of Arabs on a part of the fortifications and had let the enemy in that way." Hussein did not appear during the fight, but when the messenger subsequently asked him for a letter for Gordon, he replied, "The town is taken; tell Gordon what you have seen; I will write to him no more." The messenger then returned to Khartoum, which, according to his

estimate, was at that time invested by 16,000 men, and was still being vigorously defended.

Mr. Power mentions that General Gordon had protected all his steamers with layers of sunt wood and iron, rendering them bullet proof, and that, on six armoured barges he had raised turrets twenty feet high, with a double line of fire. The steamers presented a curious sight. Four of them were about the size of large river steamers, and were of iron. Their sides and the bridge between the paddle-boxes were boarded up like a London street bill-boarding. In place of thin pine boards, however, there were heavy sunt wood timbers, two or three inches thick, as impervious to rifle bullets as steel plates. In the forward part of each vessel a raised wooden fort had been built, the inside plated with old boiler iron. Projecting through a port-hole, closed against bullets by an iron plate when necessary, was a short brass rifled gun, 4in. bore, such as are used in the Egyptian army. On the main deck another gun was also placed. Gordon lavished hours and days of hard labour to get the material together for making these four steamers into iron or wooden clads so strong that they could safely run the gauntlet of the rebel cannon and rifle fire.

During May and June, these vessels, commanded by Saati Bey, sallied forth almost daily from the beleaguered city and succeeded in capturing a quantity of cattle. On June 25 Mr. Cuzzi, the former English consul at Berber, who was with the rebels, came to the defenders' lines, and confirmed the news of the fall of Berber. Mr. Cuzzi was then sent on to Kordofan. On June 30 Saati Bey, in one of his expeditions, captured forty ardebs of corn from the rebels, and killed 200 of them. Ten days later the same officer, having burnt Kalakla and three villages, attacked Gatarneb, but was unfortunately killed with three of his officers. On this occasion eight Arabs with spears charged 200 Egyptians armed with Remingtons. The soldiers fled at once, leaving Saati and his Vakeel to be killed. A black officer cut down three of the Arabs while the other five chased the Egyptians, seven of whom were killed by a horseman, who rode through the flying mass. Colonel Stewart, who was unarmed, got off by a fluke, the Arabs not having seen him. "With such men as these," wrote Mr. Power, referring to the Egyptian infantry at Khartoum, "we can do nothing. The negroes are the only men we can depend upon."

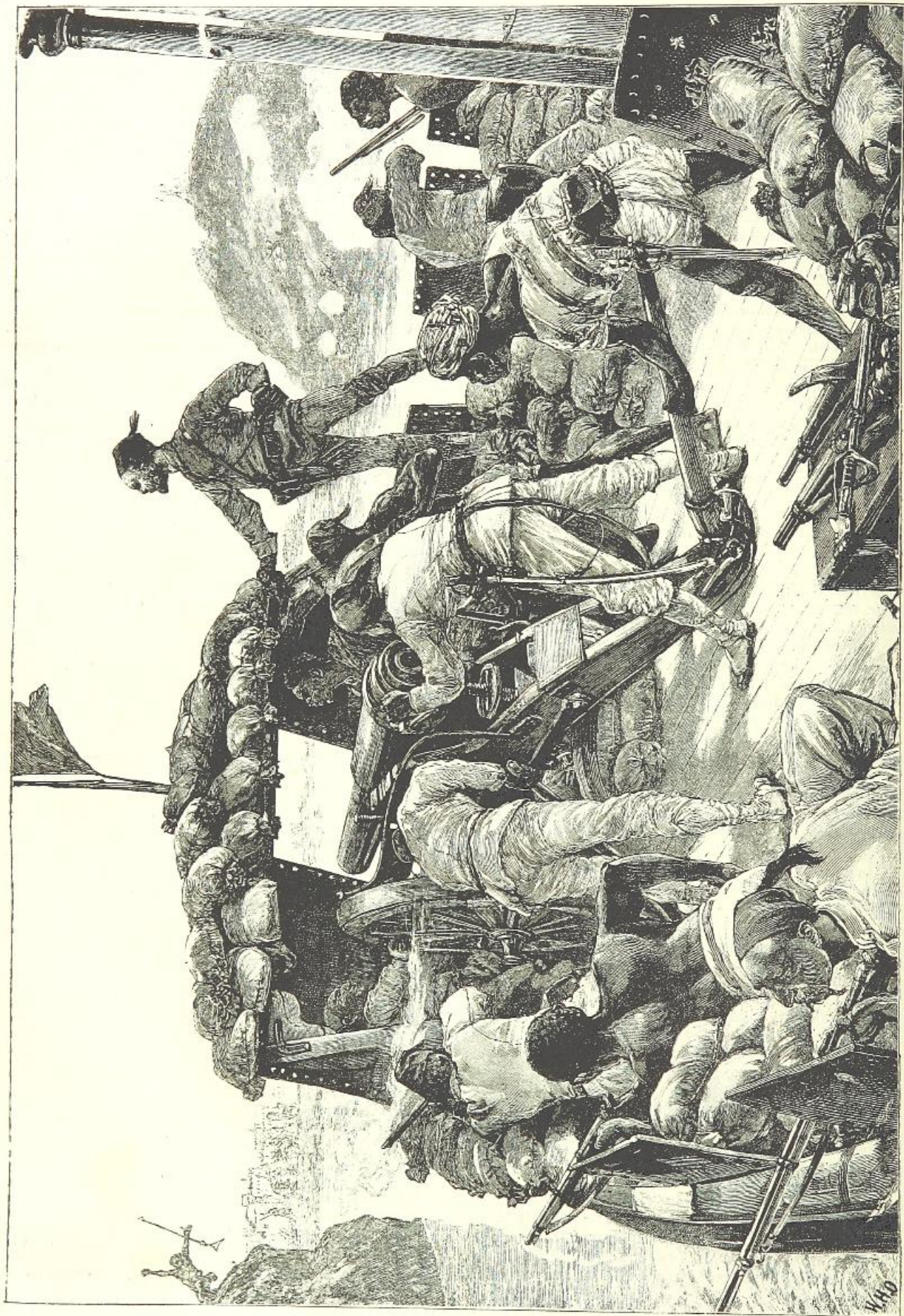
The fighting went on during July, and at the end of the month some important engagements took place. In a letter dated July 30 and dispatched via Kassala, which route of communication had been adopted "since all hopes of men getting through to Berber had ceased," Mr. Power recorded that "the attack made by the Soudanese troops under Mehemet Ali Pasha on the 28th was most successful; the Arab loss being very heavy. As General Gordon has forbidden the soldiers to bring in the heads of rebels they kill, it is now hard to know the exact number. We captured that day sixteen shells and cartouches for mountain guns, a quantity of rifle ammunition, seventy-eight Remingtons, a number of elephant and other rifles, nearly 200 lances, sixty swords, and some horses. Our loss was four killed and some slightly wounded. This action has cleared away the rebels, who day and night had been firing into our lines at Buri, on the Blue Nile. The following day, July 29, a flotilla of five armoured steamers and four armoured barges, with castles on them, went up to Gareff, on the Blue Nile. I went with them," wrote Mr. Power. "On the way we cleared thirteen small forts, but at Gareff found two large strong earthworks riveted with trunks of palm-trees, and with two cannons in

one. For eight hours we engaged these forts, and with the Krupp 20-pounder disabled their two cannons. The Arab fire was terrific, but owing to the bullet-proof armour on all the vessels our loss was only three killed and twelve or thirteen wounded. Towards the evening we drove the rebels, who were in great numbers, out of the forts." General Gordon, on his side, wrote in a subsequent despatch, (dated August 24): "We have had a series of petty fights with the Arabs from March 12 to July 30, when we were able, thank God! to drive them back and open road to Senaar."

Referring to the situation, generally, at the end of July, Mr. Power remarked, "Our losses in all, at the very outside, are not 700 killed. We have had a good many wounded, but as a rule the wounds are slight. Since the siege General Gordon has caused biscuit and corn to be distributed to the poor, and up to this time there has been no case of anyone seriously wanting food. Everything has gone up about 3000 per cent. in price, and meat is, when you can get it, 8s. or 9s. an ober. The classes who cannot accept relief suffer most. 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, &c., of our being able to cut our way through the Arabs. We have not steamers for all, and it is only from the steamers we can meet the rebels." General Gordon confirmed this last statement when he wrote in his usual characteristic style: "Our steamers are blinded and bullet-proof and do splendid work, for, you see, when you have steam on, the men cannot run away and must go into action." On July 31, the General wrote as follows to Sir Evelyn Baring:—

"Retreat is impossible, unless we abandon civil employés and their families, which the general feeling of troops is against. I have no advice to give. If we open Senaar and clear Blue Nile, we will be strong enough to retake Berber, that is, if Dongola still holds out. We want £200,000 sent to Kassala; the expenses of these garrisons must be met. Khartoum costs £500 per diem. If route gets open to Kassala I shall send Stewart there, with journal, that is, if he will consent to go. You may rely on this, that if there was any possible way of avoiding this wretched fighting, I would adopt it, for the whole war is hateful to me; 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. If I could make any one chief, here, I would do it, but it is impossible, for all the good men were killed with Hicks. To show you that Arabs fire well, two of our steamers which are blinded, received 970 and 860 hits in their hulls respectively. Since our defeat on March 16, we have had only 30 killed, 50 or 60 wounded, which is very little. I should think we have fired half a million cartridges. The conduct of the people and the troops has been excellent. I was thinking of issuing a proclamation liberating the slaves of those in arms, but have deferred doing so for fear of complications. I have great trust that God will bring us out triumphantly, and with no great loss on either side. We have queer stories as to the fall of Berber. The Arabs captured there all Stewart's hussar uniform, and my medals, &c. &c. 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 those 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.

"Syud Mahomet Osman, of Kassala, ought to be the route for your despatches, and you ought to give him a present, £500, for he saved Kassala. We have made a Khartoum decoration with three degrees—silver gilt, silver, and pewter—with inscription, "Siege of Khartoum," with a grenade in the centre. School children and women have also received one; consequently I am very popular with the black ladies of Khartoum. We have issued paper notes to the amount of £26,000, and borrowed £50,000 from merchants, which you will have to meet. I have sent in addition £8,000 paper notes to Senaar. Of course, we only get taxes paid in lead, so you are running up a good bill here. The troops and people are full of heart. I cannot say the same for all the Europeans. I expect it will end in a terrible famine throughout the land. Spy yesterday stated the "Queen of England" had arrived at Korosko; perhaps it is a steamer. The only reinforcements the



ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ONE OF GORDON'S ARMOURD STEAMERS AND THE REBELS POSTED ALONG THE NILE.

Soudan has received since 27 Nov., '83, the date when Hicks' defeat was known at Cairo, are seven persons, including myself! and we have sent down over 600 soldiers and 2,000 people. The people here and Arabs laugh over it. I shall not leave Khartoum until I can put some one in. If the Europeans like to go to the Equator, I will give them steamers, but I will not leave these people after all they have gone through. As for routes I have told you that the one from Wadi Halfa along right bank of Nile to Berber is the best, and, had not Berber fallen, would have been a picnic; the other route is from Senheit to Kassala, and to Abou Haraz on Blue Nile, which would be safe up to Kassala, but I fear it is too late. We must fight it out with our own means; if blessed by God, we shall succeed, if not His will, so be it.

"Why write in cypher, it is useless, for Arabs have no interpreter. You say your policy is to abandon Soudan; so be it, but before you do that you must take down Egyptian populations, and this the Arabs do not see. 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."

In a first postscript to this remarkable letter Gordon added;—"The Arabs captured the money you gave me at Berber, but it is only the money which the Egyptian Pashas have ground out of the Soudan since their occupation." In a second one he said:—"Reading over your telegram of May 5, you ask me to state cause and intention in staying at Khartoum, knowing Government means to abandon Soudan, and in answer I say: I stay at Khartoum because Arabs have shut us up and will not let us out. I also add that even if the road was open the people would not let me go, unless I gave them some Government or took them with me, which I could not do. No one would leave more willingly than I would if it was possible."

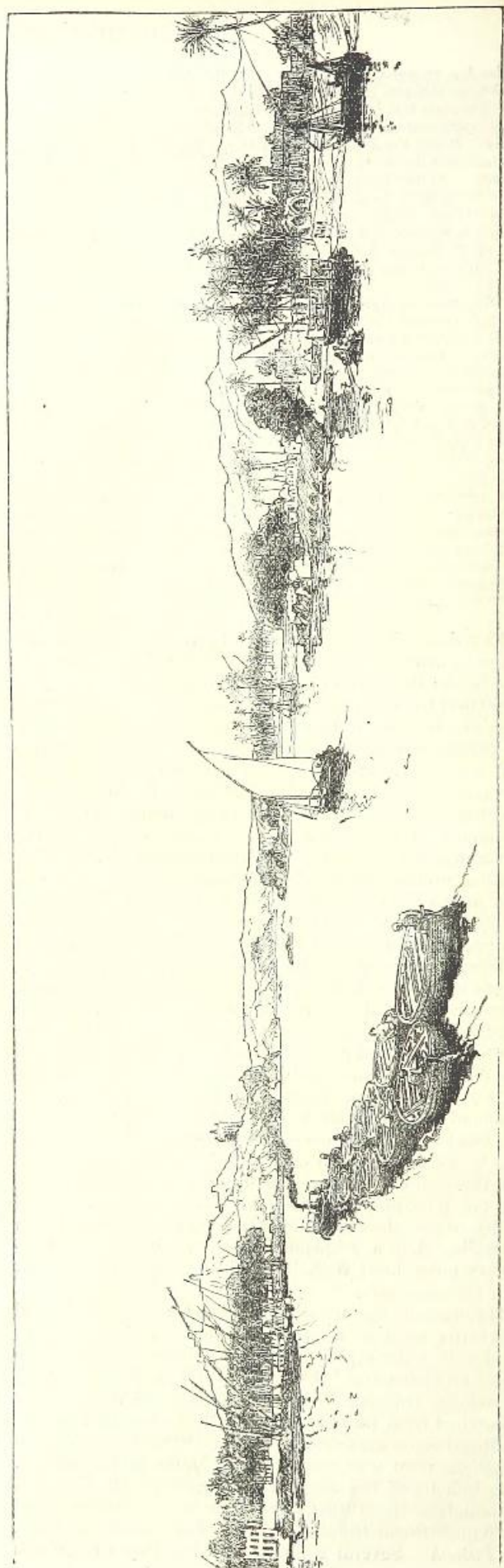
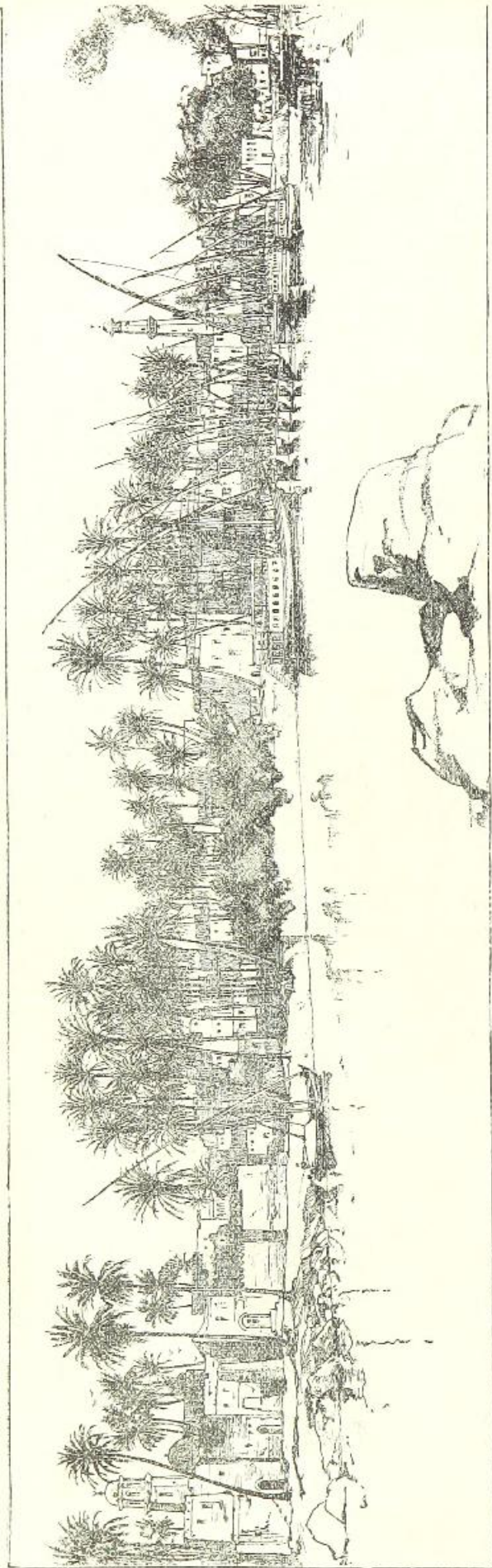
Five days after this letter had been written, and while it was journeying towards Cairo, Mr. Gladstone at last rose in the House of Commons to move a vote of credit of £300,000 to enable the Government to undertake operations for the relief of General Gordon. The Cabinet had so far persistently shirked this duty, and the Prime Minister had repeatedly expressed his conviction that no danger threatened the defender of Khartoum. On July 8 Lord Hartington had formally declared to the House of Commons that it was not the intention of the Government to dispatch an expedition for the relief of Gordon, unless it were clearly shown that such was the only means by which the General and those dependent on him could be relieved. "We have received," added the Secretary of State for War, "no information making it desirable that we should depart from that decision." Urged on, however, by the public press, and plied, week after week, and almost day after day, with questions in the House of Commons, the Government at last brought forward the vote of credit. The money was granted, and the War Office immediately strained every nerve to make up for all the time which had been lost: but it was commonly believed that it was not until August 22 that Mr. Gladstone finally consented to order a relief expedition to depart. It had originally been intended to leave the direction of the operations to Lieut.-General Stephenson, but later on Major General Earle was selected, and finally, at the eleventh hour, when the Government began to realise what a stupendous task awaited the expeditionary force, Lord Wolseley was sent for and entrusted with the command.

Throughout the month of August the arsenals and dockyards were in a state of busy activity. It was decided that the expedition should take the route of the Nile, and that some 7,000 men should be placed at Lord Wolseley's disposal. Two regiments were immediately dispatched from India to Egypt. Seven hundred men of the Royal Scots were summoned from Barbadoes, and three battalions were sent from Cyprus, Malta, and Gibraltar. Detachments of the Staffordshire regiment, the Cameron Highlanders, the 19th Hussars, the Royal Artillery, and the King's Royal Rifles sailed from Portsmouth on board the *Poonah*. Several companies of the Royal Engineers

embarked in the *Malwa*, while the *Goorka* took out drafts of the Commissariat, Transport, and Army Hospital Corps, together with a part of the 1st Sussex and the Black Watch. To carry the men up the Nile nearly 800 river boats were ordered, and, owing to the difficulties attendant upon the navigation, Lord Wolseley, who remembered his Red River experiences, insisted upon the engagement of some 400 Canadian boatmen. At the same time 300 Kroomen were obtained from the West Coast of Africa to carry stores round the cataracts. Eight steam pinnaces were, moreover, equipped for towing purposes, and a novel "stern-wheel paddle-boat," which afterwards did good service, was purchased from Messrs. Yarrow & Co., shipbuilders, of Poplar.

Amid the cheers and good wishes of a compact crowd, Lord Wolseley left London on the evening of Sunday, August 31, to take possession of his command. He was accompanied as far as Cairo by the Earl of Northbrook, whom the Government had sent out on a financial mission. In Upper Egypt the troops were now hurrying to the front; at Suakim the Mahdi's partisans were becoming more and more venturesome, advancing close to the forts, and only kept at bay by the marines and blue-jackets landed from the fleet; at Dongola short messages were arriving from Gordon, saying that "all was well, both soldiers and people;" and at Khartoum the gallant garrison had but a week previously achieved a brilliant victory over the rebels. "We have (thank God!)" wrote Gordon on August 26, "succeeded in taking Arab camp and killing Arab commander-in-chief (R. I. P.). This victory clears our vicinity in these parts of the circle." As the commander at Kassala subsequently reported, General Gordon had gained a complete victory over the rebels and captured their arms and ammunition; "also their heads," added the report, which moreover stated that Abou Karia, one of the Mahdi's sheikhs, had fled with his entire force at a critical moment, abandoning about 7,000 ardebs of dhurra (maize) and two guns. Gordon also totally annihilated Welad Magawi's contingent and Magawi himself, carrying off eight guns and seventy-two boxes of ammunition; and he destroyed Sheikh Abou Haraj and his force, capturing from them 17,000 ardebs of dhurra, 220 cantars of coffee, and three vessels full of sesame. Sheikh el Obeid too was killed, his possessions seized, and all these trophies were taken into Khartoum.





VIEW OF ASSUAN, SHOWING THE ENTRANCE TO THE FIRST CATARACT OF THE NILE.

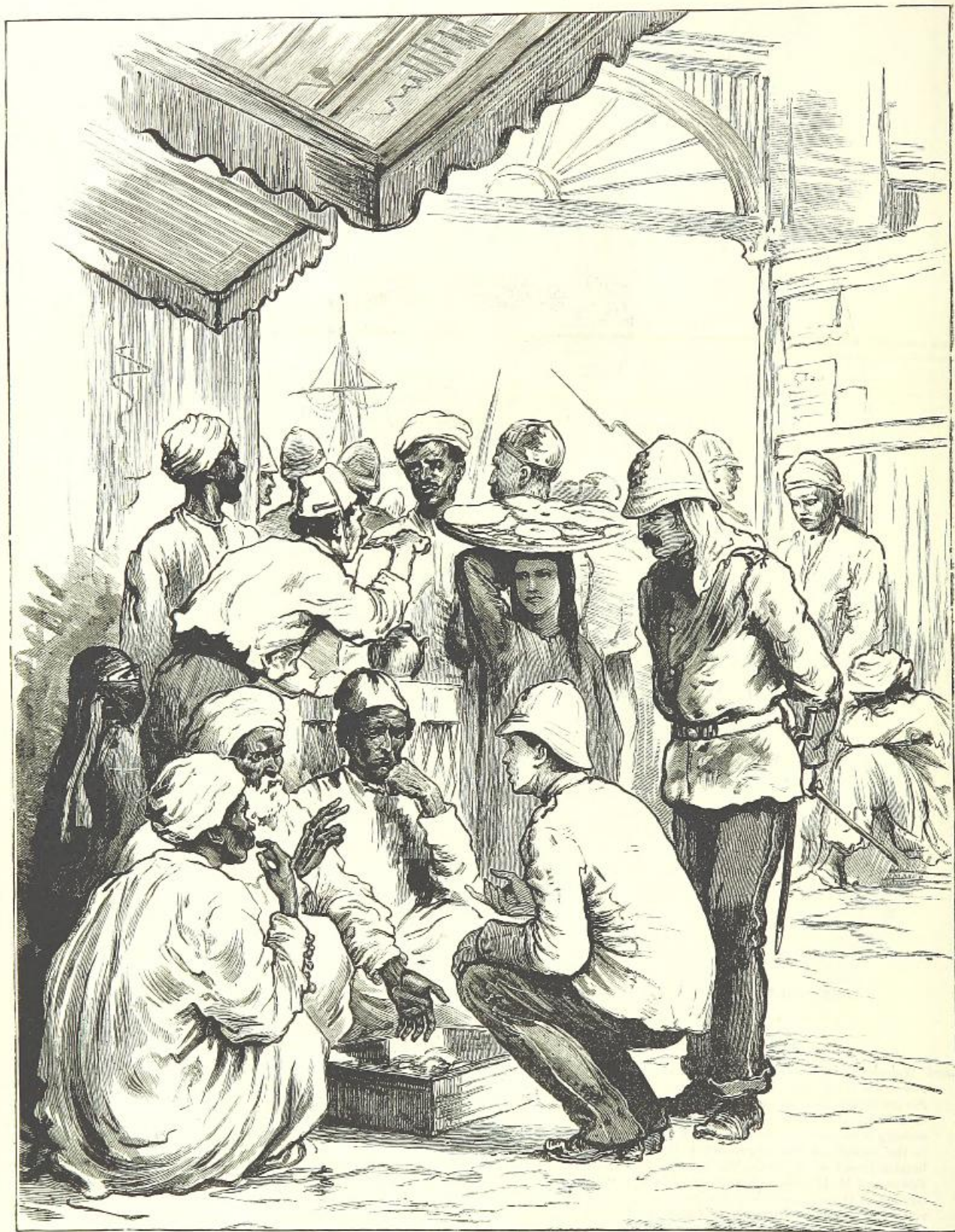


LORD WOLSELEY OF CAIRO, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE BRITISH EXPEDITION TO THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lord Wolseley's instructions.—Dispatch of troops and stores.—The row boats arrive from England.—Mr. Cook's transport contract.—No gentlemen tourists or travelling officers allowed above Assouan.—Activity at Assiout.—Sending the row boats up the Nile.—The scenery of the river.—Lord Wolseley starts for the front.—Picnics in the temple of Cleopatra, and visits Philæ.—Rumours of the bombardment of Berber.—The murder of Colonel Stewart, Mr. Power and M. Herbin.—Narrative of an eye-witness.—Stewart's mission to Dongola and Gordon's indignant appeal.—The Mudir's victory at Khorti. Dispatch of troops to Dongola.—The banks of the Nile ablaze.—Lord Wolseley at Wady Halfa.—The military hospital.—The "Railway Company" and its work.—The first boats hauled through the rapids.—The Nile between Wady Halfa and Dal.—The belly of rocks.—Up the cataracts in a nuggar.—Manitoba boys at work.—Accidents at the rapids.—Soldier killed by a crocodile.—Hauling the steamers through the gates.—The canoe raft and the Yarrow steamer.—Transport of stores to Dongola.

THE instructions given to Lord Wolseley on his departure for Egypt, stated that the primary object of the expedition was to bring away General Gordon and Colonel Stewart from Khartoum; and when that purpose was effected, no further offensive operations of any kind were to be undertaken, for the British government was of opinion that Egyptian rule in the Soudan should cease, or certainly not extend beyond Wady Halfa, near the second cataract, and some 200 miles above the old frontier town of Assouan. Lord Wolseley was not to take any steps for the relief of Kassala or Senaar, and he was expressly forbidden to extend his operations to Darfour, the Bahr Ghazal, or the Equatorial Provinces. The Government even questioned the necessity of advancing as far as Khartoum, and expressed the desire that the sphere of the military operations should be limited as



BRITISH SOLDIERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT BARGAINING WITH ARABS AT ALEXANDRIA.

much as possible. Nevertheless, when a safe retreat had been secured for General Gordon and Colonel Stewart, together with the Egyptian troops and functionaries,

Lord Wolseley was to make arrangements concerning the future government of the Soudan, and especially of Khartoum. He was informed that Egypt would be pre-

pared to pay a reasonable subsidy to any chief or number of chiefs who would be sufficiently powerful to maintain order along the Valley of the Nile from Wady Halfa to Khartoum, and who would agree to remain at peace with Egypt, to repress any raids on Egyptian territory, to encourage trade, and to prevent by all possible means any expedition for the capture and sale of slaves. The Commander-in-Chief was formally authorised to conclude any arrangements which fulfilled these general conditions.

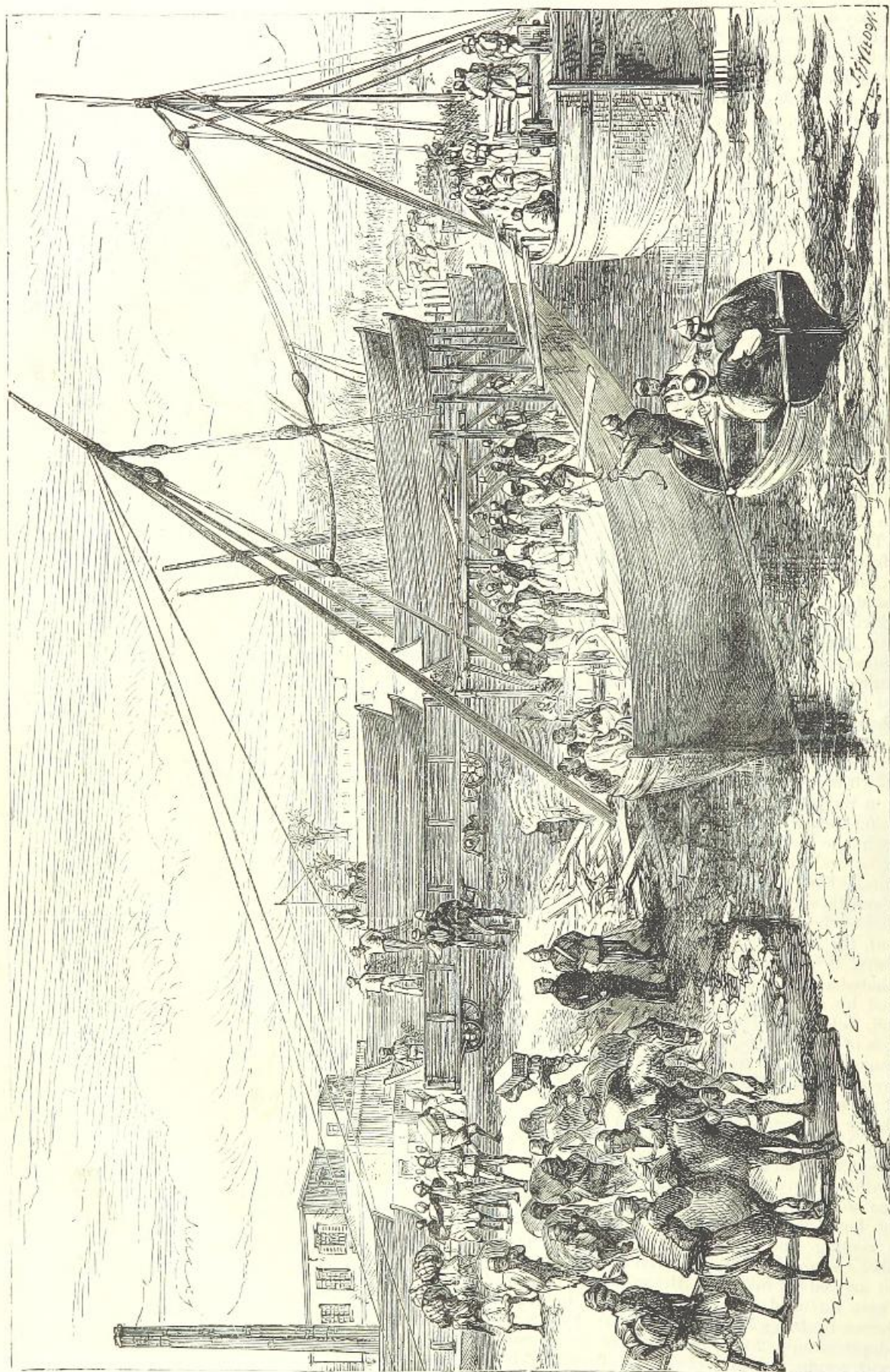
While Lord Wolseley was detained at Cairo, by the political part of his mission, the concentration of the troops selected to take part in the expedition proceeded with great rapidity. Prior to the Commander-in-Chief's departure from England, Sir Evelyn Wood and Commander Hammill had already started up the Nile to superintend the operations. The 1st battalion of the Royal Sussex was conveyed from Assouan to Wady Halfa by the *Beni-souef* steamer, and then hurried with three months' rations for a thousand men, on to Dongola, on board some of the boats which the Mudir had in the meanwhile dispatched to Sarras, just above the second or great cataract. The Royal Sussex was replaced at Wady Halfa by the Staffordshire regiment, and then the Mounted Infantry came up by water to Sarras, and proceeded by camels to Dongola. Throughout the earlier part of September, the troops were constantly advancing, Lord Wolseley having expressed the desire that they should be pushed on to Dongola without waiting for his arrival. The men after landing in Egypt consequently had but few opportunities of amusing themselves at either Alexandria or Cairo, of loitering in the bazaars and driving bargains by means of finger-signs and head-shaking, with the hard-fisted Arab merchants. They were speedily conveyed by train to Assiout and thence by steamer to Assouan, where the real difficulties of their passage commenced.

Assiout, the head of the railway line, some 250 miles from Cairo, is a thriving town of 25,000 inhabitants. It is situated a mile from the river-bank, on a small island connected by an arched stone bridge with the western mainland, below a hill or mountain which was, in the early ages of Christianity, the abode of numerous hermits and refugees from persecution; the grottoes in which they dwelt, and the tombs in which they were buried, are still to be seen. The town is a place of considerable trade, being connected by the Bahr Yusuf Canal with the fertile lake district of the Fayoum. It boasts two fine mosques surmounted by minarets, a palace for the provincial governor, a college, bazaars, baths, and has some well-built houses. Assiout soon became the scene of busy activity. Troops and stores were constantly coming and going, and before the end of September a number of the river boats made in England arrived by rail from Alexandria. These boats, which were intended to convey the troops up the Nile from Sarras to Dongola, measured 30 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in., with a depth of only 2 ft. 6 in. Built of fir and painted white, with awnings to protect the men from the blazing Egyptian sun, they each weighed about nine hundred-



weight, and were propelled by twelve oars and two sails. It was arranged that they should each carry two boatmen and ten soldiers, with their kits, 100 days' supplies, and a filter, the whole weighing about two and-a-half tons, and it was calculated that when fully loaded they would not draw more than 20 in. of water, so that a low Nile would be an advantage rather than otherwise. As they successively reached El Hamra, as the port of Assiout is called, they were shipped mainly on barges for conveyance up the river, being packed in a framework of three tiers of ten boats apiece, the whole protected from the sun by matting. Steamers, moreover, were in readiness, each of which carried thirty boats and towed a couple of barges, so that there were ninety boats in each shipment. Mr. Thomas Cook had the superintendence of the entire transport as far as Sarras, receiving £40 for each sailing barge carrying stores, and various sums for the different steamers employed, according to their size. The total cost of the transport was estimated at no less than half-a-million of money, being the largest tender of the kind ever accepted by the War Office. By way of precaution, several coaling stations were established at different points along the banks of the Nile, an agreement being made that Mr. Cook was to be indemnified in the event of the coal not being required for the expedition. At one moment it ran short at Assiout, and for several days the steamers were unable to start. Some confusion also resulted from the gear of the row boats having been removed and conveyed separately from Alexandria, and getting this properly distributed among the different boats, gave rise to considerable delay.

English tourists, desirous of viewing the preparations for the expedition, were at liberty to journey by rail as far as Assiout, and even by steamer on to Assouan, but they were warned by a notice duly posted up at the Assiout terminus, that no private gentlemen or travelling officers were allowed farther south than Assouan, without the special permission of Lord Wolseley. "They must give their word of honour," said the notice, "that they are not newspaper correspondents, nor in any way connected with the press. They will receive no assistance as regards camels or rations, and are hereby informed that Lord Wolseley has no employment for them." It



SHIPPING ROW-BOATS AT EL HAMRA, THE PORT OF ASSIOUT.

was at Assiout that one began to realise the magnitude of the undertaking in which Great Britain had embarked. An almost interminable procession of barges went up the river under sail, carrying cases and sacks containing all kinds of provisions and stores. On the bank near the port were miles of heavily laden trucks which hundreds of coolies were busy unloading, accompanying themselves all the time with a monotonous tuneless repetition of some few words, without which, wrote an onlooker, they seemed quite unable to work.

On reaching Assouan, over 300 miles higher up the river, and just below the first cataract or rapid of the Nile, the row-boats were mainly placed upon trucks for convey-

ance by a short line of rail some eight miles long, to Shellal, the port on the southern side of the rapid, while some few of them were rowed and towed through a narrow tortuous passage, past the historic isle of Philæ, where the riverbed is strewn with rocks and boulders of dark granite. Once past the first cataract it was all fair sailing for the boats as far as Wady Halfa, a couple of hundred miles higher up the Nile. For a time they passed between lofty sandstone cliffs of stern and forbidding aspect, after which the river glided gently over a bed of golden sand, with but a strip of verdure and a few doum palms on either bank whence the eastern and western deserts stretched in all their glaring sterility.



A DOUBTFUL CHARACTER IN THE CAMP AT ASSOAN.

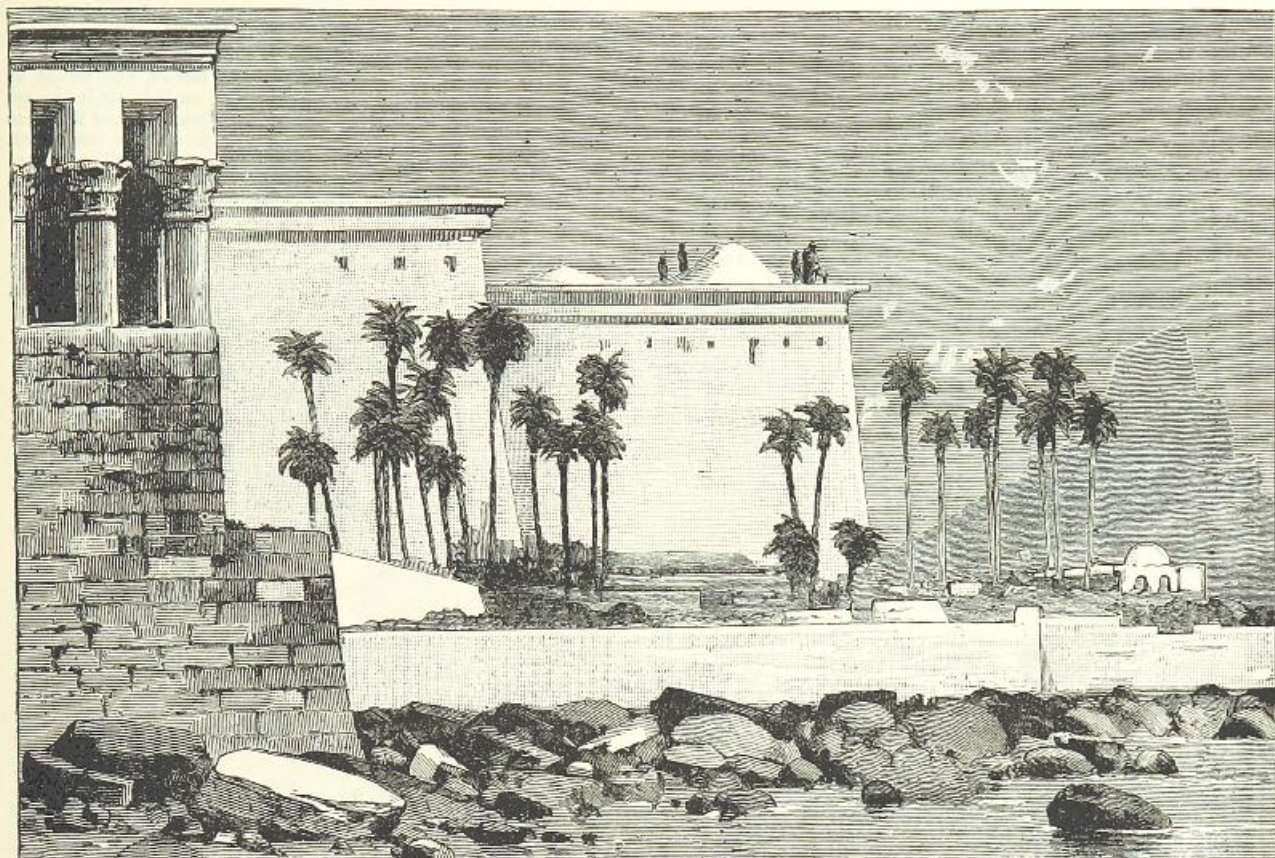
A large number of the boats had already arrived at Wady Halfa, when on September 27, Lord Wolseley, who had completed his plan of operations, and prepared himself for the intended march across the Nubian desert by constant practice in camel riding, left Cairo with his staff for Upper Egypt. Journeying along the Nile in the yacht *Ferouz*, which the Khedive had placed at his disposal, he made frequent halts on the way, inspecting the military arrangements and visiting various points of interest. At Kenh, where it was necessary to coal, he profited by the opportunity to examine the grand ruins of Denderah, partaking of lemonade and cigarettes in the famous temple of Cleopatra. Arriving at Assouan on October 1, he at once inspected the Egyptian and British troops encamped on a rocky broken plateau of considerable elevation, situated on the right bank of the Nile, where batteries with alternative embrasures had been erected to command the town, the railway, and the main caravan roads. Storm-proof works had been erected for the infantry, and huts of stone and sun-dried brick for the English officers. Reserves of ammunition and stores were kept in barges on the river below the camp. Lord Wolseley expressed his approval of all the arrangements, and after visiting the celebrated temples of Philæ, he again embarked with Sir Redvers Buller and his staff on board the *Ferouz*. The latter had been got safely through the first cataract in the meantime, and now started southwards for Wady Halfa.

On October 3, while the Commander-in-Chief was proceeding up the Nile to the base of his future operations, the news was flashed from Dongola that a native had seen Gordon's flotilla of armoured steamers arrive at Shendy and proceed northwards towards Berber. It was reported that the latter place had been bombarded, that the Mahdi's Ameer had been killed, and that the terrified rebels had removed the treasury of the province to Kurbi. The news was not unexpected by those in authority, as already on September 17, three cipher telegrams had come to hand from Gordon, announcing his intention of sending Colonel Stewart "with a good number of troops and Bashi-Bazouks to burn Berber and then return to Khartoum." On October 6, Major Kitchener dispatched a telegram confirming the report of the bombardment, but at the same time came the grievous tidings that a steamer with Colonel Stewart on board, had been wrecked between the fourth and fifth cataracts, and that Gordon's gallant coadjutor had been traitorously murdered by the Arabs. The statements made by different natives, who subsequently reached Dongola with reports of the murder, varied considerably as to date, time, and place, but as the informants one and all spoke from hearsay, this was not surprising. It was ultimately ascertained that the rumours were perfectly true, and that Colonel Stewart, after accomplishing two-thirds of his journey from Khartoum to Dongola, had been foully murdered, together with Mr. Power, the British consul at Khartoum and correspondent of the *Times* newspaper, M. Herbin, the French consul at Khartoum, and a number of Greeks and Egyptians. From General Gordon's despatches and Sir Charles Wilson's subsequent report, it appears that the expedition, consisting of three steamers, left Khartoum on September 11, and proceeded to Shendy, where Stewart seems to have landed and left a garrison, and even repaired the telegraph, so far, from Khartoum. The steamers then went on to Berber, and, after shelling the forts, two of them returned southward under the command of Gordon's admiral Kashm-el-Moos, while Colonel Stewart and his companions tried to reach Dongola with the steam launch, *Abbas*, which carried one gun, and had in tow two

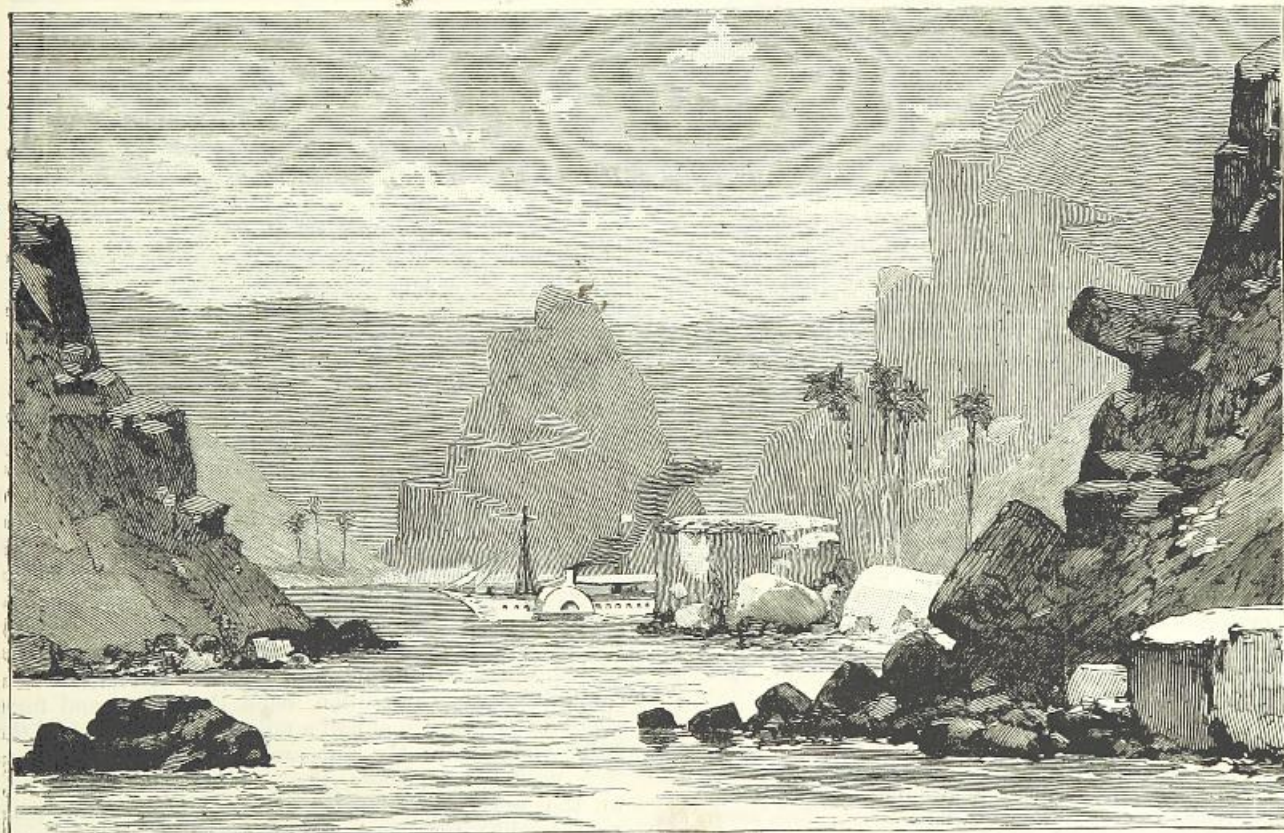
boats full of men and women. All went well with the party until they approached Abou Hammed, when the rebels swarming along the shore opened so severe a fire that, "those on board the launch had to cast their bows adrift and seek safety in solitary flight." The boats fell into the hands of the rebels below Abou Hammed, and the Greeks and Egyptians they contained were taken in captivity to Berber. The *Abbas*, however, pursued its course through the country inhabited by the Monassir tribe, with forty-four men on board all told. Between September 24 and September 28—the precise date is uncertain—while the steamer was approaching Boni island, just below the Kubenat cataract, it ran upon a hidden rock, got caught when partly over, and was badly hauled towards the stern. What afterwards occurred was subsequently related by an Egyptian stoker, named Hussein Ismail, who, taken prisoner at the time, ultimately escaped from the rebels and joined General Earle's column.

"We were passing at the time through Sheikh Wad Gamr's country," he said, "and had seen the people running away into the hills on both sides of the river. When it was found that the steamer could not be got off the rock, the small boat (a dingy with which the launch was provided) was filled with useful things, and sent to a little island near us. Four trips were made. Then Colonel Stewart drove a nail into the steamer's guns filed off the projecting head and threw both guns and ammunition overboard. The people now came down to the right bank in great numbers, shouting, 'Give us peace and grain.' We answered, 'Peace.' Suleiman Wad Gamr himself was in a small house near the bank, and he came out and called to Colonel Stewart to land without fear but he added that the soldiers must be unarmed or the people would be afraid of them. Colonel Stewart, after talking it over with the others, then crossed in the boat, with the two European consuls (Mr. Power and M. Herbin), and Hassan Effendi, and entered a house belonging to a blind man named Fakri Etman, to arrange with Suleiman for the purchase of camels to take us all down to Dongola. None of the four had any arms, with the exception of Colonel Stewart, who carried a small revolver in his pocket. While they were in the house the rest of us began to land. Shortly afterwards we saw Suleiman come out of the house with a copper water-pot in his hand and make signs to the people who were gathered near the place. They immediately divided into two parties, one entering the house and the other rushing towards us on the bank, shouting and waving their spears. I was with the party which had landed when they charged down. We all threw ourselves into the river, whereupon the natives fired, and killed some of those in the water; several others were drowned, and the rest were speared as they approached the shore. I swam to the island, and hid there till dark, when I was made prisoner with some others, and sent to Berti. I heard that Colonel Stewart and the two Europeans were killed at once, but Hassan Effendi held the blind man before him, so that they could not spear him. They accordingly spared his life, and he afterwards escaped to Berber. Two artillerymen, two sailors, and three natives are, I believe, still alive at Berber, where they were sent by Suleiman. All the money found on board and in the pockets of the dead, was divided among the murderers, and everything else of value was placed in two boxes and sent under a guard to Berber. The bodies of Colonel Stewart and the others were thrown at once into the river."

Hussein Ismail the stoker, did not witness the actual death of Colonel Stewart, but the Arabs themselves ac-



LORD WOLSELEY AND HIS STAFF AT PHILAE.



LORD WOLSELEY'S YACHT AT THE HEAD OF THE FIRST CATARACT.

knowledge that he fought most desperately for his life, killing one of his assailants and wounding a second one with his revolver. Among the prizes which fell into the hands of the rebels on this occasion, was Colonel Stewart's journal of all the events which had taken place in Khartoum from March 1 to September 10. Gordon subsequently wrote that this journal was a gem illustrated with all the Mahdi's communications in Arabic.

One looks in vain in the General's published letters and despatches, for any confirmation of the recent statements that there was a serious difference of opinion between himself and Colonel Stewart as to the defence of Khartoum. Colonel Stewart was at one time reported to have "repeatedly and strongly urged that by remaining in Khartoum, they could do no good whatever, but might cause much bloodshed;" and General Gordon on his side



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL STEWART.

(From a Photograph by A. Bassano.)

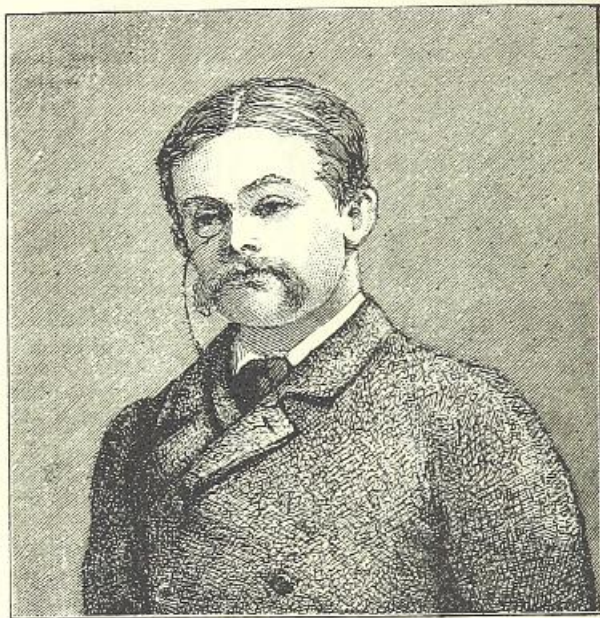
was said to have commented upon Colonel Stewart's acts in an unfriendly manner in his diaries. Thanks to Sir Henry Gordon, we know, however, that the gallant defender of Khartoum spoke highly of his coadjutor, as a brave, just, and upright gentleman, and frequently expressed anxiety concerning his safety. It is certain, moreover, that Colonel Stewart took a leading part in the operations, both offensive and defensive, and that his departure had no connection whatever with a policy of abandonment. He in fact left Khartoum to hasten the British advance in hopes of crushing the rebellion. Gordon states in his despatch of Sept. 9, that he sends Colonel Stewart and the two consuls to "communicate concerning the Soudan," and that he detaches two large steamers to convey them to Berber, so as to engage the enemy, and keep the way clear. And he adds:—

"How many times have we written asking for reinforcements, calling your serious attention to the Soudan! No answer at all has come to us as to what has been decided in the matter, and the hearts of men have become weary of this delay. While you are eating, drinking, and resting on good beds, we and those with us—both soldiers and servants—are watching by night and day endeavouring to quell the movement of this false Mahdi. Of course you take no interest in

suppressing this rebellion, the serious consequences of which are the reverse of victorious for you, and the neglect therefore will not do.

"In two days' time Colonel Stewart, the Vice-Governor-General, and the two Consuls, will start from here to Berber, and thence to Dongola. The reason why I have now sent Colonel Stewart is because you have been silent all this while and have neglected us, and lost time without doing any good. If troops were sent as soon as they reach Berber this rebellion will cease, and the inhabitants will return to their former occupations. It is therefore hoped that you will listen to all that is told you by Stewart and the Consuls, and look at it seriously, and send troops, as we have asked, without any delay."

By the departure and death of Colonel Stewart and Mr. Frank Power, the gallant defender of Khartoum was



MR. FRANK POWER.

left alone, without a single compatriot to assist him in the arduous task of keeping the rebels at bay. It therefore became important to move up to the relief of the beleaguered city with all possible despatch. The Mudir of Dongola had certainly won another victory over a strong rebel force, on Sept. 18 in the vicinity of Korti, killing several of the False Prophet's Ameer, capturing a number of prisoners and pursuing the fugitives as far as Assli, but if this success prevented a rebel advance northwards it by no means raised the siege of Khartoum, which was still closely invested, despite Gordon's successes at the end of August.

Prior to the arrival of the sad tidings of Colonel Stewart's death, and before Lord Wolseley had left Cairo, Generals Earle and Sir Herbert Stewart had already reached Wady Halfa. The latter with his staff at once set out on ponies for Dongola to take up the command, and the party arrived at their destination on Sept. 30, at the same time as two hundred and fifty men of the mounted infantry, who made the journey up the Nile from Sarras in nuggars or native barges. These men found the Tangour cataract, some fifty miles from their starting point, the most difficult to traverse, as it was impassable without towing, which was all but impracticable from the banks. On the way, the expedition found the palms and furze ablaze for a distance of half a mile on the left bank of the Nile; and one of the nuggars, conveying some forty men nearing the shore, the sail at once caught fire, to the great alarm of the crew. However the mast was speedily cut down, and forty-seven cases of ammunition were thrown overboard. No one was injured,

and the men, having eventually recovered the ammunition, proceeded on their way to Dongola.

On October 5, Lord Wolseley in his turn reached Wady Halfa, where men and stores were still constantly arriving. Frequent mention will require to be made of this locality, for it had temporarily become the base of the British operations, and it remained the chief *dépôt* of Commissariat and Ordnance stores throughout the expedition. Wady Halfa in ordinary times is but an insignificant village, noteworthy only for the frequency and violence of the north wind which blows there, and for its proximity to the second or great cataract which extends towards Sarras. At this period, however, it swarmed with soldiers and coolies; the river was covered with craft, and around the village there stretched a city of white tents, and sheds for stores. A military hospital, moreover, had been installed under canvas on the river bank, with accommodation for some 300 men; and a number of efficient lady nurses had come out from England to assist Brigade-Surgeon Norris and his coadjutors in tending the sufferers, whose ailments were mainly dysentery and enteric fever. Among the earlier patients were several men of the Railway Company of the Royal Engineers, who had been sent up the Nile under the command of Majors Clarke and Scott to repair and organise the old Egyptian railway line from Wady Halfa to Sarras by which the passage of the second cataract is avoided.



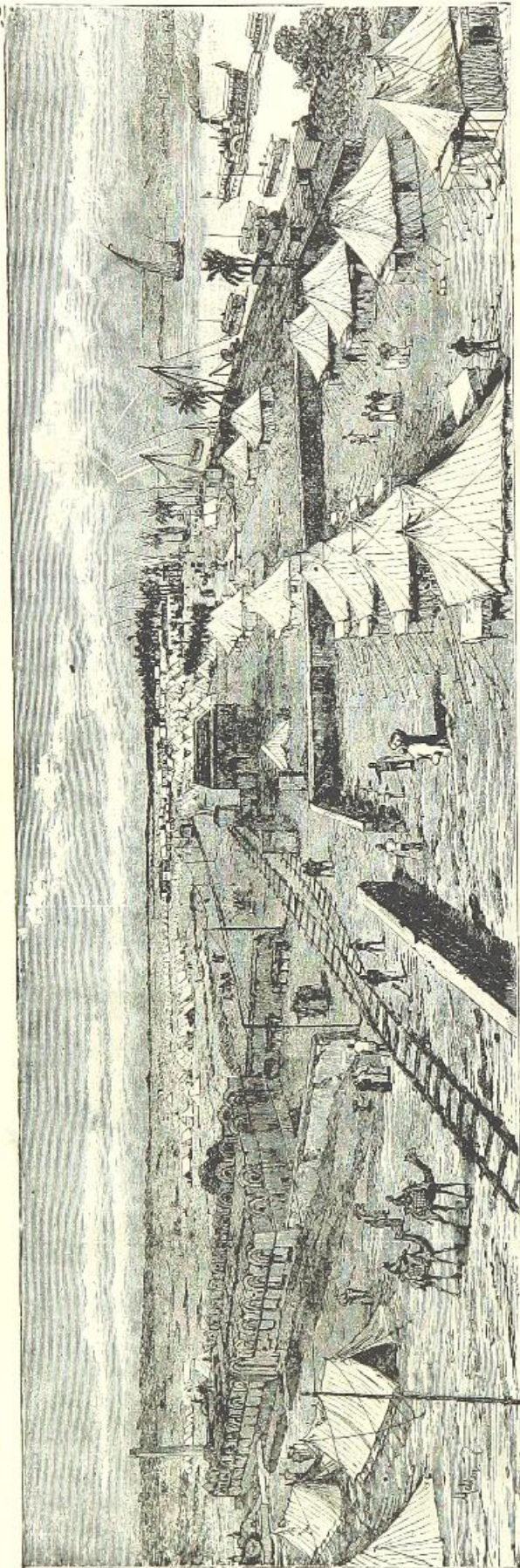
MEN OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS RAILWAY COMPANY.

These men had been badly dieted on the road, and fell ill for want of proper sustenance.

The company, which consisted altogether of six officers and 125 non-commissioned officers and men, had been specially trained in railway work near Chatham, on a line belonging to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company. The men had not merely learnt the duties of guards, signalmen, and pointsmen



BRINGING WOUNDED TO THE HOSPITAL AT WADY HALFA.



GENERAL VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL AT WADY HALFA.

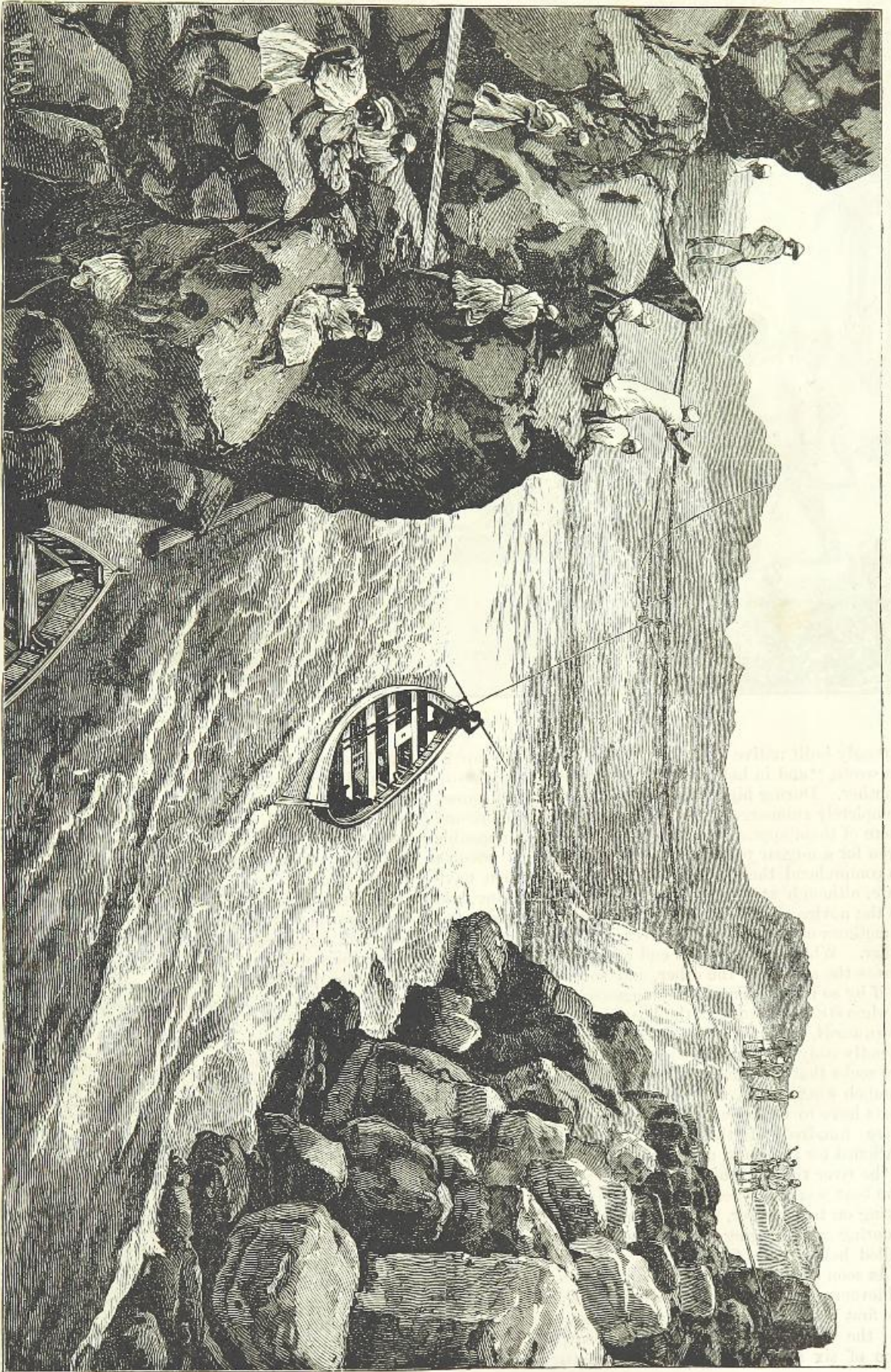
there, but they had obtained instruction as plate-layers, carpenters, smiths, engine drivers, firemen, fitters, and cleaners, in fact in everything pertaining to the making-up and management of trains, and the duties of a railway station. This sort of practice went on for more than a month, and it proved a great advantage to have the ready service of these picked and trained men for the short pieces of railway necessary to convey stores past the first and second cataracts. The Wady Halfa line as originally organised by the Railway Company, ran for a distance of thirty-three miles almost on a level, along the east bank of the Nile. It was then carried another seven miles up the broken hills of the Muhrat desert, away from the river, and it was to have wound round past the Ambigol cataract, but engines and trolleys were deficient, and the path was obstructed by rocks which required blasting. Lord Wolseley accordingly suspended the works at the end of October, and it was only towards the close of the expedition that further progress was made.

Owing to the paucity of rolling stock, the line was chiefly used for forwarding stores to Sarras, some of the row-boats being landed at Bab-el-Kebir and carried above the cataract, while others were hauled through it by the Canadian Voyageurs, or "Manitoba Boys" as they were familiarly called. These skilful fellows, who were commanded by Colonel Alleyne, proved of very great assistance, but some boats had already passed the torrent prior to their arrival at Wady Halfa. The first boat, indeed, was hauled up the rapids on Sept. 25, without any other appliances than its own gear and some short towing ropes, the operation occupying but a quarter of an hour, and proving more successful than even the most sanguine officers had expected. The second boat was then hauled up by means of Captain Hammill's cleverly-arranged tackle, and the operation was carried out even more rapidly and safely.

It should be remembered that from Wady Halfa to Dal, a distance of 123 miles, the course of the Nile comprises a series of most dangerous rapids and intricate passages; the cataracts of Samneh, Wady Attireh, Ambigol, Tangour, Uckma, Akasha and Dal following each other in swift succession. The two first, are not so difficult, but the rapids of Ambigol which extend some four or five miles, are impassable at low Nile, and prove a severe trial even when the water is high. A short distance further, the Tangour cataract bars the way, and it is as difficult of passage as that of Ambigol. So terrible is the aspect of the river at this point, as it flows onward strewn with rocks and laden with silt, bounded on the east by precipitous crags, and limited westward by the shifting sands of the Libyan desert, that the natives have given the region the expressive name of Batn-el-Hajar or "belly of stone." A large quantity of dynamite had been sent out from England for blasting the rocks at this and other points, but when it reached Wady Halfa any such proceeding was impracticable, as the river was then high. Dynamite might be used however with good effect in the months of March and April, when there are places in the rapids almost dry and studded with rocks. If the latter were then blasted and the channel properly marked, there would be a fair way in the flood season—an immense advantage for all time.

The dynamite being useless, the boats had either to be carried beyond the cataracts or to ascend them, navigated by the Canadians or hauled along by natives specially engaged for the purpose. The difficulties of navigation between Wady Halfa and Samneh were described at the time by the correspondent of the *Standard* newspaper, who made the ascent in one of the

HAULING WHALE BOATS THROUGH BAR-EL-KEBIR, THE GREAT GATE OF THE SECOND CATARACT.





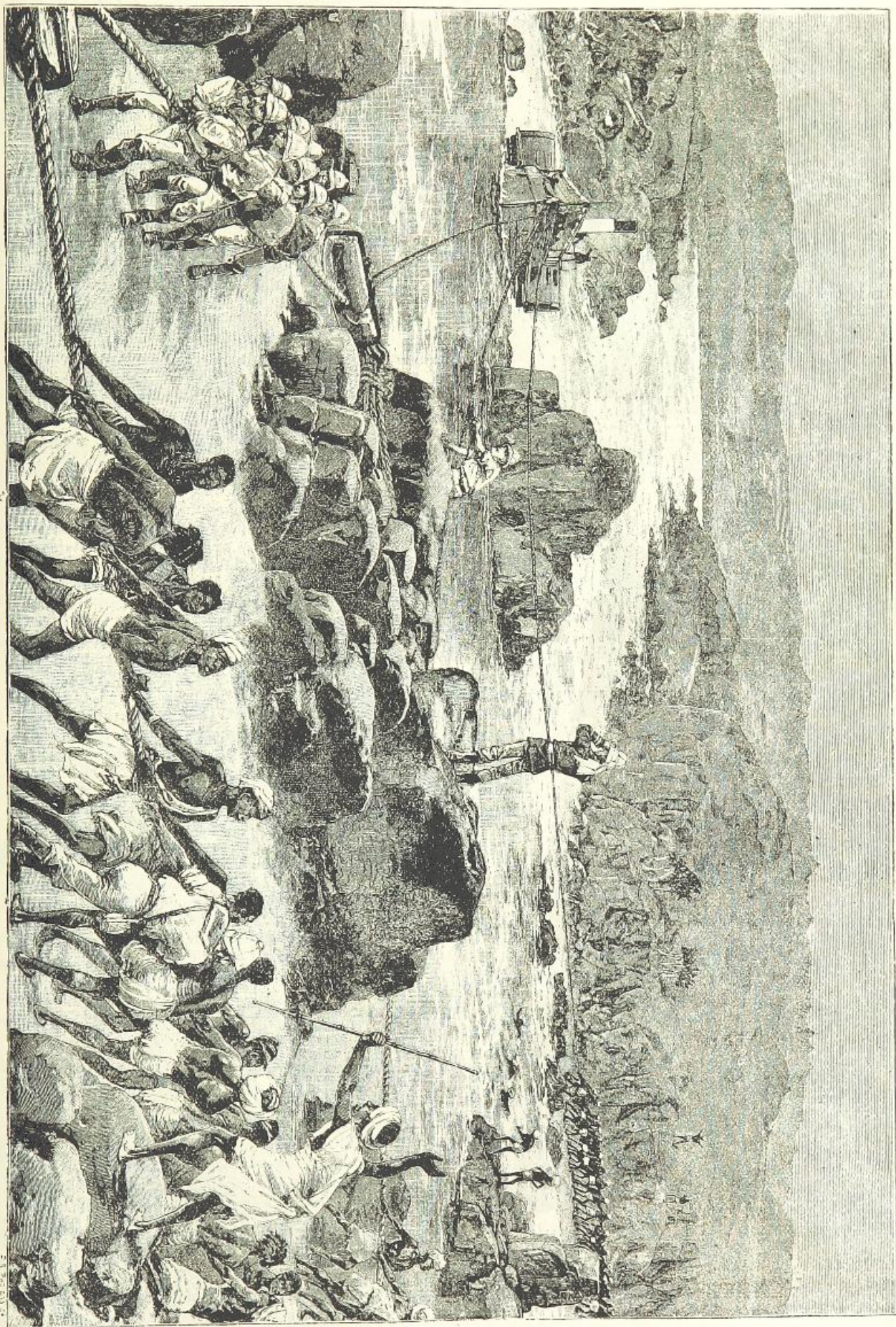
PORTAGE OF WHALE BOATS AT BAB-EL-KEBIR, NEAR WADY HALFA.

strongly built native boats. "We surmount one rapid," he wrote, "and in half an hour we have to contend with another. During high Nile many of these are, of course, completely submerged, but as the river falls, more and more of them appear, until at last it becomes impossible even for a nuggar to ascend. After a time it is possible to comprehend the system by which the boatmen navigate, although at first it seems highly bewildering, and to the novice alarming. Every rapid has its slack water, sometimes on one side of the river, and sometimes on the other. When we get to the end of one stretch, we shoot across the stream to the other, and so gradually ascend, as if by so many locks. The dangerous period, of course, is when striking across, as the boat is then carried rapidly downwards, and if it should fail to reach in time the friendly eddy on the other side, might be dashed against the rocks that lurk under water, and so be wrecked. At Samneh where the river passes over a ledge of rock, the boats have to be hauled along by manual labour. Here three hundred of the Mudir of Dongola's men are stationed for the work, and as we showed round the bend of the river they swarmed down to the beach to meet us. The boat was lightened of most of its cargo, and then, laying on to a hawser, some two hundred yards long, and shouting and singing, the noisy half-naked mob soon pulled her over the fall."

As soon as the Canadians arrived at Wady Halfa their achievements surpassed all previous feats, for they piloted the first batch of boats with which they were entrusted up the Samneh cataract in the surprisingly short time of six minutes. The general satisfaction caused

at this fine performance was damped however by a melancholy accident. The captain of one of the boats, a fine specimen of the voyageur, named Louis, overbalanced himself, and fell into the torrent. He was an expert swimmer, but, notwithstanding his own exertions and the desperate efforts of the Dongolese swimmers to save him, he was swept away and drowned. It may here be mentioned that on one occasion a couple of blue-jackets were drowned in passing the cataracts, and a similar fate overtook two men of the Sussex regiment, but on the whole there were very few casualties of the kind. The Nile crocodiles do not seem to have caused much alarm or to have made many victims. Indeed, the only recorded instance of a crocodile killing a man was when a private of the Sussex regiment fell into the river at Sarras and was so severely bitten that he died. Strangely enough his body was washed ashore a few days afterwards, and it was then seen that the predatory monster of the Nile had abstained from devouring him.

The hauling of the steamers which were sent up the river for the conveyance of stores or for towing purposes proved extremely difficult. It was necessary to sling them in cables passed under their keels and secure them with steel hawsers round their hulls, and even then accidents frequently befell them. Some thousands of men were employed in towing the vessels through the intricate and winding passages among the granite rocks that lie in the bed of the river. The various gangs of haulers took their stand at different points, and with much shouting to each other contrived by joint action to bring the vessel's head, this way or that, in the direction



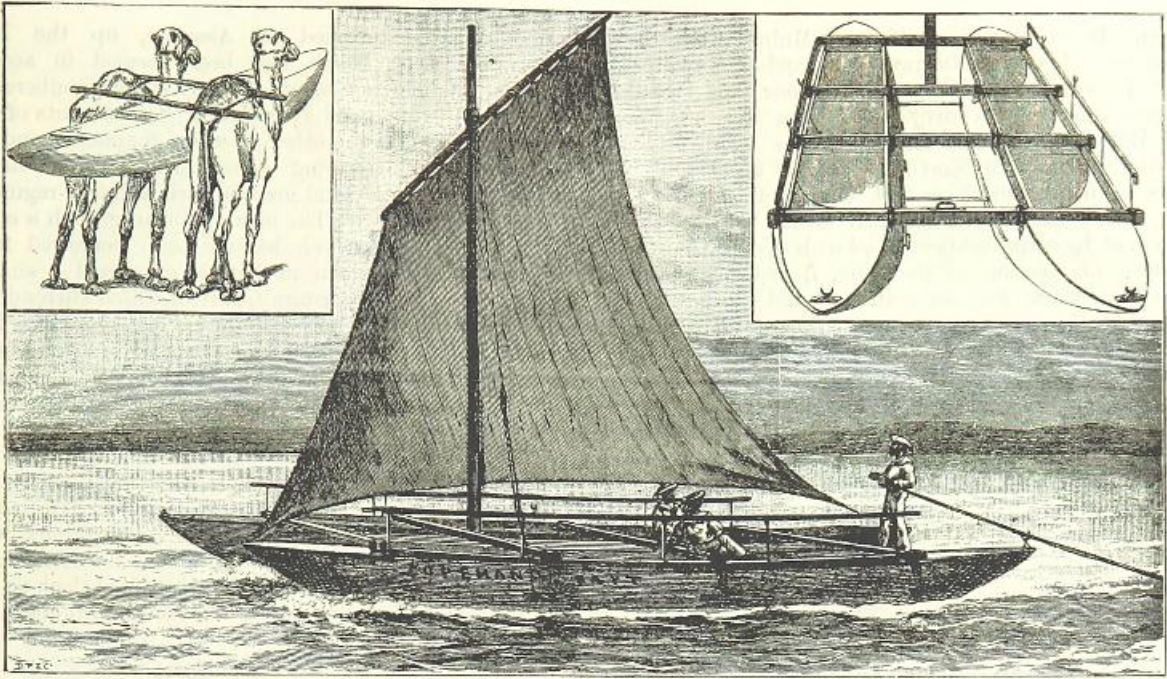
HAWLING THE STEAMER "NASSIF-EL-KHEIR" THROUGH THE FIRST GATE OF THE SECOND CATARACT.



FINAL AND SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO GET THE STEAMER OVER THE SECOND GATE OF THE SECOND CATARACT.

of safety and forward progress. Some of them were on the river's bank, others mounted upon the rocks in mid-channel, wading or swimming to and fro; but, for the Englishmen and others who had to cross the river at a wider part, a hawser was stretched right across, fastened to the shore at each end, and a boat, with some running tackle laid on the hawser, was used to ferry them over. The sailors and soldiers worked very well, assisted by 1500 Dongola men and 800 men of Esneh, but the task was a most difficult one. The *Ghizeh* passed successfully through the cataract of Bab-el-Ambak beyond Sarras, but on reaching Tangour, where the passage is very difficult, she was wrecked and sunk, only her masts and funnel being visible above the water. At one moment it seemed as if the *Nassif-el-Kheir* steamer would meet with a similar fate, for it was only by the greatest exertions and by a wonderful display of skill that she was eventually got past the rapids at Samneh. After a great deal of trouble she was hauled successfully through the first two gates, but three more lay before her, including a very difficult one where the passage is extremely narrow. She was fairly within this gate when she suddenly struck and grated against the rocks, two of the hawsers parting at the same time, with the result that she drifted towards the western shore and narrowly escaped being dashed to pieces. A boat bringing up a fresh hawser was then wrecked and the crew were only saved with difficulty. A moment afterwards, when the steamer was again in motion, the port paddle was smashed against the rocks and so injured that the engines worked unavailingly. The head hawser parted at the same time, and the steamer again swung to the western bank, held by a small hawser only. Those which had parted were a six-and-a-half-inch grass, and a five-and-a-half-inch hemp, and had been considered strong enough to resist any strain placed on them. The only course now was to secure the steamer as well as possible, and repair the paddle. This was done, and eventually, after another stupendous effort—a force of six thousand men being employed for seven hours—the *Nassif-el-Kheir* was hauled through the final gates with comparatively little damage.

About the same time the twin screw steamer *Montgomery* reached Samneh, having passed through the western channel, thus avoiding the full force of the cataract. The first of the seven steam pinnaces from England was likewise launched at Sarras, being successfully hauled down an improvised slip from the railway to the river, although the drop was a steep one, and the engineers had no proper appliances for such work. Among the other vessels sent out to be used in the expedition was the twin canoe raft, invented by Mr. E. S. Copeman, and remarkable alike for stability and buoyancy, besides possessing great capacity of stowage. It consisted of two very light canoe-shaped bodies, 25 ft. long, made of deal, with ribs of American elm, and was covered both inside and out with stout canvas. Capsizing was impossible, but in case of an accident from the raft being damaged in any particular part, it was far less likely to sink than an ordinary boat, the canoes being constructed in compartments. The raft carried two sails, three oars, and twelve paddles, and awnings were stretched from bow to stern of each canoe. There was ample accommodation for twelve men on the platforms and for 4500 lb. of stores in the compartments of the canoes. The stern-wheel steamer called the *Lotus*, built by Messrs. Yarrow & Co. of Poplar, was brought by barge in 700 pieces to Samneh, and was riveted up and launched there. This vessel, which was 80 ft. in length, 18 ft. in beam and only 16 in. in draught, was capable of carrying from four



COPEMAN'S CANOE RAFT.

to five hundred men, with a machine gun. After she had been launched the naval officers stated that she could not be taken up the Ambigol rapid, whereupon the responsibility was transferred from them to Lieutenant-Colonel Wynne, who, although a mere landsman, ultimately succeeded in passing her up in safety. She then

did good service in carrying stores and wounded up and down the Nile, and with her small draught could be utilized even when the river was at its lowest point.

There was no slight difficulty in forwarding the stores which had been collected at Wady Halfa to Dongola, the next point in the forward march of the British ex-



CAMP OF CANADIAN BOATMEN NEAR WADY HALFA.

pedition. Between Wady Halfa and Muhrat wells they went by rail; between Muhrat Wells and Ambukol, by camel; between Ambukol and Tangour and thence to Sarka Matto by convoys of whaler boats; from Sarka Matto to Khaibar, and thence to Hannek, and from Abu Fatmeh to Korti, by native boats and by whalers. An English officer took charge of a number of whaler boats, usually ten, manned either by Dongolese kroomen, or Egyptian soldiers; and with them he went up and down his section of the Nile, it being his duty to see that there was no loitering and no waste of labour. At the places of portage (Tangour two miles, Sarka Matto four miles, Khaibar one and a half miles, Hannek four miles) the stores were disembarked and carried on camels. The station-commandants looked sharply after the nuggars, and paid the British soldier that went in each store boat a sum of money in inverse proportion to the length of time in which he made the voyage.*



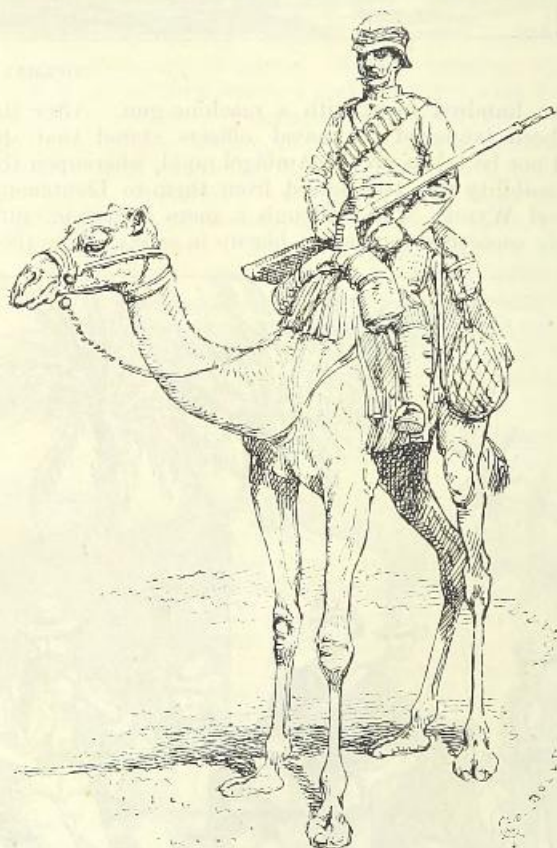
A SOLDIER OF THE DROMEDARY CORPS
ORGANIZED BY THE FRENCH IN EGYPT 1801.

CHAPTER XIV.

Formation of the British camel corps.—The idea borrowed from Napoleon I.—Uniform and accoutrements of the Corps.—Variety of objects each camel had to carry.—The first mount.—Discomforts of camel riding.—Lord Wolseley starts for Dongola.—Reports about Gordon and the Mahdi.—Consul Hansal's singular uniform.—His letters from Khartoum.—The Mahdi's European prisoners.—Gordon is defeated.—The Mahdi besieges Khartoum in person.—His sanctuary and his miracles.—Treachery in Khartoum.—Epidemics among the rebels.—Lord Wolseley arrives at Dongola.—His reception by the Mudir, whom he decorates with the order of St. Michael and St. George.—Manœuvres with the camel corps.—Bagerness of the troops to advance.

Soon after Lord Wolseley arrived at Wady Halfa early in October, he ordered the Gordon Highlanders, the Essex Regiment, the 19th Hussars, and the Camel

Corps, already stationed at Assouan, up the Nile. The camel corps, which had been formed in accordance with his instructions at an early stage, numbered in all some 1500 men, and consisted of detachments of the Household Cavalry, the other mounted regiments, and the foot-guards, each forming a separate division—heavy cavalry, light cavalry and guards, with a fourth regiment of mounted infantry. The idea of forming such a corps was by no means novel, having been borrowed from Napoleon I., who, when in Egypt, organized a similar force, mounted on dromedaries, part of which surrendered in May, 1801, to General Sir John Doyle's brigade. This French Dromedary Corps, it appears, would march ninety miles in a day over the desert, without provisions or water. The practice, when in action, was for the animals to lie down, and for the men to get behind them and fire over them. The troops detached for a very similar service, by Lord Wolseley's orders, reached Alexandria on Oct. 7, and at once exchanged their usual uniforms for red flannel tunics, corduroy knee-breeches and serge leggings, with white pith helmets and puggarees. The accoutrements were somewhat heavy, as they included a rolled cloak on the right shoulder, a leather cartridge-belt on the left one, a tin



ONE OF THE GUARDS' CAMEL CORPS.

mess-trap, a water-bottle, a brown leather ammunition bandolier, with fifty rounds of ammunition, and a rifle pocket, in which the butt of the weapon was secured. The arms were the Martini-Henry rifle and bayonet, in lieu of the ordinary cavalry carbine. In addition to rider, accoutrements, and weapons, it was decided that each camel should also carry the half of a tent, with three days' provisions and water for his master, as well as food for himself. As soon as the men reached the front an effort was made to teach them how to ride their camels, which was by no means an easy task.

* The Nile route to Khartoum.—*The Times*, April 8.

ON THE ROAD TO DONGOLA.



"Mounting," remarks Colonel Colborne, "is a ticklish operation; it looks plausible enough while the animal is recumbent. Unless you are very nimble, however, you risk a broken limb, or at the least an ugly fall. No sooner does the seemingly impassive brute feel your touch, than he rises suddenly and rapidly, and you are sent sprawling.



The best plan, and the one usually adopted, is to get the driver to plant his foot firmly on the left foreleg of the camel while you are mounting. Then you find yourself pitched backwards as the animal springs on its forelegs. Before you have time to recover your balance you are thrown forwards, receiving a violent blow in the stomach from the pommel, as the hind legs are raised, then once more backwards—receiving this time a thump in the back—as the camel raises the lower portion of the forelegs and stands on its feet. In dismounting these shakings naturally occur in reverse order."

When the would-be rider was some officer fresh from home, "spotless and clean, and hung about with trinkets and fancy camp-life requisites, thick as on a Christmas tree," the whole force often turned out to watch the performance. "A couple of Egyptian soldiers," wrote a special correspondent, "stand on the camel's knees, and three on each side of the officer grasp his arms and legs to keep him from falling while the animal gets up. With many lurches and much noise the brute is induced to rise, and the officer is still in the saddle. Then they "give the camel his head." Away he shuffles, after his kind, cutting possibly a *pirouette* over a rail or tent rope, and invariably rolling the be-bumped and astounded rider upon the ground. Sometimes a very plucky fellow tries, and has it all over again; but usually the convoy starts with our camels carrying baggage only, officers and soldiers all preferring to walk."

It would certainly seem to be no easy task to witch the world with noble "camelanship," nor is there anything agreeable about riding the hump-backed palfrey of the desert. The writer we have already quoted remarked "that he had ridden over one thousand miles on camel back, and tried every sort of saddle and position, but had not yet learned to like the brutes nor their gait." And, he adds, "Nor have I found anybody who would not exchange the best camel for the worst of horses. Learning to ride camels is an art at which, even after a time, you

don't get much "foreder." Natives even never acquire perfection and comfort at it. To the ordinary mortal, being on the back of a jogging camel is like being on a big see-saw, upon which you always find yourself going the wrong way."

However uncomfortable the men may have found themselves and however difficult their task, they nevertheless received orders to proceed to Wady Halfa as speedily as possible, and they were then pushed on to Dongola. There were frequent delays and mishaps on the road, for the poor beasts, who are only really at home on their native sands, often got so entangled among the rocks and blocks of granite, that they could with difficulty be persuaded to advance. In the steeper parts the men often dismounted and fairly applied the whip, at the same time holding up the animal's neck, while an Arab guide raised its hind quarters by pulling vigorously at its tail. As the march was made along the right bank of the Nile, it became necessary at Dongola, to ferry the animals over the river, and considerable time was spent in this operation, as boats were not always ready at the crossing places. As a rule not more than four camels, and sometimes less, could be placed in one boat, and the animals had to be previously unloaded and unsaddled, both to save damage to their saddles and burdens, and to avoid the risk of strain to the beasts themselves.

Early on the morning of October 28, Lord Wolseley and Colonel Swaine, with their aides-de-camp, left Wady Halfa by train for Sarras, whence they proceeded on camels to Hannek, escorted by a small detachment of Egyptian troops, and guarded by Arab sheikhs. *En route* they met the Guards' Camel Corps under Colonel Sir G. W. Cummings at a halting place in the desert, and after an exchange of greetings pushed forward to the point where the *Nassif-el-Kheir* steamer was waiting to convey them to Dongola.

Major Kitchener, who was still stationed there, had during the last two months telegraphed various reports concerning the defence of Khartoum, and the movements of the Mahdi. Some short despatches had also come to hand from General Gordon, the more important of which have already been quoted. From a merchant who left Khartoum shortly after Colonel Stewart's departure, Major Kitchener learnt that General Gordon never absented himself from the city, as he was president of the council, which consisted of all the leading merchants. The same informant stated that meat and money were very scarce; and that notes varying in value from one to a thousand piastres had been issued by General Gordon to the amount of £60,000. The notes were from 4 inches to 2 inches in size, and were worded as follows:—"This sum is accepted, and we will pay it at the Khartoum or Cairo treasury after six months." At the top was Gordon's seal, his signature being appended at the foot of the note.

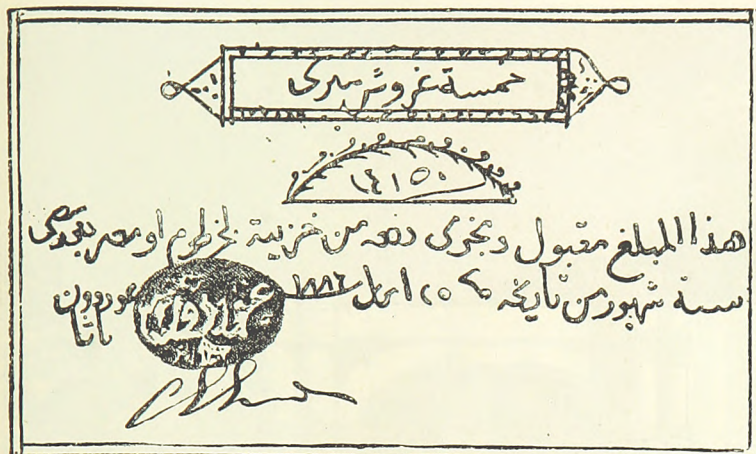
Some interesting particulars concerning the Mahdi's doings at this period were subsequently furnished by Herr Hansal, who for many years had been the Austrian consul at Khartoum. Before the rebellion broke out this gentleman on official occasions was accustomed to be the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, a circumstance which is scarcely astonishing, as he was in the habit of arraying himself in a most fantastic uniform. This comprised a red coat with epaulettes of enormous growth, a long white waistcoat *à la* Sir Charles Grandison, and blue overalls. "He might have stepped out of a scene in a comedy of the last century," says Colonel Colborne, "or he might have been a general officer on the boards of a transpontine theatre." Writing to his government in September Herr Hansal stated that during the earlier



LANDING CAMELS FROM DONGOLA.



LORD WOLSELEY ENCOUNTERING THE CAMEL CORPS IN THE DESERT.



ONE OF GORDON'S NOTES IN CIRCULATION AT KHARTOUM.

part of the month the Mahdi had been at Shatt, four hours' distance from Duem, which is a hundred miles or so south of Khartoum. Among his retinue were all the Christian prisoners, thirteen Europeans, twelve Greeks, and eleven Levantines, who had entered, as dervishes, into the Mahdi's military service. It appears that on September 9 two deputies of the False Prophet arrived at the ramparts of Khartoum and demanded entrance, as they had letters to deliver from the Mahdi to Gordon Pasha, and from the Sisters of the Mission to Herr Hansal. As entrance into the town was refused them, they handed the papers to the sentinels, and then repaired to the hostile camp, not far off. It seems that on September 14 Gordon's men had had another fight with the rebels in the direction of Senaar and were defeated with heavy loss, their square being repeatedly broken. We know but little of what occurred in or around Khartoum for the next fortnight, when a report spread throughout the city that an army of relief was approaching from Dongola. There had been so many false rumours from outside that at first the news was not believed, but on September 29 Herr Hansal wrote in the following hopeful strain :—

"What a joyful Sunday this has been to-day! The inmates of the town were filled with delight when the salute of artillery from the forts announced the approach of the English auxiliaries. Three express messengers brought to General Gordon a letter of Lord Wolseley, from Debbeh, dated August 30, advising him of the advance of nine regiments of English and Indians, under five generals, on Berber and Khartoum, besides twenty ironclad gunboats. One ray of hope for our deliverance still beams then for us. Long live England! Now at least the lives of so many thousands will be saved, even though their goods and chattels may be lost. It is hoped that we shall or must emigrate soon after the arrival of the English. It is not yet known whether they will take permanent possession of the land, or only effect a general retreat, and abandon the country to its fate."

In a postscript Herr Hansal remarked :—

"The most terrific famine imaginable is imminent. The approaching English army has, indeed, scared away all fear of the fanatic barbarians, but hunger will very shortly compel us to relinquish the country, in which an existence suited to mankind has become quite impossible. Not in vain do we pray to God, 'Defend us from war, dearth, and famine.'"

It would seem that it was not until some time in October that the Mahdi arrived in person before Khartoum. He came (so native messengers subsequently reported at Dongola), with a large force to Omdurman, and summoned General Gordon to surrender. The valiant governor of the beleaguered city replied, how-

ever, that he meant to hold out for another twelve years, whereupon the Mahdi retired without fighting to El Goz Elmek, one day south of Khartoum, and gave out that he did not intend to fight for another couple of months. In consequence of this, said the messenger, many of his followers had left him. Another informant, an El Obeid merchant, declared that the Mahdi had about this same time built a sanctuary where he retired to pray. He occasionally invited his chief people in, and delivered an address, which was followed by various pretended miracles, such as causing a coffee tray to move at his command, or producing fire by thrusting his lance into the ground.

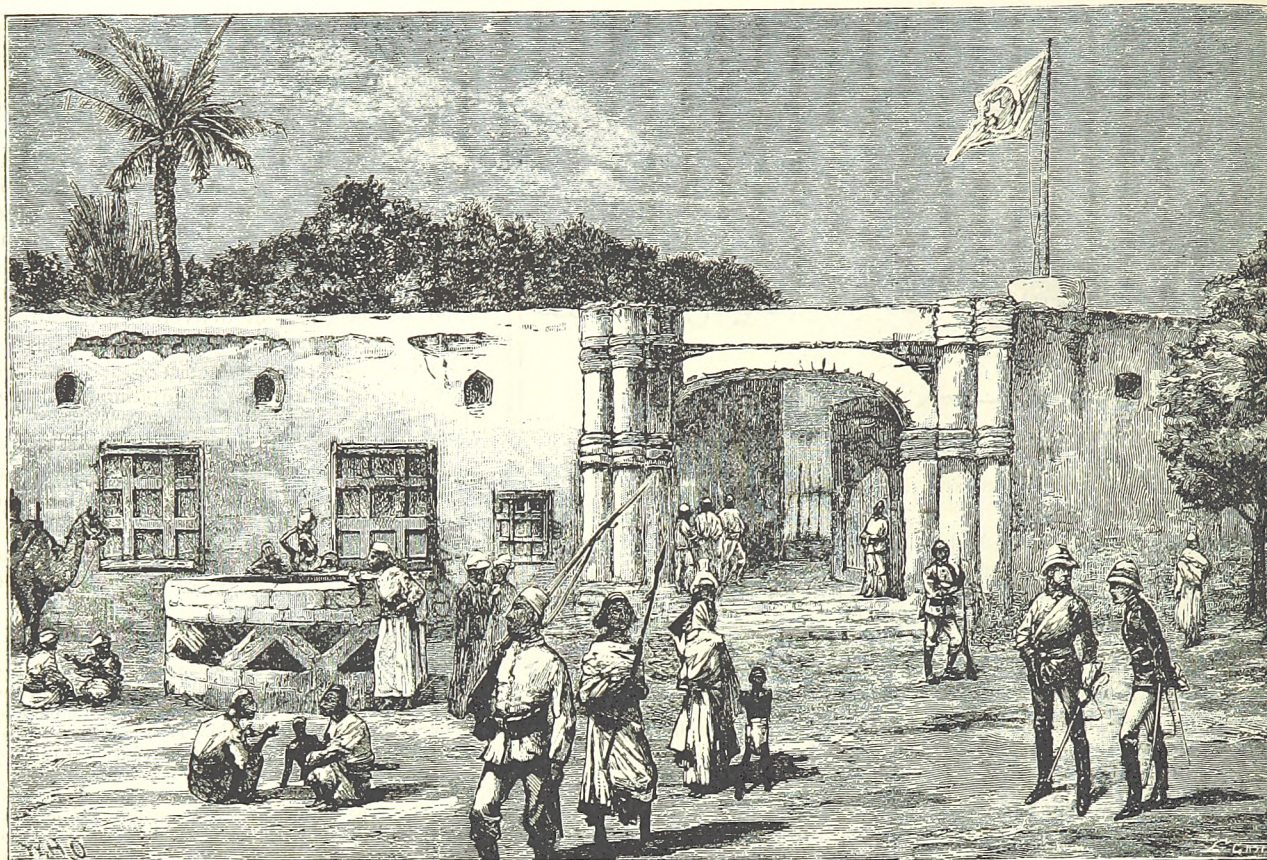
That the proximity of the False Prophet to Khartoum acted as an incentive to treachery within the walls is made evident by a second letter from Herr Hansal bearing date October 25, in which he clearly foreshadowed the ultimate fate of the city and its heroic defenders. He said :—

"It has long been an open secret that conspiracies are constantly going on with the chiefs of the Mahdi. The most prominent notabilities of the town, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, the Kadi, the Mufti, the Mudir, the secretary of Arabi Pasha, living in exile here, and others, are implicated in the plot, the leaders in which, Hassan Ibrahim Pasha and Said Pasha, were beheaded some time ago. A military sentinel with fixed bayonet walks up and down now before their lodgings, but one will scarcely have the courage at this moment to sentence them to the punishment for high treason. The sanctimonious creatures feign the greatest humility towards the authorities, whom in secret they despise and curse. Should it be possible to establish here a settled government, Said Mahommed Achmed would have to be sent out of the world. The name of the Mahdi electrifies the natives, and will curb them as long as he lives. After his death the Eastern Soudan will perish in a chaos unless a civilized Power interferes. The town is blockaded on all sides by the enemy, who seem desirous to take it before the English arrive. They may succeed if they make a violent assault, for our troops are diminished by losses, and five steamers are absent at Berber. If the English army does not advance more rapidly, it will arrive too late."

In a postscript to this letter the Austrian Consul wrote :—

"From the camp of the insurgents military captives are departing (escaping?) almost daily, chiefly Egyptians, singly or in groups, some in full uniform. They describe in gloomy colours the condition of things among the rebels. The combatants receive no wages and no corn. They live exclusively on flesh meat, and epidemics, especially of dysentery, prevail, and there are no physicians. The greatest part of the Mahdi's following consists of women, children, and slaves. The combatants are no more than 7,000 or 8,000 in number. In their blind hatred of the foreigner they overlook the complete ruin of their own people and country. All who live in the Soudan must accommodate themselves in food, clothing, and religion—in short, in everything—to the old traditional manners and customs. The foreign and modern has no home there. The Mahdi as a reformer has already laid down his dogmas in a new book, a sort of Koran or Gospel. Here we are therefore the Protestants."

Such, then, was the situation in and around the beleaguered city when the Commander-in-Chief of the British expedition at last thought fit to draw nearer to Khartoum, proceeding to Dongola, where he arrived on November 3, on board the *Nassif-el-Kheir*, and was received by Sir Herbert Stewart and the Mudir, attended by their staffs. Eighty men of the Royal Sussex formed a guard of honour, while the approach to the Mudirieh was lined by native troops, who in expectation of Lord Wolseley's arrival, had been making every effort to become proficient in their drill. After an exchange of courtesies with the Mudir, the Commander-in-Chief proceeded to his head-quarters; but at sunset on the follow-



ENTRANCE TO THE MUDIRIEH OF DONGOLA.

ing day he repaired to the Mudiriah, accompanied by his staff and a mounted escort. The square courtyard was lined with the native troops, behind whom a crowd of inquisitive Dongolese Arabs had assembled. The Mudir himself awaited Lord Wolseley with becoming courtesy on the verandah. Despite his exalted rank he was in a flutter of hope and expectation, as he had already got scent of the fact that the British Commander intended to confer a very distinguished honour upon him.

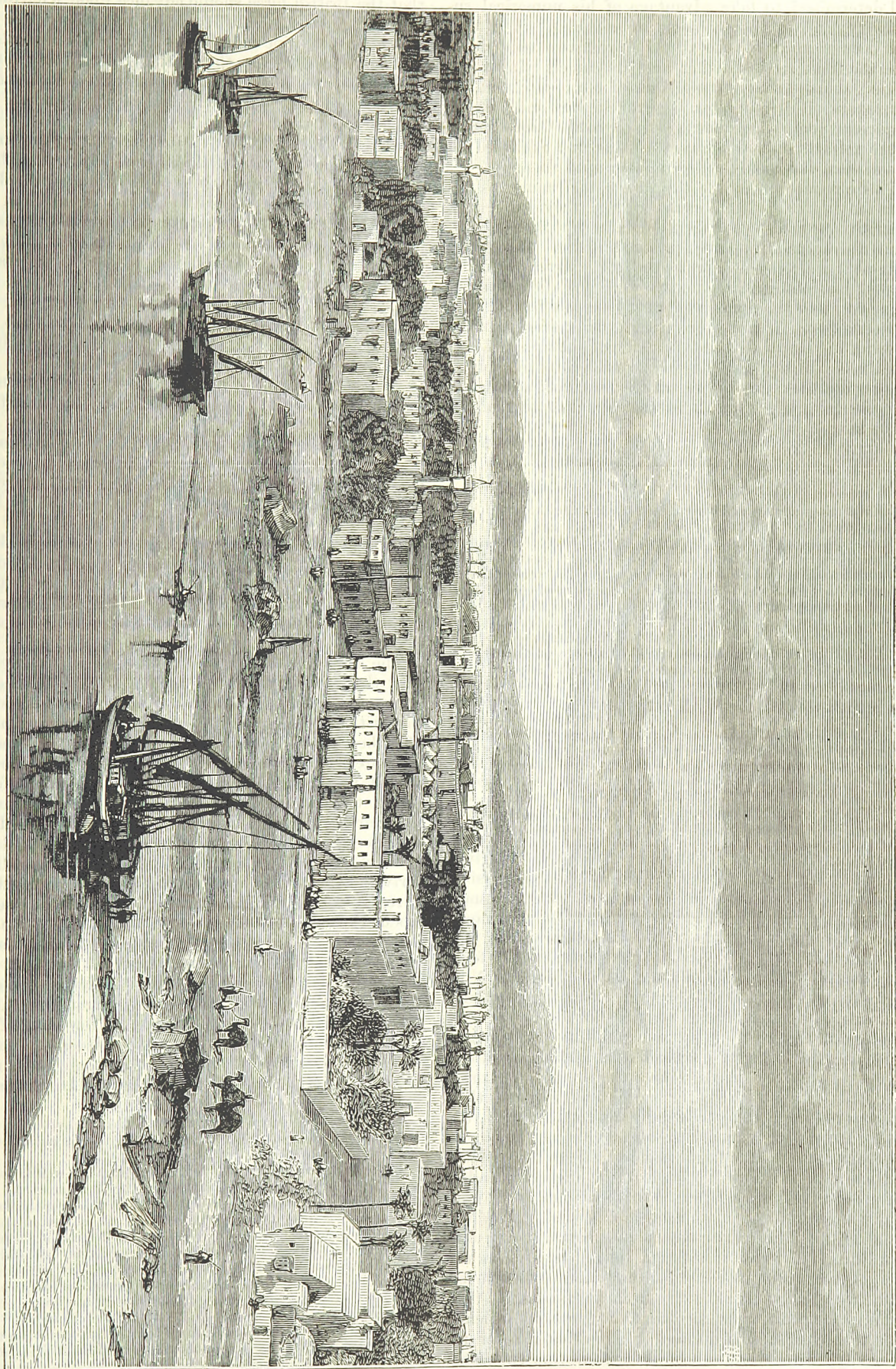
On Lord Wolseley's arrival at the Mudiriah the customary salutations were exchanged, and then the Mudir called upon the Iman to offer up prayers, to which the assembled crowd made responses in loud tones. As soon as the prayers were over the British Commander approached the Mudir, who stood in an attitude of real or assumed humility, and invested him with the insignia of a Knight Commander of the order of St. Michael and St. George; the proclamation, which was necessarily in Arabic, being read by the Iman to the crowd. It was then the Mudir's turn to speak, and while modestly expressing the opinion that the honour conferred upon him was altogether too exalted and unmerited, he promised that he would render all possible assistance to the British expedition.

Such frequent mention has been made of the Mudir of Dongola, and he has played so conspicuous a part in the Soudan war, that some description of his person and character will not be out of place here. "Mohammed Hassein Khalifa, the great chief of the Ababdeh and Bishareen Arabs," remarks the American General Colston, who knew the Mudir well, "is the patriarchal yet almost absolute ruler of over seventy thousand people. His ancestors were princes for generations, perhaps before the

days of the Prophet. He is now about sixty years of age, nearly six feet high, and of dignified presence. His colour is dark chocolate. He has excellent features, large black eyes, a curved aquiline nose, thin lips, and a fine beard. He is extremely wealthy in silver and gold, jewels and precious arms, camels, horses, and slaves. In ordinary times he is held responsible for the security of trade and travel through the eastern deserts, and receives a large royalty upon the moneys paid to his people as guides, carriers, and camel drivers; for it is one of the privileges claimed by them that no one—not even Government expeditions—shall pass through their country without hiring them and their camels. Mohammed Hassein reminded me of Abraham, only he is a much more powerful sheikh than Abraham ever was."*

On the morrow the Mudir was present with Lord Wolseley at a review of the Royal Sussex regiment, and a detachment of the Camel Corps, and at a sham fight which ensued, in order to test the steadiness of the camels in square. The general idea of this mimic engagement was as follows:—A detachment composed of 120 of the corps was marching along a desert route, when its scouts discovered the presence of a hostile mounted force numbering over 1000 men. The two forces opposed each other, and manœuvred in order to turn one another's flank. After manœuvring for some time ineffectually the officer commanding the Camel Corps, feeling that the necessity he was under of obtaining water prevented him from making a definite retreat, resolved on a determined stand against the attack of the enemy. About the same time the latter found that his ammunition was expended

* "The Land of the False Prophet," by General Colston, in the *Century* magazine.



VIEW OF DONGOLA.

and determined to take advantage of his numerical superiority, and to charge home at any cost. A square had been formed by the Camel Corps, two men deep, with the front rank kneeling, and the camels lying down inside; and the charge was sustained most successfully; the report of the umpires, General Stewart and Colonel Vandeleur, being altogether favourable to the Camel Corps, as the animals showed great steadiness, and exhibited no alarm when the enemy charged down upon them.

This promised well for the future, and, much as the men may have disliked camel riding, they were in a measure reconciled to their mounts by the bravery which the animals displayed in standing fire. The troops stationed at Dongola now longed for a bout with the enemy, but unfortunately, such were the difficulties of transport, that the main body of the expedition had not yet come up. It was more urgent than ever to press forward, for although the repeated rumours that Khartoum had already fallen were generally disbelieved, it was certain that the city was closely invested, and delay, if prolonged, might result in that awful contingency—"Too late!"

CHAPTER XV.

The advance for the relief of Khartoum practically commences.—Gordon announces that he can hold out for forty days, and that he has sent five steamers to meet the British troops.—Rebel successes.—The Egyptian prisoners in the Mahdi's camp.—Roman Catholic nuns married to Greek captives.—Slaten Bey well treated but in chains.—Olivier Pain, the Mahdi's chancellor.—Reported surrender of Lupton Bey.—Lord Wolseley returns to Wady Halfa.—General order to the troops.—£100 prize for the best passage.—Supplies on board the whale boats.—Military stations along the Nile.—The difficulties of navigation.—The race up the river.—"Tommy Atkins" as an oarsman.—Scenery from Sarra to Dongola.—The Hannek cataract.—Lord Wolseley returns to the front, leaves Dongola and proceeds to Korti.—Reports from Khartoum.—Gordon challenges the Mahdi to dry up the Nile.—Casualties to boats and men.—Wear and tear of the oarsmen.—Falstaff's ragged regiment.—Head-quarters at Korti.—Testing the steadiness of the camels.—Christmas festivities.—Lord Wolseley's plan.—Two columns formed under Generals Earle and Stewart.—Stewart's march to Gakdul Wells.—Capture of the enemy's supplies.—A running fight in the desert.—Return of Stewart to Korti.—News from Khartoum.—Gordon's secret message.

BEFORE leaving Wady Halfa, Lord Wolseley had given orders for the troops to hurry forward with all possible dispatch. There was as yet but a mere advance guard at Dongola, including the 1st battalion of the Royal Sussex and some squadrons of the 19th Hussars and the Camel Corps; the main body of the expeditionary force being still at Wady Halfa or even lower down the Nile. However, on Nov. 2, the general advance practically commenced by the South Staffordshire regiment embarking for Dongola. Some detachments of the Essex regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's regiment, the Royal Engineers and the Guards' Camel Corps, started shortly afterwards, either by river or road; and as more than 400 whale boats had now passed the second cataract, the prompt arrival of men and stores at Dongola was to be expected. It soon became evident that the utmost diligence was necessary, for on Nov. 14, the Commander-in-Chief received information that Khartoum could hold out for another forty days, but that afterwards "it would be difficult." This important news came in a despatch from General Gordon, which had been ten days on the road; so that Lord Wolseley had but another month left to him in which to free the city from its assailants.

"Your expedition is for relief of garrison, which I failed to accomplish. I decline to agree that it is for me personally," wrote Gordon, who at the same time suggested

that the British force should advance upon Khartoum by the road from Ambukol to Matamah, where five of his steamers with nine guns awaited it. His journals were on board, he said, together with all details and a map of Berber. "Do not let any Egyptian soldiers come up here," he added, "take command of the steamers direct, and turn out the Egyptian fellaheen."

Gordon also furnished some interesting information respecting the position at Khartoum. He stated that the Arabs had their Krupp guns with them, and had often hulled his steamers. They had moreover captured two of the smaller ones at Berber, (perhaps on the occasion of Stewart's departure), and a third on the Blue Nile. Since then he had built two new ones. He was still issuing paper money, and also all the stores in the magazines. Three million rounds had been fired by his troops since the commencement of the siege, but lately there had only been occasional fights with the Arabs, who were stationed on the south, south-west and east of the town some distance off; all the north side, along the White Nile, being free.* The Mahdi was about eight miles away, and had all the European prisoners in his train. The nuns who were anxious to avoid an Arab marriage, were ostensibly married to Greek captives, and Gordon jocosely alluded to this as "the union of the Latin and Greek churches." Slaten Bey, who was with the Mahdi, had all his property and was well treated, "but," added Gordon in the same line, "I hear to-day he is in chains." A mysterious Frenchman,† who had come from Dongola, was said to be with the False Prophet; and the latter had reported the surrender of Lupton Bey, the governor of Bahr-el-Ghazel. On the other hand Senaar was "all right," and knew that the British were coming.

The most important news contained in this despatch was the statement concerning the limited time that Khartoum could still hold out; and, in view of hastening the British advance, Lord Wolseley left Dongola on Nov. 13—the very day that Parliament voted a supplementary estimate of a million sterling for the expedition—and proceeded to Wady Halfa, where he gave orders for the troops to be hurried forward. This was all the more necessary as the Nile was now rapidly falling. During the Commander-in-Chief's absence from Dongola, the field telegraph line was put in order, and to expedite the arrival of the troops, arrangements were made to establish a regular ferry at Haffir, twenty miles down the Nile. About the same time news came to hand that the rebels had returned in force to Omdurman, and that two steamers, sent by Gordon to shell them, had been driven back to Khartoum by the fire of the Krupp guns—said to be pointed by Turkish topstis, commonly reputed to be the best marksmen in the world. A few cases of small-pox occurred at this period among the troops at Dongola; and, as it was deemed advisable to change the camping-ground, General Sir Herbert Stewart and his staff started

* This news was shortly afterwards confirmed by various natives, who reported that Khartoum was besieged within a radius of twelve miles by 20,000 Arabs with 13 guns.

† This was none other than M. Olivier Pain, the well known Communistic journalist. Transported to New Caledonia after the Parisian rising of 1871, he made his escape with Henri Rochefort and returned to Europe. Joining the Sultan's army at the outset of the Russo-Turkish war, he took part in the memorable defence of Plevna under Osman Pasha; and in 1884 he left France for Egypt ostensibly as the special correspondent of the *Figaro* newspaper, but with the secret intention of joining the Mahdi. After several mishaps he finally succeeded in doing so, and since that date it has been persistently rumoured that he was acting as the Mahdi's "chancellor." Subsequently he seems to have endeavoured to make his way down the Nile, on hearing of which the Egyptian authorities thought fit to offer £50 for the adventurous Frenchman's capture.

on November 23 to select a new spot some twenty miles southward.

All the remaining troops destined to take part in the expedition reached Wady Halfa by the end of November, with the exception of the 1st battalion of the Cameron Highlanders, which remained at Korosko. The decisive moment was now fast approaching. On November 25 Lord Wolseley gave orders for the formation of a naval brigade, to be commanded by Lord Charles Beresford, his naval aide-de-camp; and five days later he issued a stirring general order, which ran as follows:—

“TO THE SAILORS, SOLDIERS, AND MARINES OF THE NILE EXPEDITION.—The relief of General Gordon and his garrison, so long besieged in Khartoum, is the glorious mission which the Queen has entrusted to us. It is an enterprise that will stir the heart of every soldier and sailor fortunate enough to have been selected to share in it, and the very magnitude of its difficulty only stimulates us to increased exertions. We are all proud of General Gordon and his gallant and self-sacrificing defence of Khartoum, which has added, if possible, to his already high reputation. He cannot hold out many months longer, and he now calls upon us to save his garrison. His heroism and his patriotism are household words wherever our language is spoken; and not only has his safety become a matter of national importance, but the knowledge that our brave comrade needs help urges us to push forward with redoubled energy. Neither he nor his garrison can be allowed to meet the sad fate which befell his gallant companion-in-arms, Colonel Stewart, who, when endeavouring to carry out an enterprise of unusual danger, was foully and treacherously murdered by his captors. We can—and with God's help will—save General Gordon from such a death. The labour of working up this river is immense, and to bear it uncomplainingly demands the highest soldierlike qualities, that contempt for danger, and that determination to overcome difficulty which in previous campaigns have so distinguished all ranks of her Majesty's army and navy. The physical obstacles that impede our rapid progress are considerable, but who cares for them when it is remembered that General Gordon and his garrison are in danger? Under God their safety is now in our hands, and come what may, we must save them. It is needless to say more to British soldiers and sailors.—(Signed) “WOLSELEY.”

This order was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the troops, whose emulation was increased by Lord Wolseley offering a prize of £100 to the battalion which made the best passage up the Nile to Debbeh, where it had now been decided to concentrate the force.

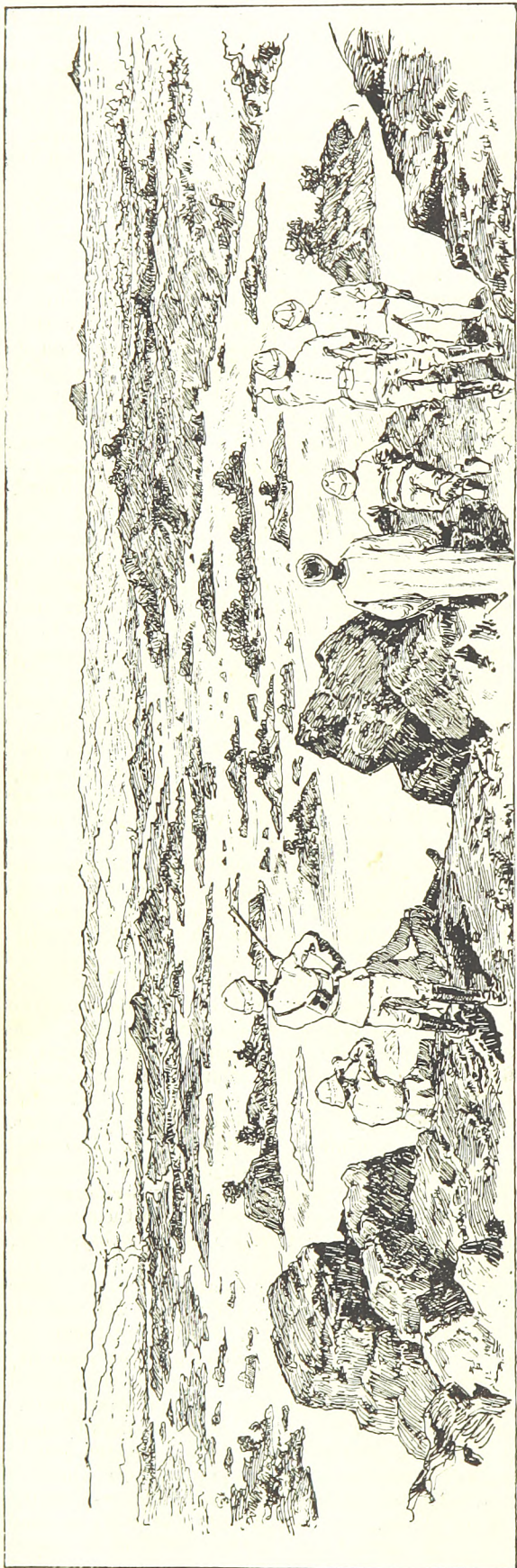
The start of the South Staffordshire was followed by that of the Cornwall regiment, the West Kent, the Royal Irish, the Gordon Highlanders, and such portions of the Camel Corps, Artillery, and Transport Service as had not yet moved forward. While the mounted detachments proceeded by road along the western bank of the Nile, the foot soldiers rowed lustily up the river in one or another of the 800 whale-boats sent out from England. The latter collectively were provided with seventeen miles of cotton rope, two inches in circumference, and with nearly nine tons of charcoal, sufficient for two years' supply. The boats, moreover, contained a great quantity of stores.* The first practical attempt to ascend the river from Wady Halfa in these whaler boats was made in November by a detachment of the 26th company Royal Engineers in five boats. The party numbered fifty-seven, and included an Arabic interpreter, a servant, a Rais to act as a guide up the rapids, and five Canadians, four of

whom were left at Dal, and the remaining one at Hannek cataract. The voyage, beginning at Jamai and ending at Debbeh, a distance of 313 miles, commenced on November 1, and concluded on December 7, a period of thirty-seven days. The greatest distance covered in a given time was forty-two miles in forty-eight hours. At the rapids the stores were either wholly or partly removed and portaged on camel-back, while the boats were pulled through the rapids or impelled by sail and oar. They certainly reached Dongola, but so badly damaged that some fears were entertained about the expediency of bringing the greater part of the expedition up the river in boats. To provide for the wants and the relief of the men on the way, a series of stations had been established at Muhrat Wells, Ambigol, Akasha, Tangour, Sarka-Matto (or Dal), Absaret, Kaibar, and Abu Fatmeh, there being on an average one for every thirty-three miles of the river's course between Sarras and Dongola. Each station was commanded by an officer, whose rank was generally that of a colonel with staff degree, and who had a detachment of Egyptian soldiers under him, with a commissariat dépôt to supply the wants of the different corps proceeding to the front.

It appears that in the month of November the voyage, in native boats or nuggars from Sarras to the north end of the Hannek rapid, a distance of 150 miles, occupied but twenty-eight days—relays of nuggars being used between the rapids, past which the baggage was portaged on camels. The passage of the native boats was greatly facilitated by the fierce and often bitter north wind which constantly blows up the Nile. “In ascending the river,” says the writer in *The Times* whom we have already quoted, “the traveller may be certain of the north wind to waft him, canvas spread; and in moving down he may equally be certain of the current to carry him, with the sail furled. The current, which varies according to season and to place, is greatest in August and September at the rapids, and least in March in the reaches between the cataracts. The descent of the river is more difficult and dangerous than the ascent, for in the latter case, it is easy to stop the boat's way by lowering the sail. The current will then sweep her away from any danger ahead. In descending, however, the current constantly tends to carry the boat on to the rocks or sand banks before it. The nuggar descends in a manner peculiarly her own. She goes stern foremost, with the sail either closely furled or slightly unfurled to deflect her from danger, or to carry her into the strongest downward current. She is steered partly by her great rudder acting on contrary currents, and partly by the wind acting on the sail. The skill shown by the natives in managing one of these boats is something surprising. One instant the traveller anticipates his destruction on a rock towards which the torrent is sweeping him; but the next he is in safety, how, he can scarcely say.”

In reference to the whaler boats the same writer observes, that “on the whole they were well enough suited for their work. The chief defect about them was the smallness of the rudder, which should have been unusually large. Owing to its diminutive proportions it had to be increased in size by attaching to it pieces of plank.” At a later period the descent of these whalers by oars, became as sure as the ascent, save that greater care in steering was required, and that the rapids, in whole or part, had to be shot instead of tracked. A course down a rapid being chosen, the men rowed as strongly as they could in order to get good steerageway on the boat. Slack rowing would have led to disaster, for a man upset in the fairway course of a rapid, must inevitably be

* In each boat there were ordered to be placed the following articles, though it is impossible to say with certainty that they were all actually furnished:—A charcoal stove, a foot deep; three nets, 36 feet in length; 56 cases of stores for boatmen; 440 cases of stores for soldiers; a sponge bath; six sacks, for stores by the way; a spring balance, for rations; a lamp box, with two gallons of oil and 6 feet of cotton wick; and the medical box, containing three bottles of port wine, eight bottles of brandy, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of mustard, 1 lb. of yellow soap, 1 lb. of candles, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of compressed tea, twelve tins of Liebig's extractum carnis, four tins of milk, six tins of cocoa and milk, two boxes of matches, corkserew, and tin cutter.—“The Nile Route to Khartoum.”—*The Times*, April 8, 1885.



THE BATN-EL-HAJAR, OR BELLY OF STONE.

sucked down and drowned. † Altogether the task was not an easy one, and so great was the labour entailed in rowing, and in tracking 313 miles, and so indifferent was the food that many of the men went into the hospitals by the river side. Far up the Nile one officer stated that he had thus left 30 per cent. of his men, and the statistical doctor of the expedition ultimately reported that there was not a single soldier under 23 years of age who had passed the first six months of the expedition without going into hospital.

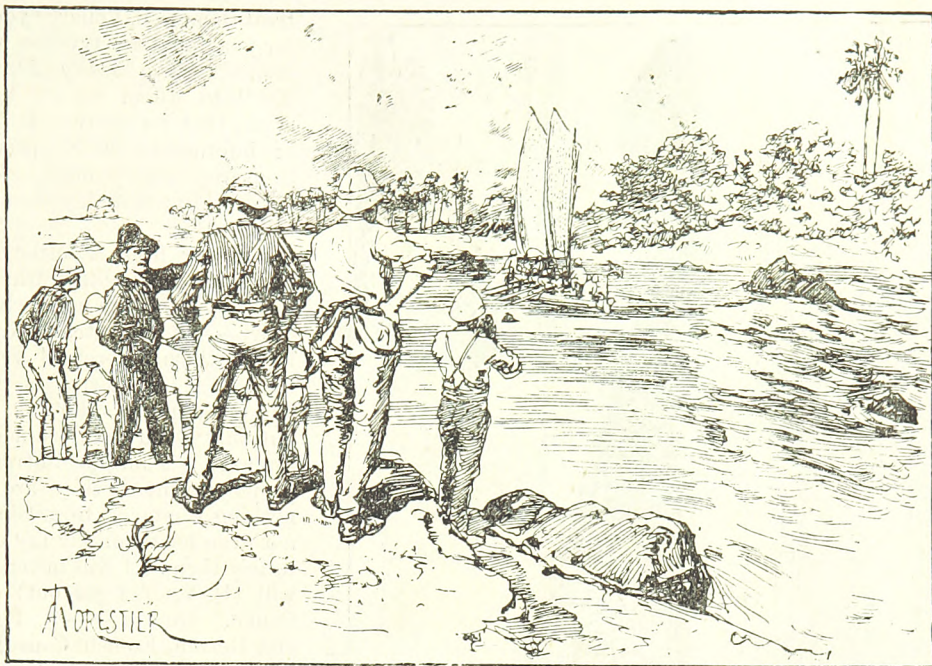
The men by no means went there readily, but human endurance has its limits. As long as it was possible they battled against the many obstacles in their way, with all the pluck and nerve characteristic of the British soldier. On they went up the Nile, rowing with might and main—not for the sake of the £100 offered by the Commander-in-Chief (for £100 distributed among a battalion of troops, meant only a few paltry shillings a head) but for the glory of the thing, for the honour that would accompany success, for the sake of being able to say, “we won the Wolseley prize.”* Englishmen, it has been remarked, have such a cool contempt for danger that they glory in making a sport of it, or in getting sport out of it where that is possible; and it was in obedience to this feeling that, for the sheer fun of the thing, the expeditionary force resolved to make the passage of the Nile, about which so much gloomy foreboding was hazarded, a mere matter of sportive adventure.

The men went onward pluckily, now rowing in fast time, now shoving their boats off a sand-bank, now poling away from a sunken rock, now pulling at a tow rope on the stony shore. Sarras and its picturesque castle were passed, the old fortifications and temples which crown the high banks round about Samneh, were left behind; and then the boats sped towards Ambigol and Tangour, still amid wild and foaming eddies, shifting sands and ever varying channels, with a sparsely cultivated region stretching on either side, and but a few palm-trees rising up here and there. Beyond the Tangour cataract, however, the scenery became more picturesque, the eye lighting upon a succession of mud villages and forts, rocky points, green banks and swirling rapids. Then Dal was reached and here a range of volcanic rocks, with peaks piled in endless confusion, bounded both banks of the river. A semicircle of breakers over which the water boiled and foamed, extended for a couple of hundred yards and then came a number of craggy islands on which mud forts and houses were picturesquely grouped, fully one hundred feet above the stream. Beyond Dal the boats passed more ruins of fortresses, huge sand-drifts often forty feet high, and a few minute patches of beans planted here and there, wherever the receding river had left a little soil. Near the palmy isle of Say, the temple of Tolib, the finest of its kind above the second cataract, could be seen about a quarter of a mile from the shore, with its eight remaining columns rising up amid a pile of ruins. Then the river, still fringed with volcanic rocks, expanded to a greater width, the vegetation became more scanty, and the desert grew hilly, with plains two or three miles broad extending between belts of heights. On went the plucky oarsmen of the expedition past Kaibar and its rapids, past Tumbos and its quarries—with a colossal statue twelve feet long lying where it was cut out from the stone thousands of years ago—and at last the final obstacle, the Hannek, or third great cataract, could be heard roaring half a mile away.

* The prize offered by the Commander-in-Chief was ultimately won by the Royal Irish; the second best passage being made by the Gordon Highlanders; and the third by the West Kent.

Here the passage was extremely difficult and dangerous, and now and again a boat was badly damaged, and had to be hauled on shore for repairs. But as soon as the rapids were passed the open course of the river allowed of more speedy progress. The scenery lost its rocky character and the desert changed to a wide sandy plain stretching far away beyond the palm-trees which studded either shore, in broken lines for a time and then in shady groves around the town of Dongola.

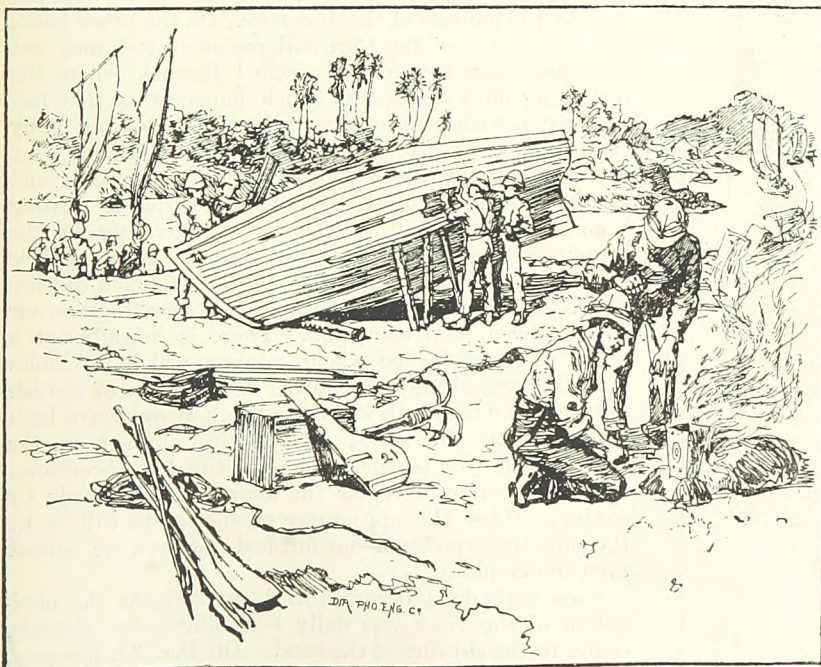
While the troops were thus proceeding up the Nile, Lord Wolseley returned to the front. It had originally been intended to transfer the headquarters from Dongola to Ambukol in accordance with General Gordon's suggestion, but it was finally decided that the troops should assemble at Korti, a few miles farther up the river, and in a much healthier spot. Sir Herbert Stewart with the Mounted Infantry and the Guards' Camel Corps arrived there on December 15, after an easy march along the left bank of the Nile, which was found to be rich in produce and cattle. A couple of days previously Lord Wolseley himself had left Dongola after promising to send for the Mudir as soon as matters were ready at the front. The Mudir modestly replied that he was at his lordship's orders. The General then enquired what supplies would be available along the river route beyond Merawi, to which the Mudir answered that there would be an abundance of sheep, dhurra, wheat, and barley at that season of the



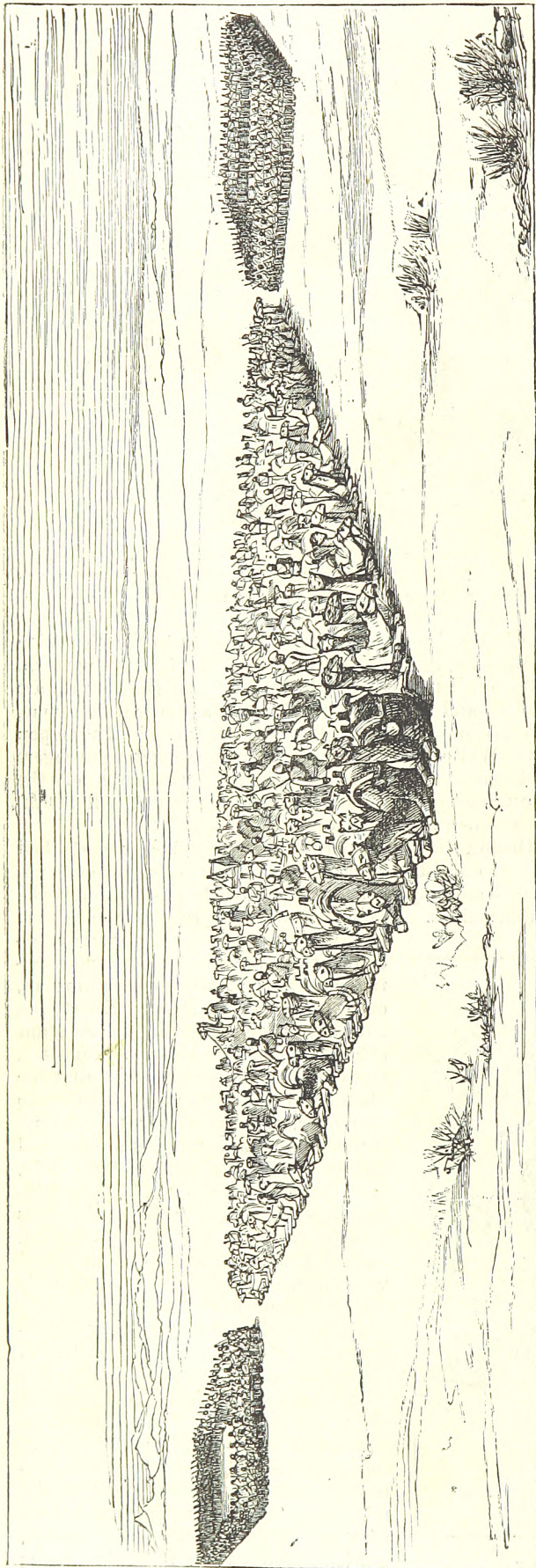
A DANGEROUS PART OF THE HANNEK CATARACT.

year. He also repeated the rumours as to the dispersion of the enemy upon the report of the British approach. "The rebel troops know," he said, "that the English are coming, and from here to Khartoum you will find none, and have no fighting. They are all gone." Thereupon Lord Wolseley asked, "Why don't we get messengers backwards and forwards then?" "Because of the country people," replied the Mudir, "but it will be different when the soldiers march."

During the earlier part of December fresh reports had come to hand respecting the situation at Khartoum, several messengers having managed to pass through the Mahdi's lines. Their statements were at variance with the Mudir's assurances, for they declared that the rebels were now gathered in force round about Omdurman, on the north-west side of Khartoum, and that they were making constant attacks, which were invariably repulsed. One of the messengers reported that the Mahdi had again summoned Gordon to surrender, whereupon the General returned the answer, "If you are the real Mahdi, dry up the waters of the Nile, and come and take me." Other informants affirmed that the garrison was greatly straitened and in want of food, and that a number of old men and women, who preferred taking their chance among the kindred tribes in the surrounding villages, had been allowed to leave the town. It has in fact been asserted that, owing to the scarcity of provisions, Gordon sent these old people away without giving them the option of remaining; and we are told that when they expressed alarm as to the fate reserved for them in the rebel camp the General provided them with an introduction to the Mahdi, worded as follows:—"Be kind to these;



REPAIRING A WHALE BOAT NEAR THE HANNEK CATARACT.



CAMEL CORPS IN SQUARE TO RECEIVE ENEMY'S ATTACK.

treat them well, I charge you. Behold I have kept all these for four months; try how you will like doing so for one month." The *Daily News'* military correspondent at Korti, to whom we are indebted for this information, states that he derived it from several sources. One of his informants, the Egyptian soldier whose narrative has been frequently quoted, added that the Mahdi accepted these old men and women, "and they are with him to this day."

Judging from a letter which Gordon wrote at this juncture to a military friend in Cairo, his patience was sorely tired by the non-arrival of the relief column. "My dear ——" he wrote, on November 26, "Thanks for your letter, which I received yesterday. The steamer which brought it had to run the gauntlet of no end of rifle fire and of six guns. She was struck three times by shells, but only seven were wounded. I hope you and Mrs. —— are well. I am not ill-treated I consider, but the Cairo people up here, they are the ill-used. I will accept nothing whatever from Gladstone's Government. I will not even let them pay my expenses. I will get the King to pay them. I will never put foot in England again, but will (D. V. if I get out) go to Brussels, and so on to Congo. How is ——? I greatly fear for Stewart, Power, and Herbin, French Consul. With kindest regards, believe me, yours sincerely, with kindest regards to Mrs. ——, C. G. GORDON."

Lord Wolseley's arrival at Korti on Dec. 16 was followed by that of the South Staffordshire men, who had come by boat from Wady Halfa. Telegraphing at this period to Lord Hartington the Commander-in-Chief said, "The English boats have up to this point fulfilled all my expectations. The men are in excellent health, fit for any trial of strength, as result of constant manual labour. The work in the boats against current is very hard, but is borne most cheerfully, without a grumble." On the whole, the result of the Nile trip was certainly satisfactory, although several casualties had naturally enough occurred. One boat containing a couple of newspaper correspondents and a party of soldiers capsized some seventeen miles from Korti, but fortunately enough, although the baggage was lost, all the occupants were rescued by the pinnacle of the *Inflexible*. On the other hand, two companies of the Cornwall regiment lost nine out of sixteen boats before they reached Hannek, where the remaining ones suffered so much damage that they had to be patched with tin to prevent them from sinking. Many of the men were described at this period as being in a deplorable plight, without either boots or trousers; and the correspondent of the *Standard* newspaper writing from Korti remarked;—"The troops arriving in the boats present an absolutely ludicrous appearance in their torn and ragged garments, the condition of which testifies to the utter unsuitability of the clothes served out to our soldiers for a hard campaign. There is literally not a sound garment in the whole column, which resembles Falstaff's ragged regiment rather than a body of British troops. The tartan trews of the Black Watch have been patched with old sacks, with native cloth from the bazaars, and even portions of biscuit tins have been sewn on to the trousers to repair the wear and tear made by rowing. What the appearance of the troops will be by the time the expedition has finished its work we cannot even contemplate."

Some little delay occurred in the arrivals, as the navigation of the river was daily becoming more difficult, owing to the shifting of the sand. On Dec. 22, however, the last companies of the South Staffordshire reached the front, with part of the Sussex regiment, and these



FATIGUE PARTY OF THE BLACK WATCH AT KORTI.

were speedily followed by other detachments. The Light Camel Corps, composed of men from the 3rd, 4th, and 7th Hussars, under Colonel McCalmont, arrived on the 24th, after a twenty days' march from Wady Halfa; and, at the same time, the Heavy Camel Corps came up from Debbeh. General Sir Redvers Buller, the chief of the staff, reached the front soon afterwards, and the camping arrangements went forward with great speed. The natives around Korti proved very friendly, and even organised a large fair for the sale of cattle and sheep, grain, dates, and salt, so that supplies were not wanting. A hospital had been erected in a shady spot for the accommodation of the men who were laid-up from the effects of hard rowing; the field telegraph had been laid down, so that Lord Wolseley was able to correspond with his subordinates in the rear, and busy activity prevailed on all sides: stores were landed and collected in the magazines; fatigue-parties could be seen marching here and there; the Camel Corps were subjected to constant drill, being taught how to form square, while the steadiness of the animals was tested in a variety of ways. However, they behaved admirably through the most trying ordeals; barely raising their heads or blinking even when the Hussars dashed past them in a thundering charge.

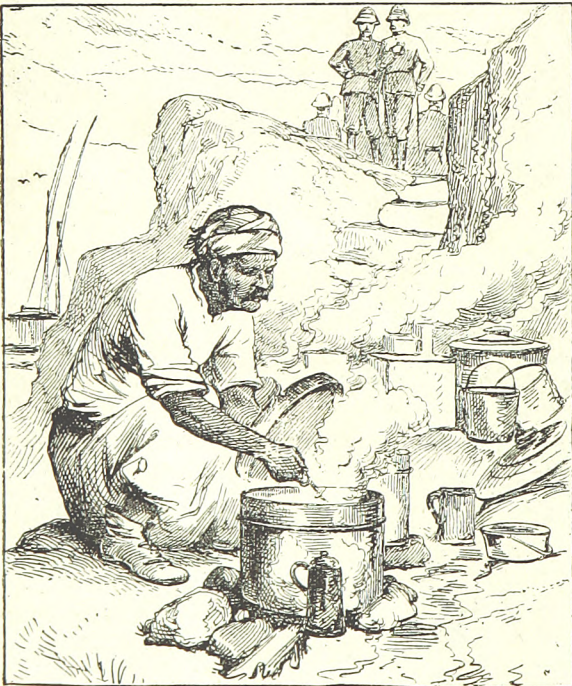


LORD WOLSELEY COMMUNICATING WITH THE GENERALS BY TELEGRAPH.

The festivities of Christmas-tide came right welcome in the midst of all the hard work. Mistletoe and holly were certainly wanting among the palm groves where the troops were encamped, but the traditional pudding had been provided, and the men did ample justice to this savoury but indigestible compound. Early in the morning on Christmas day, there was a grand parade, and at half-past seven the chaplains held a semi-choral service, which was followed a few hours afterwards by the administration of the holy communion. In the evening Lord Wolseley and his staff attended a camp-fire "sing-song," at which several men of the different arms gave proof of their vocal accomplishments, both in the sentimental and the comic line. Before the concert began, however, Colonel Swaine stepped forward and announced that the Commander-in-Chief had just received a telegram of good wishes from the Duke of Cambridge and the Marquis of Hartington. This telegram was then read aloud, and received with hearty cheers. It ran as follows: "Our united best wishes to yourself and troops at this festival season. May success attend your efforts."

As soon as the Christmas festivities were over, the preparations for an early advance were vigorously resumed. Lord Wolseley had decided to form two separate columns—one commanded by Major-General Earle and the second by Brigadier-General Sir Herbert Stewart. The former force, consisting of the Staffordshire regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's regiment, the Black Watch, two companies of the Gordon Highlanders, a squadron of the 19th Hussars, the Egyptian Camel Corps, and the auxiliary native troops of the Mudir of Dongola—the whole numbering 2200 men, with 1800 camels, 400 horses, and six screw guns—was to proceed up the Nile to punish the Monassir tribe for the murder of Colonel Stewart. It was then to advance on Abu Hamed and open the desert road between that place and Korosko, whence all necessary stores would be forwarded.

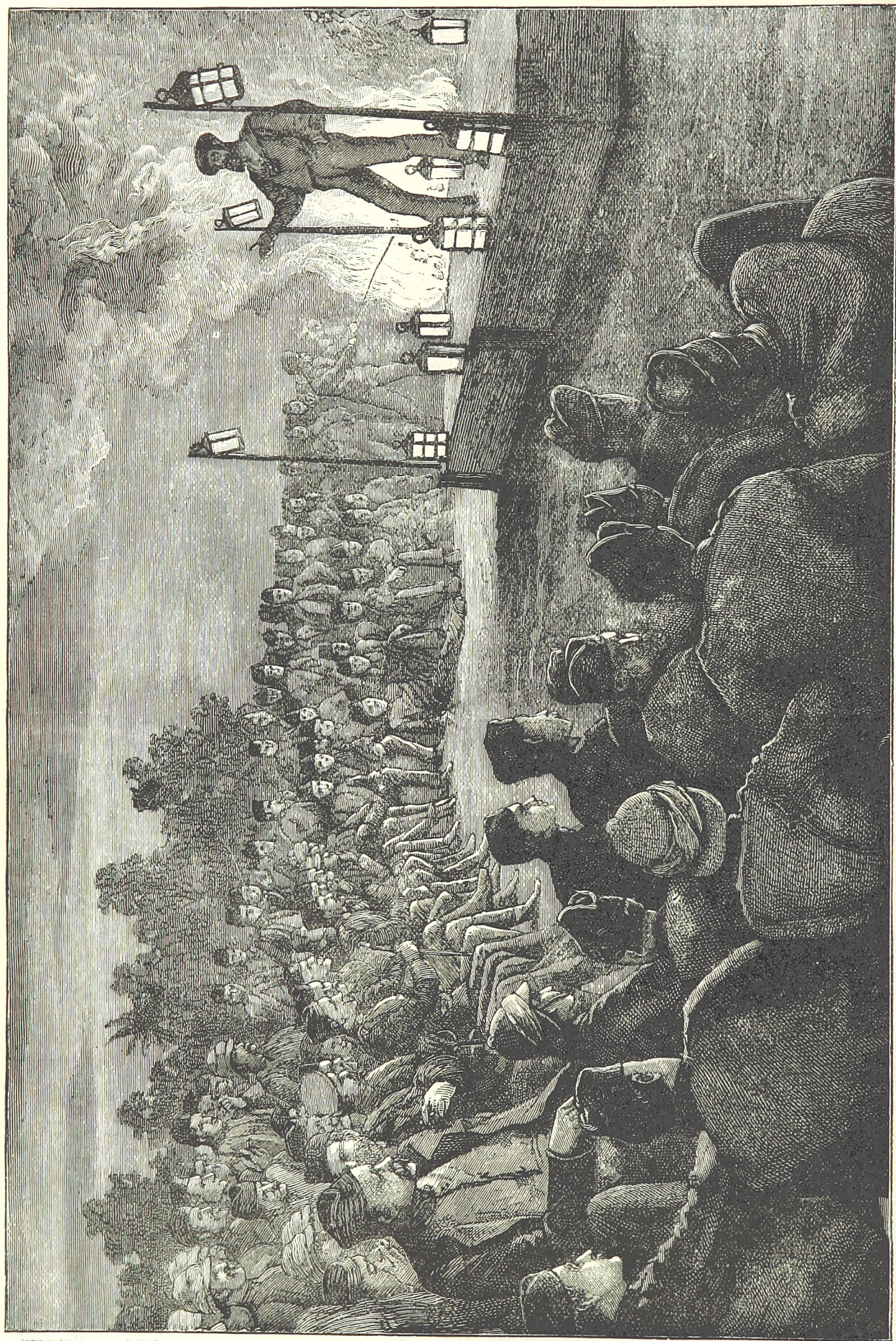
On the other hand, General Sir Herbert Stewart and



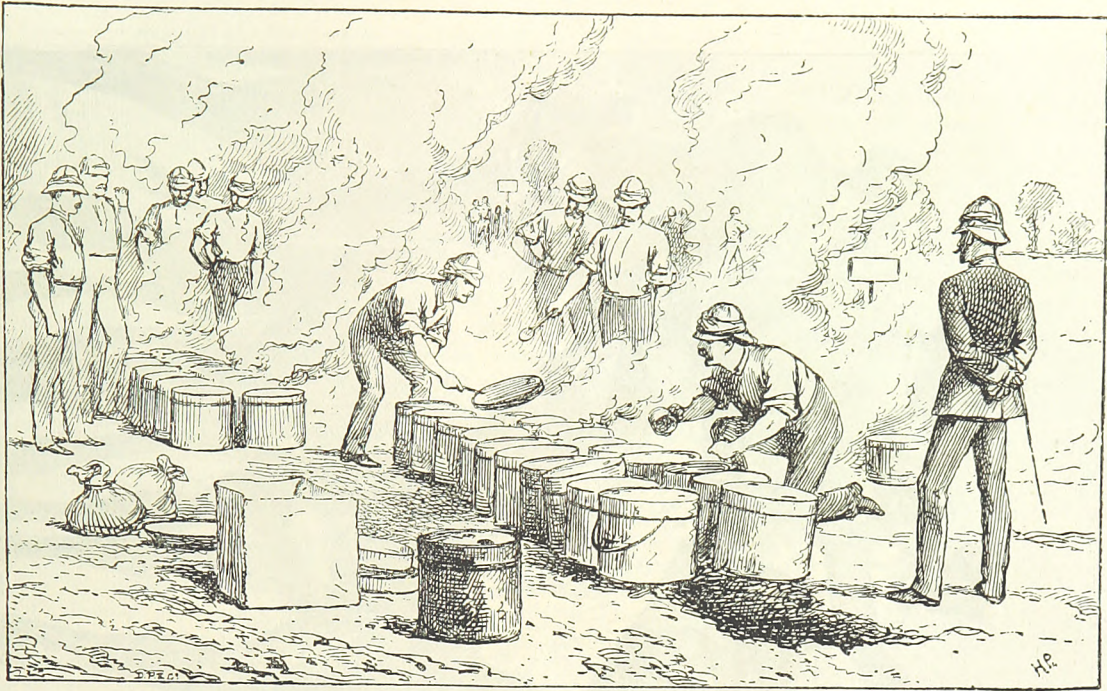
COOKING THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING FOR THE HEAVIES,

THE 19TH HUSSARS CHARGING A CORNER OF THE CAMEL SQUARE TO TEST THE STEADINESS OF THE ANIMALS.





CONCERT AT KOBTI ON CHRISTMAS DAY.



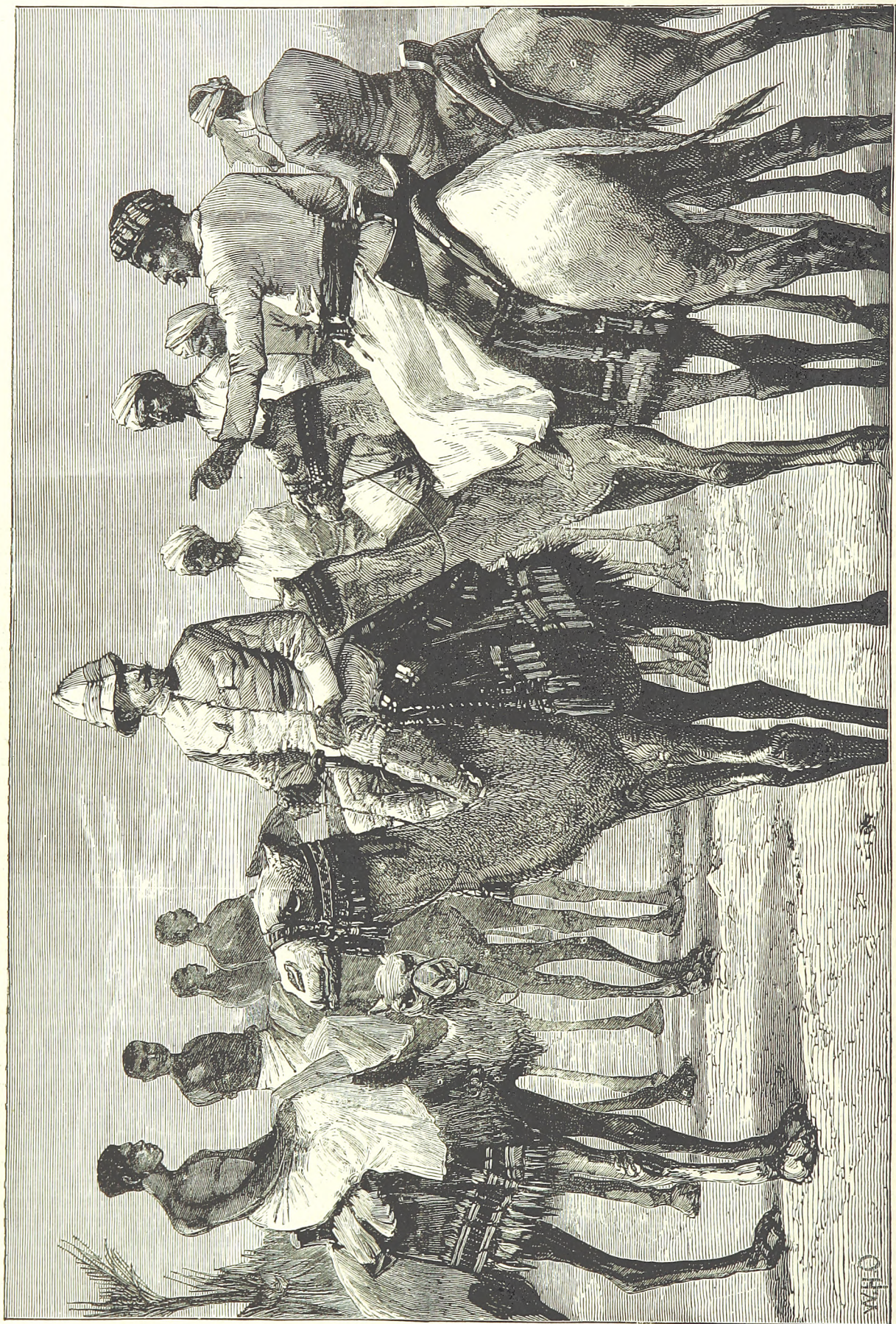
"HOW LONG THE PUDDING TAKES TO BOIL!"

his force were to open the road to Khartoum by way of Matamah; but, before making a decisive move in that direction, it was considered preferable to secure undisputed possession of the Howeyat, Abu Halfa, and Gakdul wells in the Bayuda desert, which extends from Korti to Matamah. The force placed at Sir Herbert Stewart's disposal for this purpose numbered 1100 men, mainly belonging to various sections of the Camel Corps, with nearly 2000 camels, many of which carried supplies. Besides a company of the Royal Engineers there were 45 men and horses of the 19th Hussars, and detachments of the Commissariat and Medical corps. Seven hundred and fifty gallons of water were taken as a reserve, together with 40,000 cartridges, and each mounted man carried seven days' rations, seven gallons of water, and 150 rounds of ammunition.

It was on Tuesday, December 30, that Sir Herbert Stewart and his troops started on the march across the desert to Gakdul. The baggage camels were arranged in column, with from twenty to thirty marching abreast, and with fifty yards interval between each troop. The Guards in front and the Mounted Infantry in the rear were in close column of companies, ready to dismount and form square at a moment's notice. Lord Wolseley inspected the whole, and at a quarter to three the little party of cavalry scouts, under Major Kitchener, with some Arab guides, moved off in front. A quarter of an hour later the General gave the order, and the great column got in motion, striking straight off across the undulating and pebbly plain towards the distant horizon. It was a strange sight to see the 2000 camels with their necks stretching out like ostriches, and their 4000 pairs of long legs moving along in military array, until the rising dust first blended desert, men, and camels in one uniform grey hue, and finally hid them from the sight of those who remained in camp. Broad as was the face on which this strange column marched, it extended fully a mile in length, and would have been an unwieldy body in case of an attack by the enemy. The Camel Corps and Mounted Infantry could have formed up quickly enough, but confusion would probably have prevailed among the baggage

animals, for camels are the most obstinate of creatures, and object particularly to sudden and hurried movements. Their Somali drivers, too, could scarcely be expected to be very cool or steady if suddenly assailed by a large body of yelling tribesmen.

The first halt was made in the evening at a spot nine miles out from Korti. It lasted for an hour and a half. General Stewart then gave orders for the column to close up, and for the camels to proceed on a broader front. When they moved on again in the bright moonlight the length of the column was reduced therefore to half a mile, and was not only under better control on the line of march, but was very much more able to resist any sudden attack by the Arabs. The march was continued until four on Wednesday morning, when a long halt was called and the camels unloaded. Colonel Barrow and the squadron of the 19th Hussars had preceded the column by some miles with orders to collect wood and light fires at the first halting-place, so that the men might get their tea there as soon as possible. Owing, however, to a mistake of their guides, the Hussars took the wrong track, and did not rejoin the column till midnight. When they discovered that they had gone wrong, they searched a long time in vain for the track of the column, which, owing to the whole plain being intersected by paths made by herds of gazelles and other wild animals, was by no means easy to detect in the moonlight. There was some excitement among the men when they halted for their first bivouac, owing to the uncertainty as to the whereabouts and disposition of the inhabitants. Only a few huts were visible, and these were deserted. Plenty of green fodder was obtainable, however, and the troops remained on the spot, quite undisturbed, until three in the afternoon, when a fresh start was made. Both men and animals were greatly refreshed by the rest, and the men seemed to vie with each other in the smartness with which they remounted when the order was given. The formation observed almost throughout the march was column of companies, and the force was so distributed that in two minutes three squares could be formed in échelon to resist any attack.



MAJOR KITCHENER WITH HIS GUIDES AT KORTI, PREPARING TO START ACROSS THE DESERT.

As the troops approached Hashim, where the first wells are situated, several Arabs were perceived, and Major Kitchener, who believed they belonged to a friendly tribe, immediately rode towards them. But he soon discovered his mistake, for some of the men wore the Mahdi's uniform. His position was thus very dangerous, but fortunately a company of Mounted Infantry came up, and the rebels to the number of ten, surrendered after firing a few shots from their Remingtons. Hashim was reached on the evening of Wednesday, December 31, but the water supply being very scarce there, the troops moved on almost immediately towards the Hambok wells, where they arrived at one o'clock in the morning. The men cheered the New Year in and the finding of the water together, and then hastily bivouacked for the night.

At eight o'clock in the morning they again mounted to continue their march towards Gakdul. The column proceeded on its way without meeting either friends or foes until the afternoon, when the Mounted Infantry espied a small convoy of camels laden with dates. These supplies, which were intended for the Mahdi's troops, were speedily captured, and seven prisoners were taken, five other Arabs managing to escape to the hills. That same afternoon Captain Fanshawe's Hussars pounced upon a robber sheikh called Ali Lobah, for whose head the Mudir of Dongola had long previously offered a reward of a thousand dollars; and during the night, when the march was continued, Major Kitchener and his escort surrounded a hut and captured five more natives, who were said to be the Mahdi's meat contractors.

Gakdul was reached at last at a quarter to seven on January 2, the march of ninety-five miles having occupied only sixty-five hours, a truly wonderful performance. There had been no casualties on the road, and the men were in the best of spirits, although they had remained almost without sleep since the time of their departure from Korti. The wells at Gakdul proved to be three in number, situated at the northern end of a stony basin encircled by ranges of hills stretching far into the Bayuda desert. Pumps and hose were installed for the purpose of bringing the upper reservoirs to the basin; two zerebas were constructed, one commanding the entrance to the wells, and the other on a detached hill overlooking them; a movable hospital which had accompanied the force under Surgeon Briggs was set up to be in readiness for any contingencies, and finally, after spending twelve hours on the spot, General Stewart placed the Guards and Marines, with a few Engineers and Hussars, under the command of Colonel Boscawen, to serve as a garrison, and then set out again with the remainder of his force for Korti.

On the following morning the scouts around the wells reported to Major Kitchener, who had remained with the garrison, that several natives were stationed some little distance off, apparently waiting for water. The major thereupon despatched a native guide and a female prisoner, whom he provided with a camel and some money, to treat for produce with the party; but in the evening the messengers returned empty-handed, declaring that they had been badly treated by the Arabs. A few hours earlier the scouts reconnoitring in another direction captured a convoy consisting of several camels and donkeys, accompanied by four natives, who stated that they had left Matamah on January 1, when a detachment of General Gordon's troops was still at Shendy. The rebels held Matamah, however, with a force of two thousand men. The next day Major Kitchener, with some other officers and a party of Hussars, reconnoitred in the direction of Abu Halfa, and met a small party of natives with camels and asses laden with grain. These they captured,

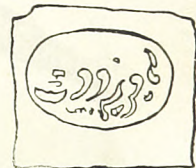
and while returning with them to the camp they sighted on their right a large convoy of about seventy camels, with fifty natives. Major Kitchener and his party at once galloped after them. On coming to close quarters with the natives, half the latter cut away the loads from their camels, and let them loose, while the other half halted, and, forming in front of the animals, showed fight. Major Kitchener's party, observing this, galloped hard, whereupon the rebels scattered rapidly in all directions. Some of the Hussars then rode after the hindmost fugitives and exchanged a few shots with them, but as it was nearly sunset it was considered prudent to give up the pursuit and return to camp, with nine more camels, laden with grain and flour, added to the earlier spoils. At midnight a stronger party went out and brought back another camel, some donkeys, and eight loads of dates, which the rebels had abandoned in their flight.

Meanwhile General Stewart had marched back to Korti, taking with him the prisoners who had been captured on the advance. After halting at Hambok, where a post was left to guard the water supply, the returning troops reached the headquarters camp on the afternoon of January 6. They were met at some little distance from Korti by Lord Wolseley and his staff, who warmly congratulated them on their speedy and successful march. When they had moved forward to their quarters the Arab prisoners were produced and Lord Wolseley examined them. They were in a state of great alarm, for they expected to be executed, and it was noticed that they had torn from their galebeas or shirts nearly all the red, blue, and yellow braiding, which forms the distinctive feature of the Mahdi's uniform. In answer to the questions put to them they stated that there were 3000 rebels entrenched at Matamah, and that the Mahdi himself was at Omdurman. One of them had seen four of General Gordon's steamers lying alongside the bank at Shendy but a week previously, and this clearly indicated that the defender of Khartoum was on the look-out for the approach of the relief expedition.

How anxiously he was awaiting its arrival was already known to Lord Wolseley, for on the last day of the old year he had received a most important message from the beleaguered city. The man who brought it had concealed a piece of paper, not much larger than a postage stamp, but rolled up to the size of a pin, in the seam of the waistband of his garment. This paper, upon being unfolded, was found to contain the words, "Khartoum all right. C. G. Gordon, December 14." To the newspaper correspondents and subordinate officers who questioned him the messenger replied that he had left Khartoum on the date named and had experienced but little difficulty in passing through the rebel lines.

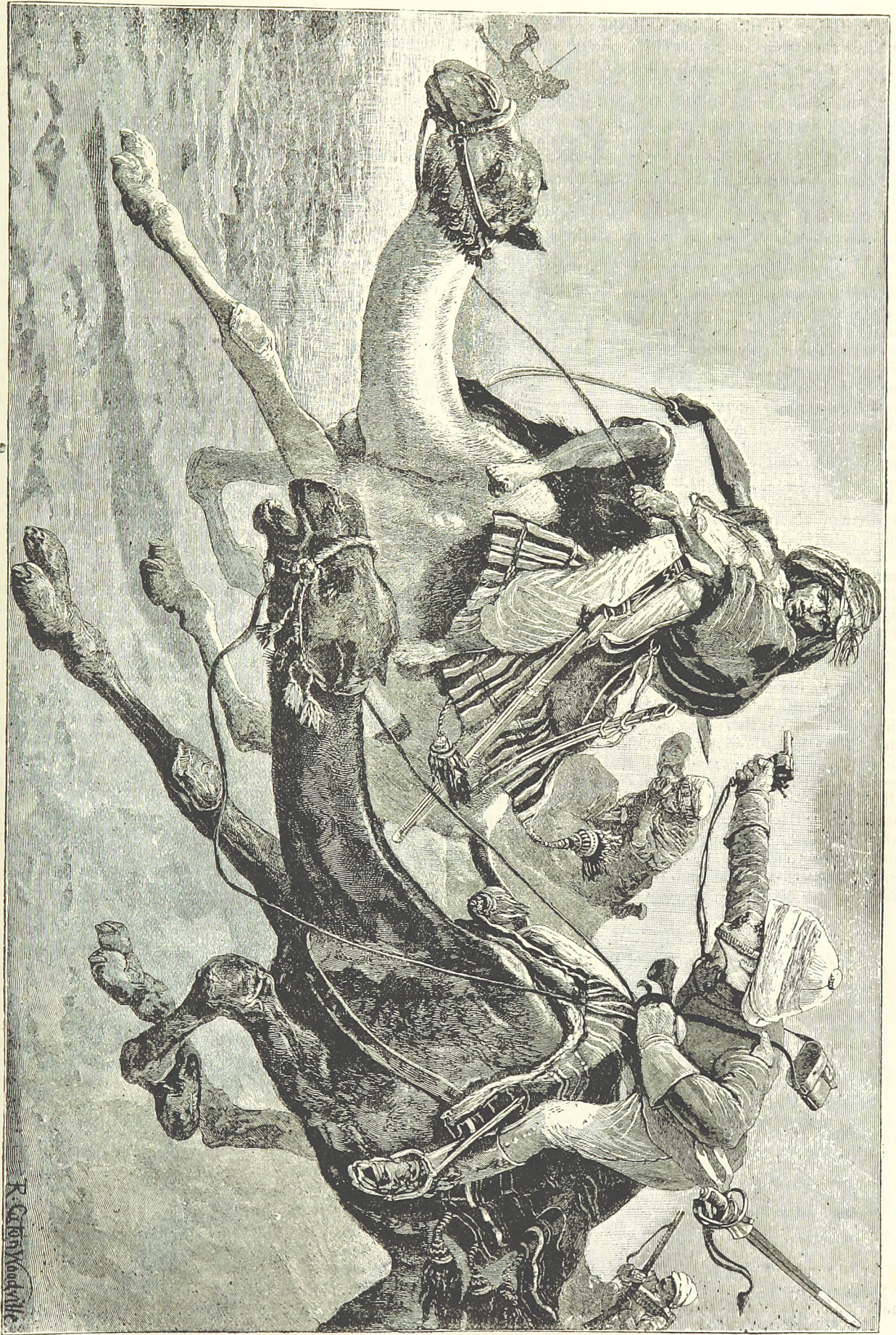
He stated that the Mahdi was still near the city, with a large force variously estimated at from twenty to eighty thousand men. Skirmishes were always taking place, and one of the False Prophet's siege-guns had recently been disabled. Gordon on his side had mounted guns on the roofs of two palaces, where he repaired every morning shortly after sunrise to scan the surrounding plains with his field-glasses, and note any change in the enemy's position. He then went to sleep till sunset, when he rose and walked about all night, visiting post after post to cheer his troops, and to see that all were alert and ready to

*Khartoum
all right
14.12.84
C. G. Gordon*





CAPTURING THE ENEMY'S SUPPLIES IN THE DESERT.



A RUNNING FIGHT IN THE DESERT.

R. Cotton Woodville

repel attacks. Gordon looked well, the messenger added, and his men were in good spirits, now that they knew of Lord Wolseley's advance with the English troops.

The curt despatch, "Khartoum all right," was duly telegraphed to London by the newspaper correspondents, together with such supplementary information as they were able to obtain from the messenger. The latter, in accordance with his instructions, had reserved secret intelligence of far greater import for Lord Wolseley personally. General Gordon had instructed him to tell the commander-in-chief that he was besieged on all sides, that he still held Omdurman and the fort on the right bank; but that the Mahdi's troops had thrown up earth-works within rifle-shot of the first-named place. "The enemy," continued the messenger, repeating word for word what General Gordon had dictated to him, "cannot take us except by starving us out. Do not scatter your troops. The enemy are numerous. Bring plenty of troops if you can. Our soldiers in Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. The food we still have is little—some grain and some biscuit. We want you to come quickly. You should come by Matamah or Berber. Make by these two roads. Do not leave Berber in your rear. Keep enemy in your front, and when you have taken Berber send me word from there. Do this without letting rumours of your approach spread abroad. In Khartoum there are no butter, nor dates, and little meat. All food is very dear."

That the situation was becoming desperate, is evident from a letter which Gordon wrote a friend in Cairo at the same date as he penned the words, "Khartoum all right." "All is up," he said, "I expect a catastrophe in ten days' time. It would not have been so if our people had kept me better informed as to their intentions. My adieux to all, C. G. Gordon."

This note did not reach its destination until February, and its contents were not known to Lord Wolseley at the time he received the secret message. It was evident enough to him, however, that the real language of Gordon was in the gloomy verbal account of the position, and not in the written despatch, "Khartoum all right." Prompt and vigorous action was therefore necessary, or the gallant defenders of the Soudanese capital would fall into the hands of the Mahdi and be either butchered or enslaved. Under the circumstances but one course was possible, and that was to make an immediate dash across the Bayuda desert.

CHAPTER XVI.

A march of troops from Korti to the Nile under General Stewart determined on.—The Naval Brigade on the ships of the desert.—The flying column starts on its way.—Peculation of water by thirsty camel-drivers.—Arrival at the wells of Abu Halfa.—The soil discovered to be full of hidden drink.—The Gakdul reservoirs.—A two days' water feast.—Colonel Fred Burnaby joins the column.—Arduous march on Abu Klea.—First view of the rebel forces.—The troops form a zereba.—The Arab advance.—Skirmishing around the camp.—General Stewart orders a move forward.—Hot fire opened by the enemy.—Sudden rush of Arabs.—The column closes square and makes a stand.—British skirmishers in danger.—Colonel Burnaby's unfortunate order.—The Heavies leave their position and the Arabs break into the square.—Gallant fight of Colonel Burnaby with a rebel Sheikh.—The Colonel is speared in the shoulder and throat.—Unavailing efforts made to save him.—Desperate struggle within the square.—The Gardner gun gets jammed.—The Ameer of Matamah shot down.—General Stewart's horse shot under him.—The Guards drive the rebels from the square.—Final charge and complete rout of the rebels.

At this momentous juncture Lord Wolseley had but a portion of his force available for immediate action in the direction of Khartoum. Gordon's message had reached him

on the last day of the year, and four days previously General Earle had started up the Nile with 2400 men to avenge the murder of Colonel Stewart, and afterwards to advance upon Abu Hammed and Berber. The column was too far away to be recalled (even if such a course had been advisable) when Sir Herbert Stewart returned to Korti from Gakdul on January 6, and reported that the wells had been seized without opposition. Thanks to this judicious proceeding, which placed ample supplies of water at the disposal of the expedition, it seemed as though there would be no serious obstacle to a second and more extended march across the desert. Some fighting was to be expected at Matamah undoubtedly, but as the rebel force entrenched there was not estimated either by messengers or prisoners at more than three thousand men, there was every probability that a column of moderate strength would succeed in joining hands with Gordon by means of the steamers reported to be lying off Shendy, in anticipation of the British advance. Besides, the effort had to be made at any cost, and Lord Wolseley resolved to confide its execution to Sir Herbert Stewart with as strong a force as could be furnished.

Sir Herbert's return to Korti on January 6, was accordingly followed, the next day, by the departure of Colonel Clarke for Gakdul with the Light Camel regiment and a large convoy of stores, and in the evening Lord Charles Beresford's Naval Brigade, selected for service with the flying column, paraded on camels before the Commander-in-Chief. The sailors were greatly delighted at finding themselves mounted on the so-called ships of the desert, and their joviality caused universal amusement. Everything was conducted in nautical fashion, and the camels were steered to the word of command "Port" or "Starboard." The animals themselves appeared puzzled with their new riders, whose vivacity and energy contrasted strongly with the apathetic behaviour of the natives accustomed to pilot them. "Steer small, Bill," "Mind your helm, Jack, or you'll run me aboard," were some of the phrases caught as the brigade prepared to march past the Commander-in-Chief, who, after commending the men for their smart appearance, informed them that they would start across the desert with General Stewart on the morrow.

The column now placed at Sir Herbert's disposal consisted of 1500 non-commissioned officers and men, about 100 officers, 300 natives, and 2228 camels, together with three screw-guns and a Gardner. Amid a great deal of dust and commotion the column set out on its line of march at three o'clock in the afternoon of January 8. Each soldier was supposed to carry food and water sufficient for three days, and forage for seven days on his camel. The water—mainly stored in musselsacks or goat-skins—was of limited quantity, but ample with discretion and economy, to have sufficed one man during four or five days for ordinary drinking purposes as well as for making an occasional pint of tea. Unfortunately however the musselsacks proved utterly worthless, for they were soon grizzled by the glare of the tropical sun, and the water, sent thudding from end to end of the skins by the swinging gait of the camels, stood in thick beads outside and eventually trickled down the animals' flanks. The result was that more than half of the skins were empty before the Hambok wells were reached. On the other hand, some metallic and india-rubber water-tanks, taken with the force, did not let a drop escape, while the patent arrangement for securing them, effectually prevented the native camel-drivers from stealing the contents. These fellows proved even thirstier mortals than the soldiers of the column. They drank copiously and often, and after

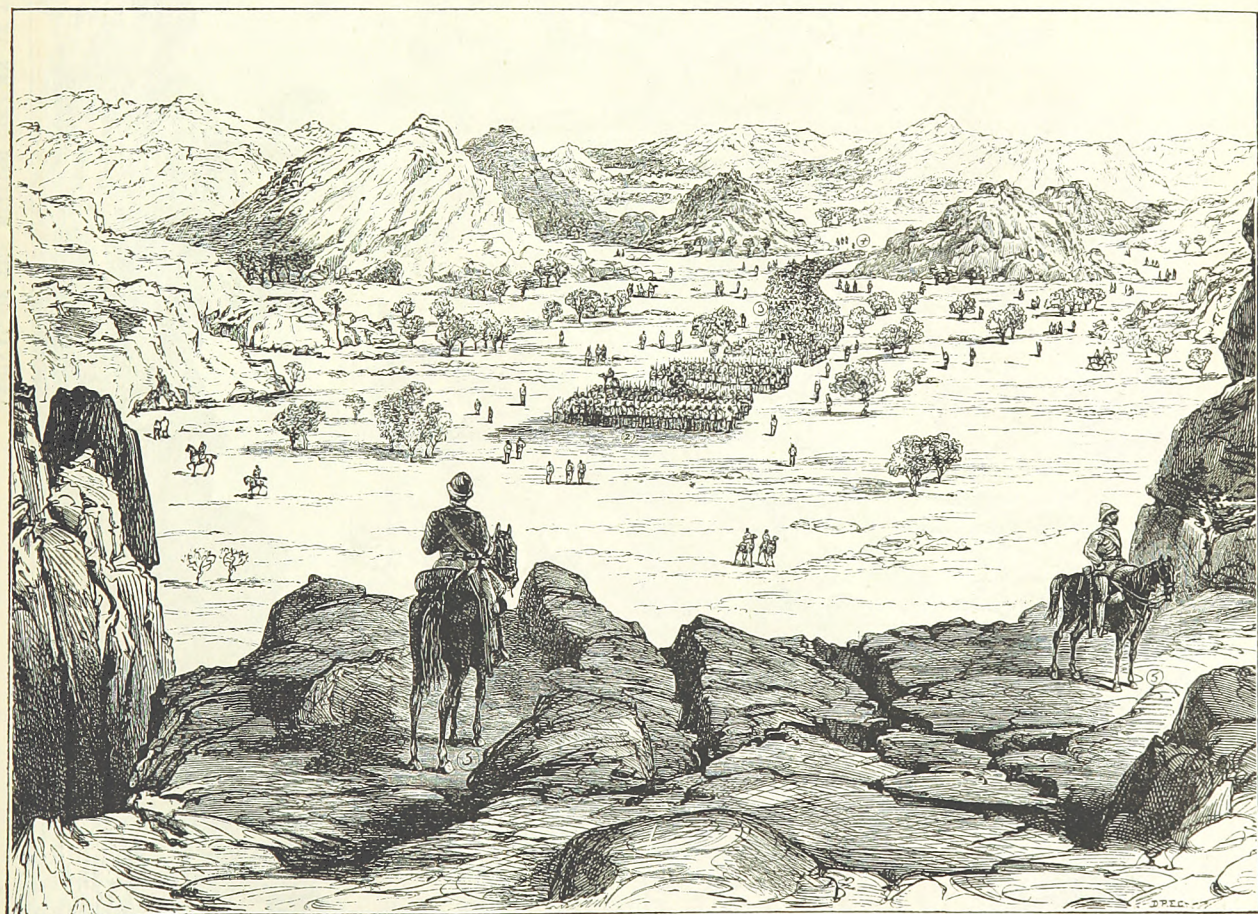
imbibing their own allowances would slash open the mussacks of the soldiers whenever they had the chance.

Nothing of especial interest befell the column until January 10, when it reached the Hambok wells, where little or no water being found, General Stewart pushed forward to Howeiyah, some eight or ten miles distant. On arriving there at ten a.m. it was found that the Engineers and Mounted Infantry, who had been left behind on the previous journey, had sunk several holes to a depth of nine feet or so in the rough gravel soil near a dry watercourse, and that some of these holes contained about six inches of cold opal-coloured water with a chalybeate taste. Unfortunately the holes in question had been practically drained a couple of hours previously by the men of Colonel Clarke's convoy, and more especially by the thirsty Egyptian camel-drivers accompanying that force; so that General Stewart's troops had to content themselves with a quart per head for the entire day. Resuming their forward march they reached a grassy plain to the south of the Galif range shortly after sunset, and here they bivouacked until three a.m. on the following morning. A fresh start was then made, but the heat and the hardship of excessive thirst were beginning to tell both on men and camels, fully thirty of the latter dropping dead on the road. However the column bravely persevered in its course, and the wells of Abu Halfa were reached at three in the afternoon.

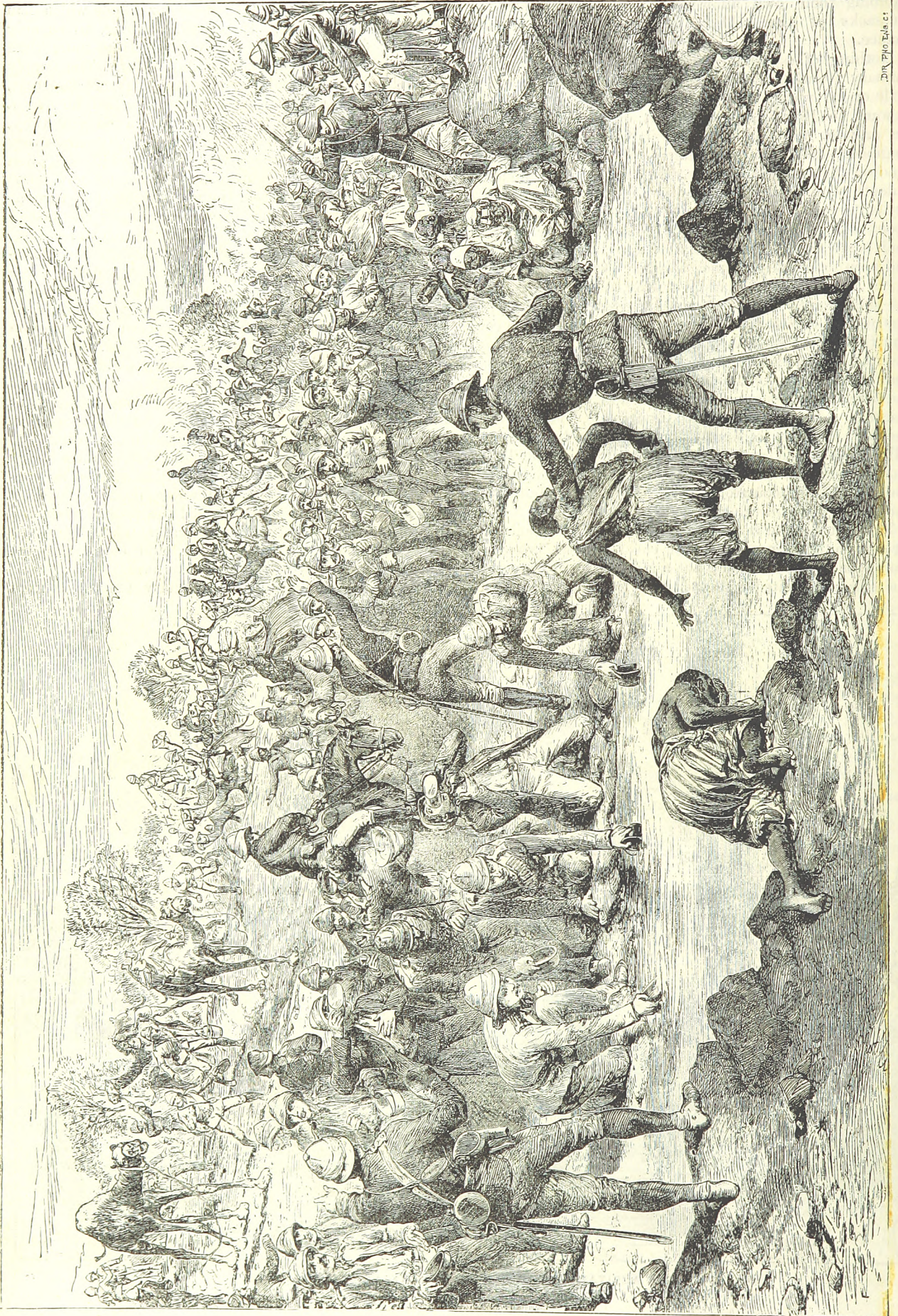
The first sight of them proved extremely disappointing, for only a little pool of water covered with pea-green scum could be perceived; but a guide, who accompanied the Hussars, excitedly shouted that there was enough to

drink for everybody, and he made for a hole which had not yet been noticed. It proved, however, to be only three or four feet deep, and contained no more than twenty gallons of cool, clean-looking water. The supply seemed so limited and the requirements were so great, that the guide was driven off, but, unabashed, he dug a hole with his hands in the sandy gravel a few feet away, and soon unearthed a flow of turbid water, causing every face to brighten. The soil was evidently full of hidden drink, and pannikins, canteens, water bottles, and horse buckets were soon at work, the men taking their turn at dipping and drinking the greenish liquid. "The taste," remarked one of the thirsty band, "was not unpleasant, in spite of its odd turtle-soupish appearance and consistency. Before all, it was water, and we drank large draughts until our thirst was quenched. The horses received two bucketsful each, which they quaffed even more greedily than ourselves. The clear water in the well was reserved for the sick, and we found that as we reduced its depth a few inches, quite pellucid springs began to flow in, refilling it almost as rapidly as we drew from it. The steady drain and the constant dipping into our own tank disturbed the mud, so that in a short time the green tinge merged into brown, and ultimately into black, such as you see in London gutters after heavy rain. With an unquestioning faith in its virtues we continued to drink the thickened water, inwardly blessing the Arabs for not having poisoned the pool by throwing dead cattle into it. That afternoon and night the whole force had abundance of beverage, and coffee and tea flowed once more around our bivouac fires."

On the following morning (January 12) the column

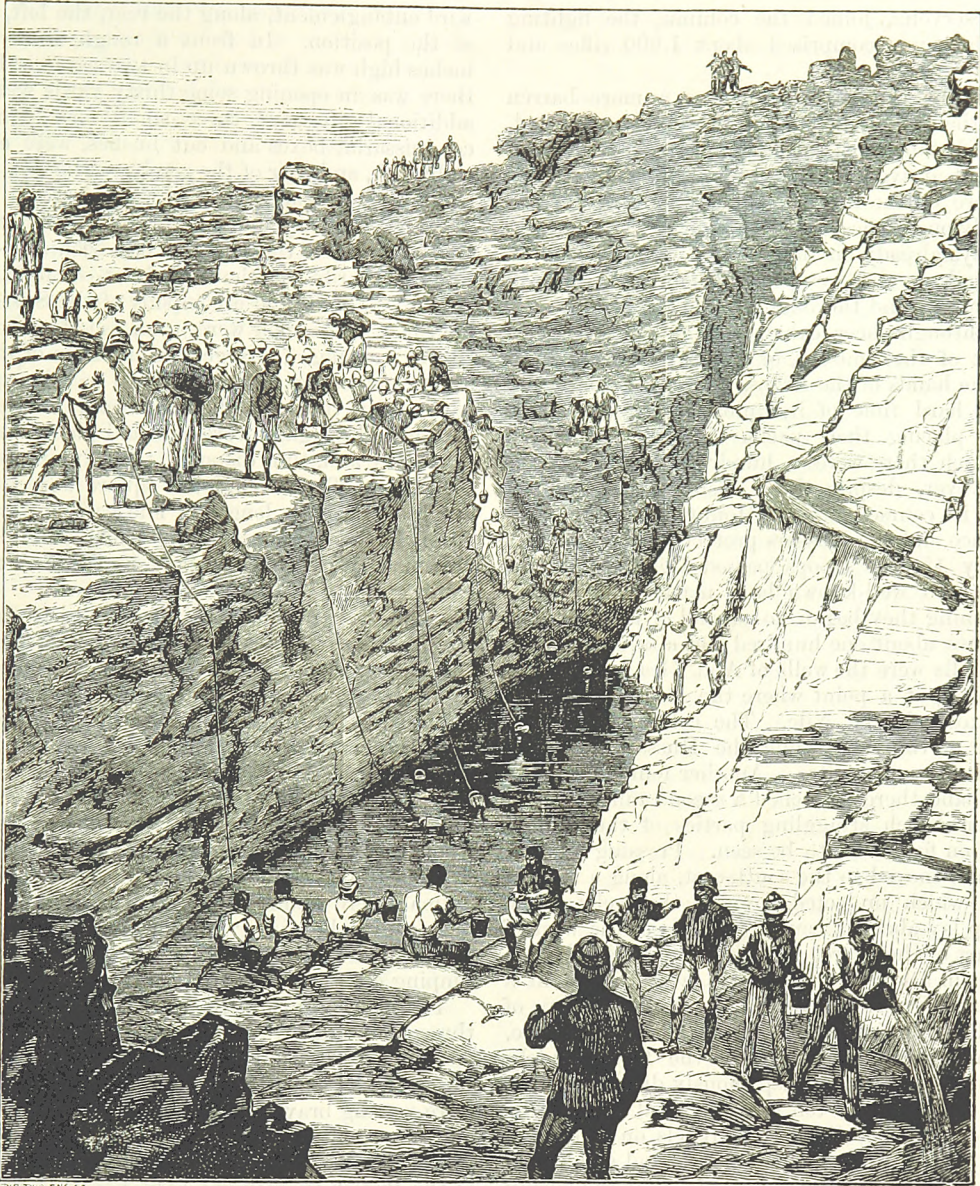


THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH COLUMN AT GAKDUL WELLS.



ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH COLUMN AT THE WELLS OF ABU HALFA.

J. W. P. H. & S. C.



THE GAKDUL WELLS.—PASSING WATER DOWN FROM THE UPPER WELL.

was astir betimes, and at eleven o'clock it defiled along a rocky gorge into the crater-like amphitheatre where the Gakdul reservoirs are situated. Some more wells were to be found across the hills at a distance of a mile or two, but the three natural receptacles at Gakdul itself were computed to contain among them nearly half a million gallons of water, so that for military purposes the supply was regarded as practically inexhaustible. The Guards and Engineers, who had been left at Gakdul on the occasion of Sir Herbert Stewart's first visit, had not merely built two forts of rough boulders, but they had also gathered the fragments of lime-stone, strewing the ground, into heaps, thus opening easy roads by which the column was at once able to march into the amphitheatre and take up its quarters near the reservoirs. A long circular trough of puddled mud and stone had been built in front of the gorge, and water was pumped into this from the lower pool, so that a hundred camels were able to go forward and drink together. Nor were the men neglected. Their drinking water was conveyed from the upper pools by a hose pipe worked on the principle of a syphon, and it

flowed into a nest of empty tin biscuit boxes, where it was stored to be drawn from as required. "The two days succeeding our arrival at Gakdul," observed the writer just quoted, "may be best described as drinking and washing days. We feasted on fresh, clear, cold water, unadulterated. We gratified our eyes as well as our throats and stomachs, and had the unaccustomed luxury of splashing and tubbing. Happy days! The aforesaid silent soldiers, who had saved their breath to moisten their lips, now began to sing snatches of camp ditties, while new spirit and life were infused into everybody."

Colonel Fred Burnaby, of Khiva and ballooning fame, arrived at Gakdul from Korti with a convoy of grain on January 13. He had previously been doing excellent work in passing the whalers through the cataracts; and although not in the best of health—for his chest greatly troubled him—he had hastened forward to overtake the column. The following morning the march towards the Nile was resumed, one hundred and fifty men of the Royal Sussex, under Colonel Vandeleur, being left at Gakdul to hold that station while the Guards, who had previously pro-

ected the reservoirs, joined the column, the fighting strength of which now comprized about 1,600 rifles and bayonets.

Beyond Gakdul the road led across a more barren region than that which had been previously traversed. Only a short distance was covered on the afternoon of January 14, but at five a.m. the next morning the troops were once more on the move. The arduous march was telling severely on the heavily laden camels, who had been for several days already on half forage, and the column began to straggle at the very period when it should have been most compact and thoroughly mobile. Numbers of animals fell through sheer exhaustion, and were shot to put them out of their misery, or to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Arabs. The rear guard had an especially hard time of it, unloading the prostrate animals and placing their packs on the "remount" camels, of which there were a hundred or so driven in a herd. However, despite these mishaps, the column persevered in its course, with the Mounted Infantry leading the advance and the Hussars protecting the flanks.

On January 15, the troops passed Gebel Noos and Gebel Terain, two well-known land marks, and on the following morning they began to ascend a ridge of foot hills, which rose about one hundred feet above the plain. Across these hills were the wells of Abu Klea, a few miles to the south-east, at a point where the ground rolls and slopes down towards the Nile. The column rested on the west side of the ridge while the Hussars advanced some four miles to reconnoitre. Another four miles away on the right hand there stretched a second range of bald black hills, on which straggling parties of the enemy, mounted and on foot, were to be seen. Pressing forward the cavalry now moved to the south-east, along a spur of high ground which projected towards the wells. The enemy's camp lay about a couple of miles to the west of Abu Klea, part of their force being screened behind some mimosa scrub in a wady, while others were hidden in a dry water course, in the rear of which were two groups of horsemen. Fifty or sixty of the Mahdi's banners, white, red, yellow and green, with texts of the Koran rudely inscribed upon them, were conspicuously displayed from poles of bamboo eight to ten feet long, and it could be seen that the camp was fortified. The rebels, on perceiving the Hussars, circled to the right and left, and a skirmish ensued from a distance, with the result that the enemy speedily sought cover behind a ridge, whence they kept up an intermittent fire. Colonel Barrow of the Hussars, had occupied an isolated peak from which his men were well able to hold the enemy in check, and eventually at about two o'clock the van of the column made its appearance in close fighting order; the Guards' Camel Corps on the left, the Heavy Division in the centre, and the Mounted Infantry on the right. The force moved forward until within three miles of Abu Klea, and as the enemy showed no signs either of retreating or advancing, a halt was finally commanded.

General Stewart then carefully surveyed the rebels' camp and at 3 p. m. he decided that the column should bivouac for the night to the rear of the peak occupied by the Hussars. The front and right of the position rested upon a stony upland slope, while the left and part of the left rear lay upon a small wady. Orders were given to form an entrenchment or zereba, which might serve as a protection in case of a night attack, and as a stronghold where the camels and baggage could be left under a guard when the main body moved out in the morning to meet the foe. Quantities of scrub mimosa were cut, and a line of these prickly bushes was placed, together with some

wire entanglement, along the rear, the left, and the right of the position. In front a rough stone wall eighteen inches high was thrown up in two sections, between which there was an opening some thirty yards wide; and, as an additional safeguard, three small forts, constructed with commissariat boxes and cut bushes, were erected on the right, left, and rear of the zereba. The two last positions, which were really strong works, were held by the Mounted Infantry under Captains Payne and Pigot. On the peak which the Hussars had occupied—nearly seven hundred yards on the left front—a fortalice of rough stones was built, and a company of the Sussex was sent to hold it. These men were in an excellent position to give timely warning of any general advance of the enemy. A strong picket was also dispatched to take up ground on a ledge about the same distance from the left rear. The camels and baggage were as usual placed in the centre of the square and, thus disposed, the column prepared to pass the night. The faces of the square were each about two hundred yards in length. The camels were doubly tied down, knees and heads alike being securely fastened to prevent confusion or stampede in the event of a fight or galling fire.

Before lying down the men stood to their arms, and the officers saw that everybody was at his post. During the night several shots were fired at intervals into the camp by the Arabs, who at six o'clock had already indulged in a fusillade promptly silenced by a few rounds from the screw guns. Thrice the troops were called to arms before dawn, when a general attack upon the position was expected, but everything remained tolerably quiet until breakfast, when the enemy opened a hot fire from some stone breastworks, thrown up on the right flank of the zereba during the night. Several men and animals were wounded, one bullet striking Colonel Burnaby's gray horse. "I'm not in luck to-day," said the colonel, with a grim smile, and he thereupon led the limping creature away to procure a fresh charger.

The firing went on till nearly eight o'clock, when some three thousand Arabs advanced in perfect order, with a front of two divisions, from the rugged, stony hills on the right of the position. Several red and white banners were waving bravely in the sunlight amid the rebel ranks, and one could hear a number of tom-toms beating. The Arabs seemed somewhat puzzled by the apparent inaction of the British troops, and halted in line within a mile of the zereba, occasionally firing a few shots, and gradually taking ground to the right, where their course was arrested by two sections of the Mounted Infantry. At the same time, however, another party of rebels began creeping stealthily up the grassy wady on the left front, which was the direct road to the wells. General Stewart accordingly ordered Captain Norton's three screw guns to the left, together with the Gardner and the Naval Brigade, and a few shots speedily checked the threatened advance. Meanwhile, the Arabs made skilful use of their Remingtons from a distance, and several men were hit in the zereba. At half-past nine it was reported that some of the enemy's scouts were trying to creep round the hills on the left flank, and Barrow's Hussars were dispatched to check this strategical movement. In front the fire was still kept up on both sides, the Martinis proving especially effective. So withering, indeed, was the British fusillade in this direction that the rebels showed no disposition to try close quarters.

General Stewart had already remarked, "Well, if they won't come on, I must go out," and at twenty minutes to ten he took horse, and riding between the Guards in the centre and the Heavies on the left, he ordered an

advance. At the same time he gave the significant caution, "When the men are ordered to close they must always close on their left," this being the line of retreat and also the line which enabled the column to keep upon the high ground along the edge of the wady leading to the wells. The advance was made in a hollow square formed in the following order:—The left front face consisted of two companies of Mounted Infantry, and the right of two companies of Guards. The left face was composed of two companies of Mounted Infantry, and one company of Heavy Dragoons. The right face was composed of two companies of Guards, and two companies of the Sussex Regiment. The rear face consisted of four companies of the Heavy Cavalry Camel Corps. The Artillery with the three screw guns was in the centre of the front face, and the Naval Brigade with the Gardner occupied the centre of the rear face. Some men of the Mounted Infantry acted as skirmishers on the front and right, while the Hussars did similar duty on the left. The whole force, with the exception of the mounted officers and Hussars, was on foot, there being merely a few camels with ammunition, water, and hospital stretchers, in the centre of the square. All the other animals, with the stores and baggage, were left in the zereba under the guard of a hundred and fifty men of the Royal Sussex and Mounted Infantry.

The troops moved out in the formation given above, marching so as to pass round the left flank of the enemy's position, and force him to attack or be enfiladed. However, the Arabs met the advance with a hot fire from the hills, and as their bullets rained upon the column, men dropped from the ranks right and left. Major Gough of the Mounted Infantry was shot dead, and Captain Lord St. Vincent (16th Lancers) was severely wounded,* together with Major Dickson and Surgeon Magill. Surgeon-major Ferguson and the medical staff immediately attended to the injured men, all of whom were carried along with the column. Meanwhile the Mounted Infantry continued skirmishing, and the enemy fell back, gradually dissolving, as it were, in the long grass, until nothing could be seen of them but their flags waving across the valley at right angles to the British line of advance. Nearly an hour had elapsed since leaving the zereba, and a distance of two miles had been covered, amid a heavy fire from a number of negro riflemen on the hills, when the order was given to halt and close square. General Stewart had selected a good position on a slope, which the rebels would have to ascend across open ground.

It was eleven o'clock when the skirmishers of the Mounted Infantry went forward to force on the attack, while the screw guns pounded away at what seemed to be the enemy's main position. Suddenly, however, on the left rear of the square, the foe sprang up with twenty banners waving, and charged fiercely up two narrow gullies leading from the valley. So swift was the onset that the skirmishers barely had time to reach the square before the Arabs came upon the Heavies, who formed the rear half of the left face, and the whole of the rear face of the formation. Colonel Burnaby, who was on this side, seems to have feared for the skirmishers, and he at once rode forward to their support, sword in hand, at the same time ordering the Heavies to follow him. The latter, faithful to their cavalry instincts, were only too eager to advance, and they rushed out to meet the Arabs, who came on at great speed, brandishing spears, hurling javelins and wielding huge double-handed swords.

* Lord St. Vincent, who had previously seen service in South Africa and Afghanistan, died a few days later from the effects of his wounds.

Altogether there were 8000 of them, belonging to ten tribes, each of which had, on an average, 800 men in the field. On the right of their line they were led by Abou Saleh, Ameer of Matamah, and on the left by Mahomed Kheir, Ameer of Berber. The latter was wounded, and soon retired; but Saleh came desperately on at the head of the fanatics. Colonel Burnaby now ordered the Heavies back, but too late, unfortunately, and their formation being broken, their valour proved of no avail against such superior numbers. They were thrown upon the Naval Brigade and the right of the Sussex regiment, which had naturally tried to close up the gap. But the enemy was already sweeping round the flank and breaking into the square.

Meanwhile poor Colonel Burnaby had tempted death once too often. He had gone to the assistance of the skirmishers armed only with a sword; for, in deference to the noise made in England with regard to his action on a former occasion, he had trusted his servant with that double-barrelled shot-gun which he had used so effectively against the Hadendowas at El Teb. "Had it been in his hands at Abu Klea," wrote Mr. Burleigh in the stirring description of the battle sent by him to the *Daily Telegraph*, "he would easily have saved other lives as well as his own, but they would have been English lives at the expense of Arabs. As the dauntless colonel rode forward on a borrowed nag—for his own had been shot that morning—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, and not Burnaby's swordthrust, brought the sheikh headlong to the ground. The enemy's spearmen were close behind, and one of them suddenly dashed at the colonel, pointing the long blade of his spear at his throat. Checking his horse and slowly pulling it backward, Burnaby leaned 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 I think the colonel just touched his man, only to make him more wary and eager. The affray was the work of three or four seconds only, for the savage horde of swarthy negroes from Kordofan, and the straight-haired, tawny-complexioned Arabs of the Bayuda steppe, were fast closing in upon our square. Burnaby fenced smartly, just as if he were playing in an assault at arms, and there was a smile on his features as he drove off the man's awkward thrusts. The scene was taken in at a glance—with that lightning instinct which I have seen the desert warriors before now display in battle while coming to one another's aid—by an Arab who, pursuing a soldier, had passed five paces to Burnaby's right and rear. Turning with a sudden spring, this second Arab ran his spear-point into the colonel's right shoulder. It was but a slight wound—enough, though, to cause Burnaby to twist around in his saddle to 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. As the Englishman withdrew the steel, the ferocious Arab wriggled round and sought to reach him. The effort was too much, however, even for his delirium of hatred against the Christian, and the rebel reeled and fell. Brief as was Burnaby's glance backward at this fatal episode, it was long enough to enable the first Arab to deliver his spear-point 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.



COLONEL FRED. BURNABY.

Hali, a dozen Arabs were now about him. With the blood gushing in streams from his gashed throat the dauntless guardsman 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." Private Wood, of the Grenadier Guards, sprang to his rescue, but it was too late; for the colonel was overborne and fell to the ground. Wood raised his head; and, seeing that the case was hopeless, exclaimed, "Oh, Colonel, I fear I can say no more than 'God bless you!'" The dying man, his life-blood running out in a stream from his jugular vein, opened his eyes, smiled, gave a gentle pressure of the hand, and passed away, close to his old comrades the Blues.

When Colonel Burnaby was struck down, among the number who bravely ran out to render aid was Colonel Sir William Cumming, of the Scots Guards. The fringe of advancing Arabs had thickened, still Sir William got near enough to see he was too late. An Arab charged full at him spear in hand, Cumming parried the blow, and gave the savage the point of his trusty Highland broadsword full to the hilt. A second Arab came swooping down instantly, but, luckily for Sir William, the rebel missed his footing, stumbled, and got a swinging back-hander over the nape of his neck, that severed the

vertebra. Quicker than it takes to tell, another Mahdist, with uplifted two-edged cross-hilted sword, dashed into the fray, dodged a cut made at him, and made good his retreat towards his men, thanks to a blundering camel that got in the way.

While the foregoing incidents were transpiring, the fate of the entire force was trembling in the balance. Several officers, including Captain Verner (staff-officer to Sir Charles Wilson, chief of the Intelligence Department), tried to rally the Heavies, who were being massacred, while powerless to retaliate, owing to the cartridges jamming in their rifles.* Verner himself was overpowered,

* "The scenes that occurred at the battle of Abu Klea," remarks Mr. Burleigh, "through the jamming of cartridges, are not likely to be effaced from the memories of those who witnessed them. We had a forewarning during the morning, as the men lay in the zereba and replied to the enemy's fire, that the rifles might jam. The approved mode of freeing the block from a jammed cartridge was to endeavour to throw the lever up and down smartly two or three times. If that plan did not work, then there was nothing for it but to hit the lever a sharp blow with a stick or stone, or use the ramrod to eject the empty case or shell. When the Arabs charged the square at Abu Klea, the left face, upon which the rush came, poured in a comparatively ineffective fire. That front, as all know, was composed partly of the Heavy Cavalry regiment. The men had fired very few shots, and at that stage of the fight there was no over-heating of parts of the

however, and forced to the ground, when his life was saved by Major Carmichael of the 5th Lancers, whose dead body, as well as those of three Arabs, fell across him. For ten minutes a part of the square was in confusion. The Gardner gun was jammed by the extractor of the second barrel from the right pulling the head off the empty cylinder of a cartridge which had been fired. The cylinder remaining in the barrel necessarily prevented the new cartridge from being forced home to its place.* Meanwhile a desperate struggle raged from the left rear to the centre of the square. The Ameer of Matamah, who had so far escaped the fire of the Martini rifles, was shot down inside the British ranks. Sir Herbert Stewart's horse fell dead under him; and, as the General himself sank for a moment to the ground, his orderly was killed beside him. Several camels were speared by the rebels, and the interior of the square presented a mass of falling animals and struggling men, but partially visible amid the dense smoke and dust which enveloped the savage scene. Meanwhile shots and sword strokes answered each spear thrust of the foe, and the Guards, whose line was still as steady as a rock, faced about, rescued the Heavies, and drove the rebels from the square, discharging such volleys upon them that every man in the leading division fell dead amid the British ranks.

Three hearty cheers were given as the square closed up again and moved on about a hundred and twenty yards to more level ground, where Sir Herbert Stewart elected to make a final stand. Then once more did the sable warriors charge, nothing daunted by their first repulse. This time, also, they did considerable execution, but not so much as before, for the fire from the square was so deadly that line after line fell as it advanced, until at last the survivors were driven back pell-mell into the long grass, where the guns did heavy work among them for a mile and more. Beaten off they did not venture upon a third attack, but retreated sullenly, numbers springing

rifles, yet I am told as many as 20 to 30 per cent. of the men found their rifles jammed and useless. Had the jamming of the cartridges not taken place on so extensive a scale and at the critical moment it did, I feel assured the Mahdists would never have been able to have borne down in a mass upon our square that day, and many a brave soldier would not have gone to a grave in the Soudan. Amid the hubbub and excitement of such a conflict there were officers who, like Captain Crabbe, of the 3rd Grenadiers, went about with sticks, with which, taking the jammed rifles from their men's hands, they struck the levers and ejected the cartridges. That the complex, ill-shapen Boxer cartridge was the cause of most of the jamming that occurred at Abu Klea there is scarcely room to doubt."

* Lord Charles Beresford in his report makes the following allusion to this incident:—"The Gardner gun jammed after firing about thirty rounds. The enemy were then about two hundred yards from the muzzle of the gun. The captain of the gun, Will Rhoods, chief boatswain mate, and myself, unscrewed the plate to clear the barrel, or take the lock of the jammed barrel out, when the enemy were upon us. Rhoods was killed with a spear. Walter Miller, armourer, I also saw killed with a spear at the same moment on my left. I was knocked down in the rear of the gun, but uninjured, except a small spear scratch on the left hand. The crowd and crush of the enemy were very great at this point, and, as I struggled up, I was carried against the face of the square, which was literally pressed back by sheer weight of numbers about twelve paces from the position of the gun. The crush was so great that at the moment few on either side were killed, but fortunately this flank of the square had been forced up a very steep little mound, which enabled the rear rank to open a tremendous fire over the heads of the front rank men; this relieved the pressure and enabled the front rank to bayonet or shoot those of the enemy nearest them. The enemy then, for some reason, turned to their right along the left flank of the square, and streamed away in numbers along the rear face of it. In a very few minutes the terrific fire from the square told on the enemy. There was a momentary waver, and they then walked quietly away. I immediately manned the Gardner, and cleared the jam as soon as I could. This, however, was not done in time to be of much use in firing on the slowly retreating enemy, as they had got back into the nullah and behind the mound before it was ready."

up from among the dead and rushing past the square, whence a well-directed fire brought most of them to the ground never to rise again.

More than a thousand bodies lay upon the scene of the engagement, horse and rider, camel and foot soldier, friend and foe in one red ruin blent. The victory had been dearly purchased. The British losses were nine officers killed and nine wounded, and sixty-five non-commissioned officers and men killed, and eighty-five wounded. The enemy, it was officially reported, had left no fewer than 800 dead around the square, and prisoners stated that the number of their wounded was quite exceptional. In addition to the Ameer of Matamah, they had also lost the sheikh of the Baggara tribe. On the British side, one-half of the loss was borne by the Heavy Camel Corps alone, and this resulted undoubtedly from the gallant but rash advance which Colonel Burnaby had impulsively ordered, forgetting that he was simply a staff officer, and had no direct authority over the men. It was a grievous blunder and might have led to a terrible defeat. But Burnaby had ever been a man of dash and daring with a proud disdain for adverse odds. The Heavies obeyed his rash order to their own cost, and he himself fell fighting sword in hand like the gallant soldier that he was. The column had also lost Lieutenants Pigott and Delisle of the Naval Brigade who fell when the Gardner gun was jammed and the enemy rushed upon it. On the other hand the screw guns under Captain Norton of the Royal Artillery had done deadly execution throughout the action, especially when the rebel cavalry formed for the charge, and again when a renewed attack was threatened. Altogether the battery fired thirty-eight shrapnels, nineteen common shell, and six case, the latter when the rebels rushed to close quarters. At that moment gunner Smith behaved most gallantly. All his comrades were driven back, when snatching up a hand-spike he vigorously repelled the Arabs and saved Lieutenant Guthrie, who had been severely wounded.

The enemy was already drawing off to the rocky rugged hills around the valley, when the Hussars, who had been detached to prevent a flank attack, came up and received orders to march forward to Abu Klea wells, now but a short distance ahead. The force had been suffering agonies of thirst with no means of appeasing them. The moans of the wounded were piteous in the extreme, and there was hardly a drop of water to give them. Everything that was possible was done however by Dr. Ferguson and his colleagues, and before three o'clock all was ready for the advance, the wounded being carried on camel litters and on stretchers to the wells, which were finally occupied at five o'clock without further opposition beyond a few shots from flying natives.

At night volunteers were called for to fetch the convoy from the zereba, and the position round the wells was held until the following morning, the men being foodless, if not waterless, and the night again being bitterly cold. Some parties of the enemy who made an attack upon the zereba were driven back with a loss of nearly a hundred men, and then the remainder of the foe streamed out of the wady and over the hills. "Had there been one regiment of cavalry," wrote Mr. Charles Williams to the *Daily Chronicle*, "we might have exterminated or taken prisoners these fellows, who to the last maintained a defiant appearance. They jumped out of the long grass and closed with individual soldiers for hours after the fight was over, and two of them in ghazi's uniform excited admiration by the cool way in which they walked off for a distance of half a mile, regardless of all the attempts to pot them."



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

CHAPTER XVII.

The Abu Klea wells taken possession of and fortified.—Night march of General Stewart's column towards the Nile.—The camels give in.—Bivouac of the troops.—The rebels prepare to intercept the British advance.—Deadly fire of the enemy.—General Stewart mortally wounded.—Mr. St. Leger-Herbert shot dead.—Sir Charles Wilson assumes the command.—Advanced works erected for the skirmishers.—Mr. Cameron killed.—A flying column sallies forth.—Repeated desperate charges of the foe.—Valley of the Shadow of Death.—Final rush and retreat of the rebels.—The Nile at last.—Occupation of Abu Kru and burning of Gubat.—Results of the battle.

THE immediate result of the hard-won victory of Abu Klea was the seizure of the wells, which gave the troops an abundant supply of water. By nightfall the men were collected inside an irregular and imperfectly completed zereba, where they rested in square formation, with their arms beside them ready for instant use. The supplies having been brought from the old position, additional fortifications were erected at the wells; the British dead were buried, and by dint of hard work the column was ready to resume its forward march at four o'clock on the following afternoon, January 18. A detachment of the Sussex regiment and a few men of the Royal Engineers

were left to guard Abu Klea, and General Stewart set off towards the Nile with the remainder of the force, and one hundred camels for the conveyance of water, ammunition, and cacolets. Starting at four p.m., the column marched onward until sunset, when a halt of a few minutes was made, to allow the darkness to settle down, and then, avoiding Shebacat wells and the Arabs posted there to intercept or hinder the force, General Stewart struck due south into the Desert, hoping to reach the Nile before daylight, and before the rebels could come up. Part of the way, the force moved in columns of regiments, the Mounted Infantry leading, with the Hussars in advance and on the flanks. Ali Lobah, the outlaw robber chief, captured by the Hussars at Gakdul, directed the course, which was at times rather circuitous—now south, then south by west, and again south by east.

The column progressed only slowly, for the men had already passed one sleepless night and had toiled hard all day. Halts frequently had to be made in order to enable the rear to come up with the rest of the column. Scores of camels moreover broke down under their loads and had to be abandoned, the packs, as a rule, being

transferred to the few spare "remount" animals. The force was at times in a state of great disorganization, groups of men frequently drifting behind; for, in spite of blows and shouts, the camels refused to move out of a slow walk. Whenever the route led through broken ground—fortunately it was for the most part easy going—there was much straggling and raggedness, the column resembling a herd more than anything else. The briefest halt was seized upon by hundreds of soldiers to dismount and throw themselves upon the ground to snatch a few minutes' sleep—sleep so dead that they had to be roughly aroused before they could be made to remount. "Go on, go on," was the cry incessantly uttered; and heavy-eyed, half-dozing, the force mechanically moved forward. Watchfires, probably lighted by rebel scouts, were seen on the flank amid the darkness, and uncertainty as to the British strength could alone have prevented the enemy from making an attack. Towards morning the route lay through dense jungle and groves of mimosa, where the confusion again delayed progress for an hour or two. The camels, which were very hungry, insisted on eating the long grass, and as all attempts to urge them forward proved unavailing, Sir Herbert Stewart ordered a general halt. It was now evident that the Nile could not be reached by daylight.

Eventually the men set off again at a slow march, and as the dawn broke, the column found itself still six miles from the river, and about the same distance south of Matamah. The sun was barely up when numerous tom-toms were heard beating, and it became evident that the rebels were aware of the British approach. Soon streams of men on horseback and on foot poured out of Matamah and took up a position between the column and the Nile. For a short time Sir Herbert Stewart deliberated whether to push on two miles nearer the river, but as the Arabs were mustering in sufficient force to offer a serious resistance to the advance, he decided at six o'clock to halt upon a ridge of desert covered with sparkling pebbles, four miles from the river and in the vicinity of the village of Gubat. To the right and rear rose a few low black hills, from one mile to two miles distant; while in front the desert, dotted with bushes, rolled downward towards the green flats bordering the Nile.

Turning with a light smile to his staff, General Stewart exclaimed: "Tell the officers and men we will have breakfast first and then go out and fight." The column thereupon closed up, and the men proceeded to form a zereba for their protection. Sacks and barrels of stores, camel saddles, brushwood and sand were steadily piled up, and flimsy as these works looked to an inexperienced eye, they nevertheless constituted defences not to be despised in the open plain. While the troops were thus occupied the Arabs gathered not merely on the front and the flanks of the column, but also in the rear. Groups bearing the fantastic Koran-inscribed banners of the False Prophet, similar to those of which two or three score had been captured at Abu Klea, could be seen occupying every point of vantage, and the fire of the enemy soon became fierce and deadly, despite the cloud of smoke and sand-dust which hung around. Breakfast preparations were consequently suspended for an hour, whilst most of the troops lay flat and fatigue parties strengthened the position.

The situation was exceedingly critical, and General Stewart recognized the danger. At eight o'clock, having given orders to form square and attack the enemy in that formation, he went towards a low mound, a hundred yards on the right front where a few skirmishers were stationed. A minute later he fell to the ground hit in

the groin by a bullet. His wound was kept a secret for a time, and he was as unostentatiously as possible carried to the centre of the square, where a hospital had been established by heaping a number of saddles and boxes to a height of some four feet. The enclosure thus formed was soon filled by wounded men, some injured severely, others seeking mere temporary dressing of slight injuries. Bullet hits came faster and faster, and the thud, thud of the lead against some resisting substance became painfully frequent. Here the wounded commander lay with Mr. St. Leger Herbert, his private secretary and likewise correspondent of the *Morning Post*, weeping whilst he tended him. Leaving his charge for a few moments Mr. Herbert was proceeding to the horse lines to fetch some provisions from his saddle bags, when he was shot through the throat and fell dead within thirty feet of the hospital.



MR. J. A. CAMERON, CORRESPONDENT OF THE "STANDARD."

General Stewart being wounded, the command of the column devolved by seniority upon Lord Charles Beresford, but he being a naval officer and far from well, although personally standing by his Gardner gun all day, passed on the honour to Sir Charles Wilson, hitherto chief of the Intelligence Department. The latter officer at once held a council of war, at which Colonels Boscawen and Barrow, Lord Charles Beresford, and others were present. It was resolved to wait till 2 p.m. for the enemy's expected assault upon the position, and if by that time they did not assail it, to march out with a square of about 1,200 men, who should fight their way on foot to the Nile. As the position was threatened by a front attack, the necessity of a small advanced work occurred to all minds, and the occupation of two mounds on the right front was urged. Forty volunteers immediately hurried out with boxes, pack-saddles, and spades, and ran up a shelter, behind which the skirmishers were safe from the enemy's fire and could prevent any force from creeping near the square. The rebels were too numerous, however, to drive away, and the nature of the ground and the high trajectory of their Remingtons enabled them

to drop their bullets into the square at all points, causing considerable loss of life. Mr. Cameron, the *Standard* correspondent, had just installed himself behind his camel to have some lunch, and his servant was in the act of handing him a box of sardines when one of the dropping bullets entered his back and killed him instantly. A short time afterwards Mr. Burleigh received a blow in the throat from a spent bullet, whilst talking to two other correspondents, but fortunately it did not prevent him from continuing to carry on his duties.

"The enemy," he wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*, "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. 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 small, and the wounded had to be laid outside, where doctors and patients were alike exposed to the enemy's fire. Surgeon-Major Ferguson, Dr. Briggs, and their colleagues had their skill and time taxed to the utmost. Want of water, however, hampered their operations.

"Our situation had become unbearable. We were being fired at without a chance of retaliating. The 10,000 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 their opportunity to slay."

Bold as was the proposed advance—for right in the path stood the enemy, unbeaten and reckless with the mad courage begotten of fanaticism—it was impossible to delay decisive action any longer. Accordingly all preparations were made and the zereba was placed under the guard of Lord Charles Beresford and Colonel Barrow, with the Hussars, about 120 strong, the naval contingent, the Artillery, and some Engineers. This force was considered sufficient to defend the position, as the Gardner and the three screw guns were left in its hands.

The flying column, with Sir Charles Wilson in command, and Colonel Boscawen acting as executive officer, was about 1200 strong, and marched in the same formation as at Abu Klea. 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. Cacolets were taken for the wounded, and each man carried 100 rounds of ammunition, and had his water bottle full. At two o'clock precisely the signal was given for the advance, and the square began to move slowly across the open, protected by the fire of the Gardner gun in the fort, while flanking skirmishers threaded their way through the scattered mimosas, exposed to a galling fire, from which many fell.

As the column reached a part of the valley, which was too thickly covered by grass and scrub for a successful advance, it 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. A first host of fanatics then hurled its swordsmen and spearsmen upon the square. The troops prepared to face the onslaught, and by their officers' directions fired

volleys by companies, scarcely any independent firing being allowed. As the Arabs came on, with loud and furious shouts, the clear, steady voice of Colonel Boscawen could be heard above the din—"Halt—fire a volley at five hundred yards—ready," and then, from the four faces of the square, belched forth flame and smoke. The wild dervishes and fanatics who led the charge, went down in scores before the British rifles, none of them ever reaching the square. Then the column moved forward again at the same slow pace, the bearers picking up the British wounded and placing them on the cacolets. But the Arabs were still undaunted, and on three more occasions they attempted charges along the line of the advance.

Colonel Boscawen, cool and collected, met each move of the enemy successfully. Now to the right and then to the left the square marched, driving back the enemy's skirmishers upon the main bodies. In the zereba Colonel Barrow, standing on a pile of saddles, directed the fire of his men so as to prevent the Arabs on the flanks from uniting to crush the flying column. Captain Norton, with his guns, sent scores of well-directed shell and shrapnel into the masses of the enemy on the right and front of the square, stopping an open intention upon the part of a considerable force upon the right to join in the charge upon the troops. As his well-planted shots burst among the Arabs, scattering them like dust, the soldiers in the square and the zereba cheered his success and that of his colleague, Lieutenant du Boulay. Again and again the Arabs gathered in dense masses intending to rush upon the square. Promptly at sight of their array the troops halted, the front ranks lying down or kneeling, whilst volley upon volley was sent into the savage hordes, causing them to reel and tumble and slink away behind the crests of the rolling upland. In one hour the square had travelled a mile from the zereba, beset and fighting its way inch by inch. The desert, bounded by low black hills, seemed a valley of the shadow of death, for the column was already carrying many wounded, some of whom were struck again and again while perched in their camel chairs.

At last, at half past-four, after two hours' incessant fighting, Norton's guns again opened fire, and Lord Charles Beresford's Gardner warned the column to be cautious. It was then slowly but surely approaching the crest of a sandy ridge, beyond which flowed the Nile. The sky-line around suddenly became black again with the enemy, nearly 10,000 of whom swept down in three directions towards the square, their main body coming upon the left face.

"It was a critical moment," says Mr. Burleigh. "Down the Arabs came from behind the ridge led by gallant horsemen and wild dervishes, who 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 Matamah; but our square had to gain the ridge before escaping from their sharpshooters' fire, or getting a chance of punishing the daring foe."

The onward march was then resumed, only a few shots coming from the bushes, and these gradually ceased as the column drew nearer to the Nile. The sun had now sunk to rest, and the pale moonlight revealed a silvery

mass in the distant gloaming. It was the Nile at last. The square then halted for a brief rest, and the wounded were lifted from their litters to see the river they were longing for; the precious liquid that was to soften their caking wounds and quench their feverish thirst. After a few minutes' repose the column advanced to the Nile, and encamped in a sheltered ravine, near the straggling little village of Abu Kru. The men drank freely of the refreshing water, and then lay down with their arms, strong outposts being on the alert against any surprise.

Early the next morning, leaving the wounded under a strong guard at Abu Kru, the column set out for the zereba again. The village of Gubat was passed on the way and set on fire, and at eight o'clock—the enemy offering but little resistance on the way—the entrenched position was reached once more. There had been considerable fighting at the zereba, while the square was on the march, but the enemy had eventually been compelled to retreat before the fierce fire from guns and rifles alike. Breakfast was just ready in the morning when the column was seen returning, Colonel Talbot, commanding the Life Guards, walking as composedly in advance through the scrub as though he were returning from a field-day in Queen Anne's Walk. When the column came up it was received with befitting cheers, for it had done a really plucky thing well, or “tastefully,” as an Irishman in the Sussex regiment observed.

Such was the battle of Gubat or Abu Kru. Despite the repeated charges of the enemy, they had been kept so well at bay on all sides that the casualties of the expeditionary force were comparatively few. Two officers had been killed, and nine wounded, including the gallant commander, Sir Herbert Stewart, who, unhappily was destined never to recover. Among the non-commissioned officers and the men there were twenty-two killed and ninety-two wounded, and two-thirds of the latter cases were severe, a large number of operations being deemed necessary by the medical staff. If the flying column had wavered for one moment it would no doubt have been annihilated, but it met every charge unflinchingly, and the Arabs fell to the ground ere they could deal destruction with their spears.* The official report of the action stated that they came on less fiercely than at Abu Klea, so it is probable that the result of the first engagement had already shaken their faith in the omnipotence which was supposed to attend the banner of the Mahdi.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Burial of the Dead who fell at Abu Klea.—A general advance ordered to the Nile.—Attack on Matamah.—Arrival of some of Gordon's steamers.—Landing of Native troops.—Despatch from Gordon, “Khartoum all right: could hold out for years.”—Gloomy account given by the Egyptian soldiers.—Private letter from Gordon.—Treachery at Khartoum.—Sir Charles Wilson's unaccountable delay.—Formation of a new camp.—Shelling of Shendi.—Sir Charles Wilson at length departs for Khartoum with two steamers.—Difficulties at the Sixth Cataract.—Reports current that Khartoum had fallen.—The first glimpse of the city.—Engagement with the enemy's batteries.—Running the gauntlet.—Khartoum in the hands of the Mahdi.—The steamers ordered to retreat.—Various native reports of the fall of Khartoum.—The Mahdi's account of the capture of the city.—The treachery of Faragh Pasha universally believed in.—Gordon killed on the threshold of his palace.—Death of Consul Hansal.—Two thousand other victims said to have fallen.—Reported massacre of women and children.—Fate of the remaining European residents at Khartoum.—Gordon's misplaced faith in being timely succoured.

ON the return of the flying column to the zereba, Sir Charles Wilson gave orders for a general advance to the

Nile. First of all, however, it was necessary to bury the dead, and the engineers immediately set to work digging a long trench for the non-commissioned officers and men, and a single large grave for the remains of Mr. Cameron, Mr. Herbert, and the two officers who had fallen in the fight. At noon, the bodies of the two unfortunate journalists were placed on stretchers and carried by Colonel Barrow and the various newspaper correspondents in the camp, to the desert spot which was to be their last resting place. Lord Charles Beresford impressively read the burial service, and then the remains of Cameron and Herbert were reverently consigned to their mother earth.

An hour afterwards, the whole force moved away in column of regiments from the zereba, taking as large a quantity of stores as possible, and leaving behind only a guard of fifty men. There were fifty-five wounded soldiers to be carried on hand-stretchers, for the loss in camels had been by hundreds. Fortunately the enemy did not again attempt to attack the force which reached the river-village of Abu Kru at night-fall. The wounded were placed under cover in the huts, and the outlying houses were loop-holed for defence, whilst the troops settled down for the night, sleeping on the ground outside, there being not more than a score of small mud buildings in the place.

According to native reports Matamah was garrisoned by some of the Mahdi's most trusted troops under an Ameer of high military reputation, to whom Sir Charles Wilson made an offer of terms through a prisoner captured at Abu Klea. The Ameer—the only one of his rank, who had survived the recent battles—vouchsafed no answer to this offer, and it was then decided that a column about 1000 strong should reconnoitre the town. The troops sallied forth on the morning of January 21st, and marching along the low ground to the west, they were allowed to approach within a hundred yards of a thick cluster of mud houses loop-holed and strongly fortified, when the enemy suddenly opened fire from an advanced battery. All the morning, streams of natives on foot and donkey back had been seen making off towards the river and Berber, so that the column was rather surprised at being received by volleys of bullets, and some rounds of solid shot from a Krupp gun. The latter passed over the square, but several men were hit by the bullets, and among them Major Pöe of the Marines. The column thereupon drew back, halting to the west of the town, where a desultory fire was kept up until ten o'clock, when some sentinels reported that three steamers flying the Egyptian flag were approaching down the river.

The news caused great commotion among the troops, and as the vessels came in view three ringing cheers were given. It was evident enough that these were some of the steamers which Gordon had turned to such good account in his river warfare, and that they had been sent by him to convey a portion of the British column to Khartoum. They soon stopped abreast of the village of Abu Kru, and at once proceeded to land 250 Bashi-Bazouks and Egyptians, together with four brass guns. The men, who were armed with serviceable Remingtons and bayonets, with waist and shoulder belts full of cartridges, proved a somewhat ragged lot as regards attire, but they were hearty and jovial and apparently fit for any amount of hard work. The British soldiers fraternized with them at once, and on their side they seemed delighted to find that the column had reached the Nile. But a short time had elapsed and greetings were still being exchanged when a fourth steamer was reported to be in sight, and as it approached slowly down the river

* According to a statement subsequently made by the Sheikh of the Shagiya tribe, the losses of the enemy in killed and wounded at Abu Klea and Gubat were upwards of 3,000 men.

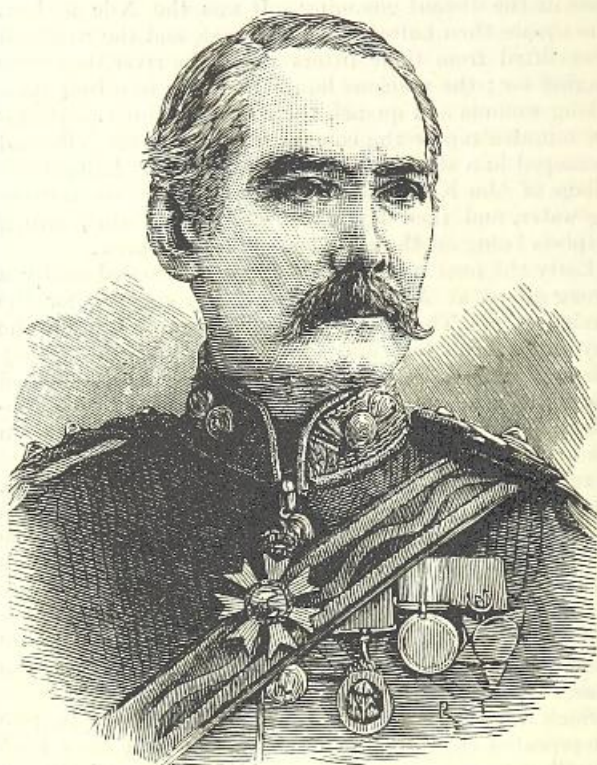
it could be seen that it was towing a large barge laden with provisions. At this sight the troops gave another round of cheers, and seemed to regard their troubles as ended. The native soldiers, who had been landed, now marched with their four guns to join the column attacking Matamah, and for an hour or so the two contingents pounded away at the mud walls. The cannonade seemed to have little effect, however, and Sir Charles Wilson eventually decided to withdraw to Abu Kru. Lord Cochrane pleaded hard to be allowed to storm the houses on the windward side, set fire to that quarter, and under cover of the smoke drive the rebels out of their earthworks, taking them in flank, but Sir Charles Wilson did not consider that the result would justify the risk.*

Sir Charles had already been joined by the commander of the little flotilla, Khasm-el-Moos Bey, who brought with him five volumes of Gordon's diary and various letters. On one slip of paper which he produced there was written the words "Khartoum all right, could hold out for years. C. E. Gordon, Dec. 29, 1884." The good news conveyed in this brief message spread rapidly through the ranks, and caused the greatest satisfaction, the more so as the statements made by the Egyptian officers accompanying the steamers had been less hopeful. According to their account they had for some weeks been stationed with the steamers at an island a short distance above Matamah, waiting for the arrival of the British column. They had assisted in getting messages into and out of Khartoum, where the situation was altogether most gloomy. Gordon himself was well, they said, but his soldiers were despairing of relief, and it was advisable that some Europeans should proceed with the utmost alacrity to Khartoum, in order to reassure the population and the troops.

These statements were in full contradiction with General Gordon's brief note, but the latter was manifestly a blind, for Mr. Burleigh maintains that the gallant defender of Khartoum declared in a private letter that the end was coming. Two men whom he had spared—Faragh Pasha, said by some to be a Soudanese, and by others a Circassian, and Ahmed Gelab Bey, a native of Assouan, the chief men in Khartoum commanding the Egyptian troops—were negotiating with the Mahdi for the surrender of the city and the garrison, and he was powerless to prevent it. The coming of the relief expedition had been too long delayed. He prayed God his countrymen might be in time to save him. He had been warned, and could personally escape, but would not desert "his people," preferring to await the issue, which was in God's hands. There was little likelihood, he thought, of his ever seeing his friends again in this world, as he would never be taken prisoner.

Sir Charles Wilson was in possession of this information on Wednesday, January 21, and ought undoubtedly to have proceeded to Khartoum without even an hour's delay. At the battle of Gubat, when Sir Herbert Stewart was wounded, Colonel Boscawen had assumed the effective command of the troops, and he was quite capable of de-

* Mr. Charles Williams, the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, subsequently alluded to this attempt against Matamah in the following derisive terms:—"The column marched to the north of Matamah; after an hour it marched to the south-west of it. Since the famous exploit of the King of France with 20,000 men, never was there such marching up hills and then marching down again; never was there such an objectless movement of troops in close order under fire. After six hours—five of them under fire—after establishing, by the efforts of the Royal Engineers and the picked shots of the Rifle Brigade, an admirable little fort, within 650 yards of the town, and after being reinforced by the men and some of the guns of Gordon's steamers, which most opportunely arrived, we—retired. Then only did the attempt on Matamah come to be called a reconnaissance in force."



COLONEL SIR CHARLES WILSON.

fending the position at Abu Kru. There was accordingly no reason why Sir Charles Wilson should not have repaired to Khartoum immediately, or if there was, it can only have been known to himself. However, he remained with the column, which, with the exception of two companies of Guards, moved down to the river's bank on the morning of Thursday the 22nd. The new position was considered to be more secure and advantageous, and to increase its safety it was speedily fortified. The wounded were removed there, and Sir Herbert Stewart, who for the time being was progressing favourably, was carried on board the smallest of the steamers, where it was considered he would be more comfortable than on shore.

The three other vessels had in the meantime been employed by Sir Charles Wilson on a reconnaissance down the Nile. Detachments of Egyptian troops, the Mounted Infantry, and the Sussex regiment were on board, and a couple of hours were spent in shelling Shendi, which was almost completely destroyed. No troops were landed, but three boats were captured, and then the vessels steamed back to the British position. During their absence the Arabs had gathered on the surrounding heights as if for an attack, a thousand or more of them coming from the direction of Khartoum. Another large party also sallied forth from Matamah, apparently with the object of storming the British position, but it speedily retired when the Infantry advanced in a line to meet it. Meanwhile a third portion of the rebel force established itself on a small island in the Nile, exactly opposite the British camp, with the evident intention of annoying the troops during the night by a ceaseless rifle-fire. However, as the steamers returned, their small guns were speedily brought into play, the infantry sharpshooters opened a steady fire, and the rebels could soon be seen scuttling off the island and across the Nile.

Friday seems to have been unaccountably dawdled

away, but in the evening as provisions were running short—and it was desired to let Lord Wolseley know what had happened—a convoy of camels was sent out after dark to return to Gakdul with instructions to bring stores up from there. An escort of 300 men, composed of Guards, Heavies, and Mounted Infantry, under the command of Colonel Talbot, accompanied the convoy, which was guided on its way by Lord Cochrane and some natives.* On the morrow, January 24, that is three days after the receipt of Gordon's communication, Sir Charles Wilson at last thought fit to start for Khartoum. He might have done so on the afternoon of the 21st, for Lord Charles Beresford had already had the two principal steamers examined and the necessary repairs done to them, but procrastination seems to have been the all but invariable rule throughout the expedition. The force selected to accompany Sir Charles Wilson consisted of twenty men of the Royal Sussex, and a couple of hundred Soudanese troops who embarked on board the *Bordein* and the *Tellhoweiya*, the two best of the five steamers. Sir Charles Wilson was on the former vessel together with Captain Gascoigne and Khashm-el-Moos Bey; while the latter was commanded by Abdul Hamid Bey, with Captain Trafford and Lieutenant Stuart Wortley. The newspaper correspondents applied for leave to accompany the expedition, but this was peremptorily refused in accordance with Lord Wolseley's orders. Starting from the British camp at 8 a.m., the vessels reached the village of Gandatu three hours later and stopped to take in wood for firing. A messenger here came on board the *Bordein* from the Sheikh of the Shagiya tribe, who sent word that his men were ready to join the English as soon as their power was established. The victories at Abu Klea and Gubat had produced great effect, the enemy estimating their total loss at 3,000 men. The steamers stopped for the night near Derrera, starting off again at 5.30 a.m. on January 25. Another stoppage was made at nine o'clock for wood, and then the vessels went on their way again, passing Wad-el-Habeshi at the foot of the sixth cataract, where the enemy had made embrasures for guns. They were, however, all unoccupied.

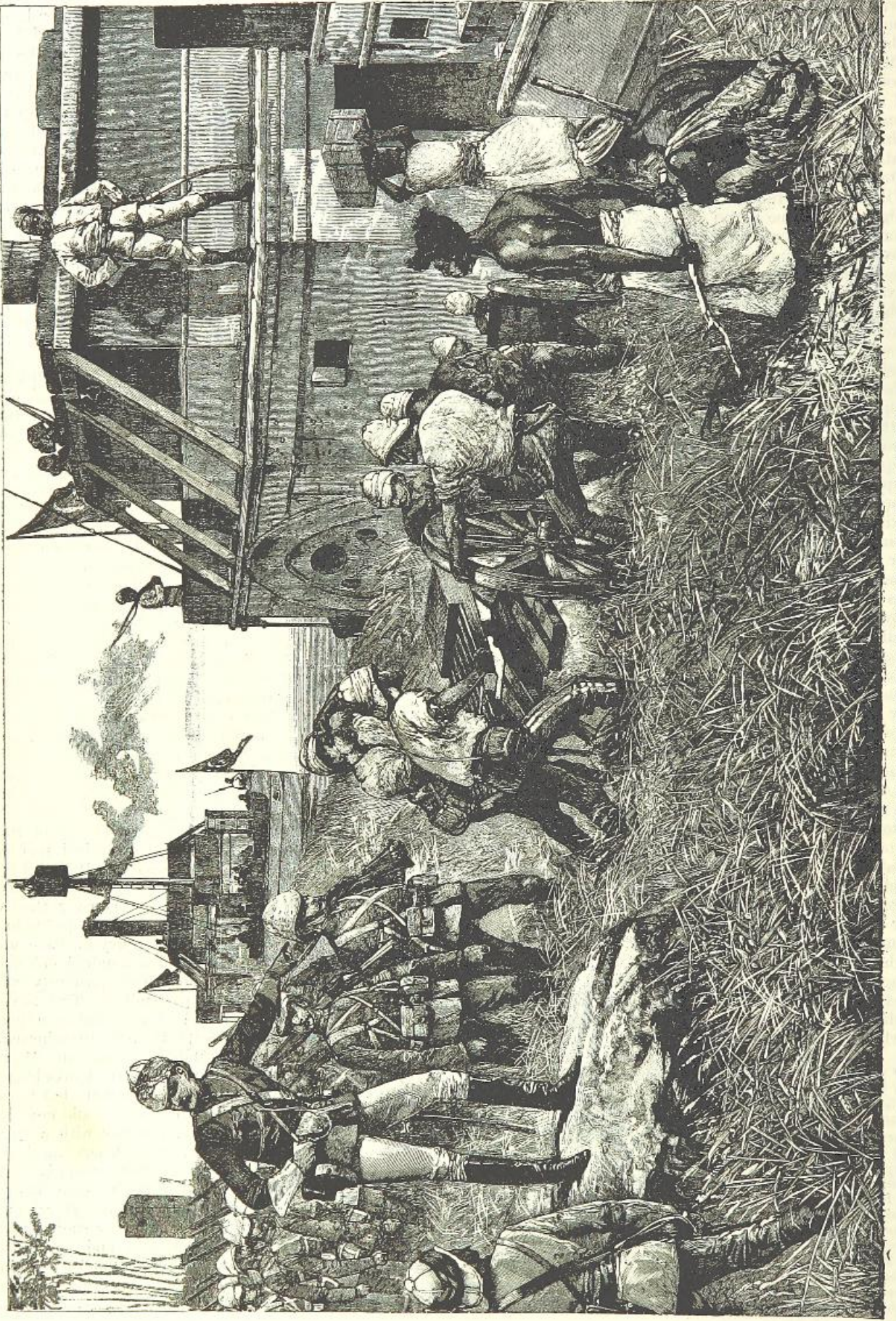
At three o'clock the steamers entered the cataract, and on nearing one of the islands of Hassan a couple of hours afterwards the *Bordein* ran upon a rock. She only cleared it on the following morning, and the water was so shallow that all the men had to be landed to lighten the vessel and enable her to pass over a rapid. However, she soon went aground again, and the expedition was delayed for the whole day. Two Arabs of the Shagiya tribe who came on board reported that General Gordon had been fighting for a fortnight, and that the advance of the English was greatly feared. They added that their tribe was only waiting for a positive turn of affairs to declare either one way or the other. A fresh start was made early on the morning of January 27, and on reaching the

village of Gos-Nefisa some more wood was taken on board. While this operation proceeded an Arab informed Lieutenant Stuart Wortley that a camel-driver from Omdurman had passed that day, reporting the fall of Khartoum and death of General Gordon, but this was generally disbelieved. The vessels continued on their way up the Nile, and throughout the afternoon they were fired upon by Arabs stationed on the western bank. They stopped for the night at a village on the east bank opposite Tamaniat, and at six o'clock on the following morning they were once more under steam proceeding at the utmost speed towards Khartoum.

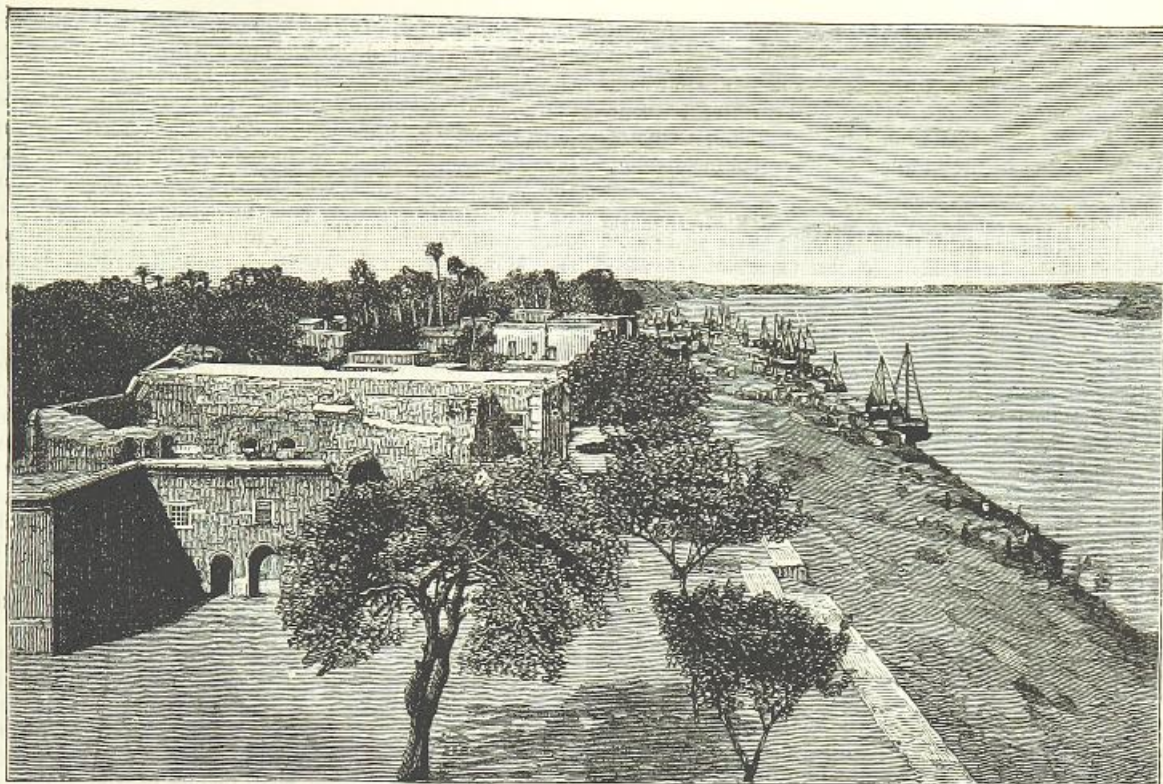
Gebel-seg-et-Taib, a steep point of a hill near the river's edge, where guns had formerly been in position to fire on Gordon's vessels, was reached at an early hour and found unoccupied. Shortly afterwards, however, a man of the Shagiya tribe shouted from the eastern bank, that Khartoum had fallen two days before. Discredited at first, these reports repeated at every bend in the river, now filled all hearts with alarm. Who can tell what passed in the minds of these men hurrying to the relief of Gordon, and dreading every moment to discover that the statements of the natives were true, that blood and treasure had been poured forth in vain, and that they were destined to arrive too late? For months and months the valiant hero had battled with the foe, abandoned to his own resources, treated with derision when he appealed for Zebehr or the Turks, denied every request, told to abandon his post of honour when abandonment had become an impossibility, even if it had been compatible with his chivalrous ideas, and now that success was sent, it was perhaps destined to prove unavailing.

The crews of the *Bordein* and the *Tellhoweiya* were not left long in doubt. At nine o'clock they passed the island and village of Vakeel Amin, which were found to be in the occupation of Sheikh Mustapha, one of Mohamed Ahmed's head amers. Running the gauntlet of the rebel fire the vessels steamed onwards, and when just below Fighiaiha, a glimpse was caught of Khartoum through a telescope. Shortly after eleven o'clock an island was reached, and here the rebels hidden among the grass and bushes on the low banks, opened a very hot rifle fire. The *Bordein* was in front with the *Tellhoweiya* close behind, and at noon they were both abreast of Halfaya, where the enemy occupied an entrenched position with four guns. Both vessels responded to the rebel fire with their howitzers and rifle volleys at a range of five hundred yards, and still steaming up the river, they at last came abreast of Tuti island, which they hoped to find occupied by Gordon's troops. But a heavy fusillade was opened upon them at a distance of a hundred and fifty yards, and two guns began to shell them apparently from Khartoum. As the southern extremity of Tuti island was approached, another heavy fire was opened upon them from four Krupp guns stationed at the fort of Omdurman, which was evidently in the Mahdi's possession. Meanwhile thousands of rebels swarming on the banks blazed away at the steamers with their Remingtons, but fortunately with little effect. Those on board could now see Gordon's troop-barges drawn up, together with a large fleet of nuggars and native craft, on the Khartoum shore, opposite the Omdurman ferry. Nothing could be seen however of the two steamers that the General was reported to have retained. Looking towards Khartoum the north-west shore outside the city was swarming with rebels; whilst men with Mahdi flags and in Mahdi uniforms thronged the streets, housetops, and forts. Thousands of others, many of them dervishes, disdaining the cover of trenches, ran down the low ground to the

* Sir Charles Wilson, in a despatch addressed to Lord Wolseley, gave the following reasons for the delay on January 23. He observed:—"General Gordon, in a most characteristic letter, addressed to the chief of the staff or to the officer commanding the British advanced guard, insisted strongly on our taking actual command of the steamers, and removing from them all Pashas, Beys, and men of Turkish or Egyptian origin. He wrote in strong terms of the uselessness of these men in action, and begged that, if the boats were not manned by British sailors, they should be sent back to him with none but Soudanese crews and soldiers. It was originally intended that the steamers should be manned by the Naval Brigade, but Lord Charles Beresford was in hospital unable to walk, and all the other officers of the Brigade, and several of the best petty officers and men had been killed or wounded. It was therefore necessary to select Soudanese officers, crews, and soldiers from the four ships, and to transfer them to the two steamers going to Khartoum."



EMBARKATION OF SIR CHARLES WILSON AND HIS TROOPS AT GUBAT.



LOOKING DOWN THE NILE FROM KHARTOUM.

water's edge, brandishing their weapons, firing at the steamers or shouting derisively the news of Gordon's fate. One dervish approached the river's brink, carrying a white flag, and tried to attract the attention of those on board. Whatever his purpose may have been it was impossible to parley, for guns were throwing shot and shell from three points—Khartoum, Omdurman, and Halfaya—while a continuous rifle fire came from all sides. The *Bordein* according to Lieutenant Stuart Wortley's official report, crept to within two hundred yards of the north-west shore of Khartoum and then perceived that no flag was waving from the staff on the palace. Some of the buildings were in ruins and the city was clearly in the Mahdi's hands.

As the steamers were well protected by armour-plates the loss on board had been very slight. Only two men were killed and sixteen were wounded. One shell, however, had burst on the *Tellhoweiya's* cabin, and the *Bordein's* dingy had been blown to pieces. The first view of Khartoum in the rebels' hands had momentarily demoralized the native crews and soldiers. Kashm-el-Moos, his officers and men, threw themselves upon the decks, covering their heads and weeping like children. Gordon's admiral suspected, and ultimately learned that he had lost his three sons and all his property in the capture of the city. When actually under fire, however, all the natives fought with great bravery. The men of the Royal Sussex, on their side, fired volley after volley, until at last their shoulders fairly ached; and it is certain that the rebels lost several hundred men during the action.

As it was quite impossible to land under so heavy a fire, Sir Charles Wilson, realising that further efforts would be useless, ordered the steamers to put about and go full speed down the river again. By a quarter past four in the afternoon the expedition was once more out of range of the enemy's guns. A stoppage was made at an island below Gebel Royan, and messengers were then

sent out to collect information. They shortly returned, and reported that Khartoum had fallen on the night of January 26, through the treachery of Faragh Pasha, the very scoundrel mentioned in Gordon's private letter, and said to have been originally a black slave whom the General had freed and intrusted with the command of the Soudanese troops. This man had opened the gates of Khartoum to the Mahdi's followers, and a terrible massacre had ensued, the heroic governor being slain, and all his followers with him.

The British expedition had failed; many lives had been sacrificed, and millions of money had been expended for no purpose. Lord Wolseley had certainly done everything in his power to bring about a different issue, short of assuming the command of the Bayuda flying column in person. He had, however, confided the expedition to an energetic and able officer, Sir Herbert Stewart, and but for the latter's wound, Khartoum would in all probability have been reached in time, and Gordon saved. Such a result might still have been attained, perhaps, if the Commander-in-Chief had placed a really competent officer beside Sir Herbert Stewart to second his endeavours and assume the command in the event of any misfortune befalling him. Unfortunately, however, the direction of the column devolved upon Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, who was scarcely fitted for such arduous duties. But much as one may regret that he did not start from Gubat as soon as Khasm-el-Moos arrived there with the steamers, much as one may regret that Lord Wolseley did not provide Sir Herbert Stewart with an efficient coadjutor, it is not to them that blame mainly attaches. The real responsibility rests upon shoulders which have vainly essayed to shake it off, upon the ministers whose policy was procrastination, and who were only driven to action at the eleventh hour by the clamour of public opinion.

The precise circumstances under which Khartoum fell into the hands of the rebels cannot be detailed with cer-

tainty, as the accounts furnished by different refugees and messengers varied in important particulars. The Mahdi's partisans pretended that the whole affair was a miracle, and the Ameer of Berber sent a letter to that effect to all the generals under his command. One of these letters, found in the saddle-bag of a rebel messenger, ran as follows:—

"In the name of God, &c.—From Mohammed Kheir Abdullah Khoy Fali, Ameer General of Berber, to his friend Abdul Magid Abi-el-Lekalek and all his men.—I inform you that to-day, after the mid-day prayer, we received a letter from the faithful Khalifa Abdullah Eben Mohammed, in which he tells us that Khartoum was taken on Monday, the 9th Rabi, 1302, on the side of El Haoui in the following manner:—

"The Mahdi prayed upon his Dervishes and his troops to advance against the fortifications, and entered Khartoum in a quarter of an hour. They killed the traitor Gordon, and captured the steamers and boats. God has made the Mahdi glorious.

"Be grateful, and thank and praise God for his unspeakable mercy. I announce it to you. Tell your troops."

Whatever reports, however, the Mahdi may have been pleased to spread abroad in view of enhancing his saintly prestige and the fanaticism of his adherents, there can be no doubt but that Khartoum was captured through the treachery of Faragh and other pashas. Gordon himself stated in the private letter before referred to that Faragh and Ahmed Gelab Bey were negotiating for the surrender of the city to the Mahdi. It is alleged that he had always mistrusted Faragh, treason having been proved against him on a previous occasion, in respect of which he was condemned to death. Yielding, however, to Faragh's reiterated prayers for pardon and professions of devotion, Gordon eventually forgave him. For many months Faragh's conduct was above suspicion; but it is thought that he was induced to re-open negotiations with the Mahdi by the fear that punishment would overtake him on the arrival of the English. The position had, moreover, become extremely difficult at Khartoum by reason of the capture of Omdurman by the Mahdi. Provisions were very scarce, and fear of starvation acted as an incentive to treachery. The Egyptian soldier, whose narrative of the siege, published by the *Daily News*, has been frequently quoted in these pages, stated that there were traitors within the city who met and took counsel together against Gordon. "He was warned, but replied, 'Suffer it to be so.' The plan was to deliver over the city whenever the English drew near. The number of traitors increased daily as the people became hopeless. Another thing, and this decided many: after the battle of Abou Klea the rebels went down and collected all the helmets they could find. They showed these to us, waving them outside the trenches, and saying, 'Thus and thus have we eaten up the Feringhees*.' Thus even faithful men were sorely tempted, and became sick at heart. At night time the enemy often came to the south end, within speaking distance; and we used to revile each other. We were called the cursed rebels who spoke evil of the fathers and mothers to the third and fourth generation. In return we called them 'sons of dogs,' and shouted 'Allah bou rou Gehenna, ye rebellious ones; maledictions on your fathers; depart to Gehenna;' and they would make answer 'Ye are slaves of the infidels; ye too are infidels, as you do not believe in our book. We will eat you up, and wipe you from the face of the earth of Allah.' Thus and thus did we call out to each other during the long night."

According to the *Mubashir*, a paper published at

* Gordon's Admiral, Khasm-el-Moos, confirmed this statement in part, mentioning that the Mahdi had a number of helmets made like the English ones, and had sent his men to parade them in sight of the townspeople, while shouting that they were the helmets of soldiers they had killed in battle.

Dongola, the fall of Khartoum was due not only to the treachery of Faragh Pasha, but also to that of several of the Mahdi's followers, who made their way into Khartoum and sowed dissension among the garrison. For some days before Gordon's gallant struggle ended large numbers of the rebels were roving about the town, and paving the way for the betrayal of the garrison. Faragh according to this account, had the command of the western gate of the garrison—that is to say, the gate commanding the Mahdi's position at Omdurman, his duty being to admit into the town and look after all deserters from the Mahdi's camp. Those who obtained admission in this way were very considerable in numbers, particularly just before the betrayal took place, all the fugitives pretending that they had left the rebel camp owing to the famine that prevailed there. They were hospitably entertained at Khartoum, and, at their own request, were distributed over the western fortifications of the garrison, under the traitor Faragh Pasha. They appear to have behaved well enough in repelling the attacks of the Mahdi's followers, and on this account Gordon does not seem to have suspected any possible treachery on their part. On January 21 Faragh informed Gordon that the famine in the Mahdi's camp had reached its acutest stage, and that the rebels would desert by hundreds if they could only safely cross the White Nile.* Gordon accordingly ordered two of his steamers to cruise about before Omdurman for the purpose of taking up any fugitives who might want to cross over to Khartoum. The captains of the steamers, however, were bribed by the Mahdi, and on the night of January 25 conveyed across the White Nile, from Omdurman to Khartoum, several hundred rebels, who were admitted through the western gate of the garrison by Faragh Pasha at four o'clock on the morning of January 26, Faragh being assisted by those under his command, who had gained admission into Khartoum as fugitives. Various natives stated that it was by the southern or Messalamia gate that the rebels entered, and according to information collected by Khasm-el-Moos, the first to enter the city were the Gaulin tribe. Another version supplied by Colonel Boscawen was to the effect that "one of the treacherous pashas marched the garrison to the Omdurman side of the city, telling them that an attack of the Mahdi's troops was expected there. Meanwhile the other pasha opened the gates of Khartoum, allowing the rebels to enter."

Whatever may have been the particular circumstances, it is at least certain that the rebels gained admittance by treachery. On that point all accounts agree. As to what followed, however, there is a considerable amount of conflicting testimony. Two natives informed Sir Charles Wilson, on his way down the Nile, that General Gordon and M. Nicola, the Greek consul, had shut themselves up in the Catholic church of Khartoum with 500 Greeks, some men of the Shagiya tribe, a large store of ammunition, and a certain quantity of food. As this position was known to be very strong, there seemed to be yet a faint hope of saving Gordon—providing, of course, that the information was correct. It was certainly confirmed by some other natives who were questioned by Khasm-el-Moos, but all hope vanished when they declared that the Mahdi after summoning Gordon to surrender, which the latter declined to do, had shelled the church and reduced it to ruins, everyone inside it being killed.

A very different and far more circumstantial account of

* This account does not tally with the statement that provisions were very scarce in Khartoum. The rebels would have been even worse off for food inside the city than outside it.

Gordon's untimely fate was subsequently furnished by a native of Wady Halfa named Abdul Kerim. This man had been a cavass of Ibrahim Bey Ruchdi, who had accompanied Gordon from Cairo to Khartoum in the capacity of chief clerk. Abdul Kerim declared that he had actually seen General Gordon killed. He gave the following particulars:—

At early morning on January 26 Faragh Pasha treacherously opened the gate in the southern wall. The bulk of the Mahdi's fighting men were close at hand, and at once rushed into the town. General Gordon, hearing the confusion, hurried out of the palace, armed with a sword and an axe.* He was accompanied by Ibrahim Bey, the chief clerk, and twenty men. He went towards the house of the Austrian consul, but on his way he met a party of the Mahdi's men, who fired a volley at him, and shot him dead. The Arabs then rushed on with their spears, and killed the chief clerk and nine of the men; the others managing to escape. Abdul Kerim also declared that he had actually seen Gordon's body lying outside the palace; that the corpse had apparently not been subjected to any exceptional indignities, but that the savage Soudanese, as is their custom, had thrust the body through and through with their spears. These stabs were all inflicted after death, however, the actual cause of death being a gun-shot wound which must have deprived the hero of life both swiftly and painlessly. Abdul Kerim stated, moreover, that Herr Hansal, the Austrian consul, had been killed in his own house, but that M. Nicola, the Greek consul, had had his life spared, being simply taken prisoner. A doctor also had escaped death, but all the other Europeans, including the Greeks employed at the Arsenal, had been killed, together with most of the notables.

In reference to the natives the cavass affirmed that the majority of the inhabitants fraternized with the Mahdi's men, and that no women or children were killed; all who surrendered and gave up their valuables being allowed to go away without harm. This assertion was in no wise corroborated by other accounts. A letter written by one of the captive missionaries and brought by a messenger to Padre Vincentini at Dongola formally stated that Khartoum had been sacked and its people massacred. We calculate," said the writer, "the number of victims at over 2,000. The Consul Hansal was murdered, with all the Europeans and General Gordon."

These reports of a massacre having taken place on the fall of Khartoum were to some extent confirmed by the number of bodies which Sir Charles Wilson and his party are said to have seen floating down the Nile. Several of these were coupled and tied back to back, after much the same fashion as the *suspects*, whom the pro-consul Carrier drowned at Nantes during the great French revolution. Contrary to what was generally believed, there appear to have been a number of Europeans in Khartoum at the time when it fell. According to the Egyptian soldier, so often quoted, "the little German tailor, Klein, who, for twenty-five years had resided in Khartoum, remained till the last. His wife and four daughters remained too. There were also several white women—daughters of Europeans by Abyssinian wives, whom they had bought; and there were two or three ladies at the Austrian consul's. I think all these had so many family ties that they would not leave; besides, Gordon always said, 'The English are coming.'"

The latest account that has come to hand of the capture of Khartoum was supplied by the *Daily News* mili-

tary correspondent at Dongola, who professed to have taken it down from the lips of two of Gordon's soldiers who were on duty inside the city when it was delivered up to the Mahdi's partisans.* "Khartoum fell," said they, "through the treachery of the accursed Faragh Pasha, the Circassian, who opened the gate called 'Bouri.' It was on the Blue Nile. We were on guard near, but did not see what was going on. We were attacked and fought desperately at the gate. Twelve of us were killed and twenty-two retreated to a high room, where we were taken prisoners.

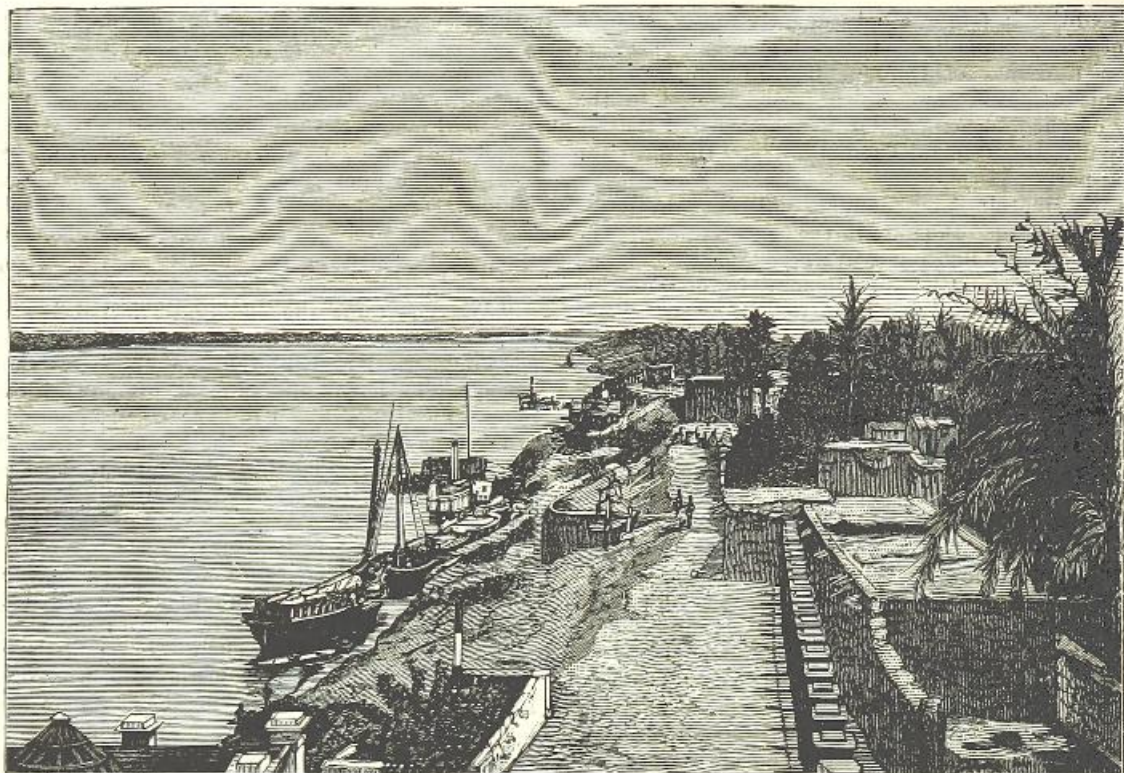
"And now came the ending. The red flag with the crescent was destined no more to wave over the palace; nor would the strains of the hymn of his Highness the Effendina be heard any more at evening within Khartoum. Blood was to flow in her streets, in her dwellings, in her very mosque, and on the Kenniseh of the Narsira.

"A cry arose, 'To the palace! to the palace!' A wild and furious band rushed towards it, but they were resisted by the black troops, who fought desperately. They knew there was no mercy for them, and that even were their lives spared they would be enslaved, and the state of the slave, the perpetual bondage with hard taskmasters, is worse than death. Slaves are not treated well, as you think; heavy chains are round their ankles and middle, and they are lashed for the least offence till blood flows. We had fought for the Christian Pasha and for the Turks, and we knew that we should receive no mercy. We, the party I was with, could not help being taken prisoners. The house was set on fire. The fight raged, and the slaughter continued till the streets were slippery with blood. The rebels rushed onward to the palace. We saw a mass rolling to and fro, but did not see Gordon Pasha killed. He met his fate as he was leaving the palace near the large tree which stands on the esplanade. The palace is not a stone's throw, or at any rate a gunshot distance, from the Austrian consul's house. He was going in that direction, to the magazine on the Kenniseh, a long way off. We did not hear what became of his body, nor did we hear that his head was cut off. We have heard that it was the blacks that ran away, and that the Egyptian soldiers fought well; that is not true. They were craven. Had it not been for them, in spite of the treachery of many within the town, the Arabs would not have got in, for we watched the traitors.

"And now fearful scenes took place in every house and building, in the large market-place, in the small bazaars. There were the same terrible scenes in the dwellings where the window-sills and door-lintels were painted azrek (blue), where there had been many feasts and fantasias, where merissa had flowed in plenty, and where the walls were built of wahál and the roof built of dhurra stalk. Men were slain shrieking for mercy, when mercy was not in the hearts of our savage enemies. Women and children were robbed of their jewels of gold and jewels of silver, of their bracelets, necklaces of precious stones, and carried off to be sold to the Bishareen merchants as slaves. Yes, and white women too—Egyptians and Circassians who wore veils over their faces, and head-dresses showing them to be of the upper classes, with gold or silver ornaments in their hair—ladies, in fact, clad in embroidered muslin and silk and satin cloaks and jackets. Mother and daughter alike were dragged off from their

* According to another narrative Gordon was armed with a revolver which he discharged upon the rebels before being shot down.

* These men, named Said Abdullah and Jacob Mahomet, were, according to their own account, taken prisoners at the time the Mahdi's followers entered the city, and were afterwards sold as slaves by their Arab captors to some Kabbabish merchants. They escaped when at Abandom, and made their way to Debbah and thence to Dongola.



LOOKING UP THE NILE FROM KHARTOUM.

homes of comfort. These were widows, wives, and daughters of Egyptian officers, some of whom had been killed with Hicks Pasha; wives and children of Egyptian merchants formerly rich, owning ships and mills, gardens and shops. They were afterwards sold; some for 340 thalaries or more, some for 250, according to age and good looks. And the poor black women already slaves, and their children, were taken off too. These were sold, too, for a hundred, eighty, or seventy thalaries. Their husbands and masters were slain before their eyes.

"This fighting and spilling of blood continued till noon, till the sun rode high in the sky—red, yet darkened by smoke and dust. Then there was riot and clamour, hubbub and wrangling over spoil; cursing was heard till the hour of evening prayer. But the Muezzin was not called; neither were any prayers offered up at the mosque on that dark day in the annals of Khartoum. But the history of these scenes will not be written on its records; for all scrolls and papers and books in the archives were destroyed and scattered abroad. Yet the howling herd, possessed by evil spirits, the screeching devils, bespattered with gore, swarming about in droves and bands, found not the plunder that they had been promised or had expected. Then they were exasperated. Their fury knew no bounds, and they sought out Faragh Pasha; but he was with the dervishes. He had presented himself to them as one deserving well of honour and rewards. 'Where,' he was asked, 'is the hidden treasure of the Greek merchants and Bachalees; of Leontides and Georgio Themetrio? Yes, and of the Frenchman Marquet; of the Italian Michaelo? We know that you are acquainted with the secret hiding places. Where are all the thalaries of Marco Polo, and of the German tailor, Klein? We know that those who left Khartoum were unable to carry away their silver, and you know where it is hid.'

"The dervishes, seeing the tumult, questioned Faragh sharply and addressed him thus: 'The long-expected One,

our lord, desires to know where the English pasha hid his wealth. We know he was very rich and every day paid large sums of money; this has not been concealed from our lord. Now therefore let us know, that we may bear him word where all the felluce (pay) he gave the troops is hidden, so that we may put it into the treasury. Let him be bound and examined in the inner chamber.'

"Then were the doors of the house where the dervishes were, and the gates of the gardens outside—they were in the Jenesch—closed against the Arab soldiery, and they were driven out, though angry words and threats were loudly heard. Faragh was now questioned, but he swore by Allah and by the souls of his fathers back to three generations that Gordon had no money, and that he knew of no hidden money or treasure.'

"'You lie,' cried the dervishes. 'You wish after a while to come here, dig, and get it all for yourself. If the Englishman had no money or silver, how did he make all those silver medals we have seen?'

"'Most of them are lead,' Faragh replied, 'and he paid every one with paper.'

"'It is false,' rejoined the dervishes, 'and now have a care, Faragh; listen to what we are going to say to you. We are sure you know where the money lies concealed. We are not careful of your life, for you have betrayed the man whose salt you have eaten; you have been the servant of the infidel, and you have betrayed even him. Unless you unfold this secret of the buried treasure, you shall surely die.'

"But Faragh, it is said—for we were not there—seeing that his end was approaching, that his words were not believed, assumed a proud and haughty bearing, and an attitude of defiance.

"'I care not,' he said, 'for your threats. I have told the truth, Allah knows. There is no money, neither is there treasure. You are magnoons (fools) to suppose there is money; but if there were you would not divide

it fairly among your followers—to every one his portion. You would keep it among yourselves. I have done a great deed. I have delivered to your lord and master the city, which you could never have taken without my help. You would have been beaten back from the trenches by the English, who, even now, await their time to punish you; and I have secrets regarding these, which, if I die, will die with me. I tell you again there is no treasure, but you will rue the day if you kill me.’

“One among the dervishes then stepped forward and struck him, bound as he was, in the mouth, telling him to cease his fool’s prophecies; while another, incensed, rushed at him and struck him on the back of his neck with his two-edged sword, so that with one blow his head fell from his shoulders.

“So perished the arch-traitor—may his soul be afflicted! But as for Gordon Pasha, the magnanimous, may his soul ‘be enjoying fuller knowledge!’

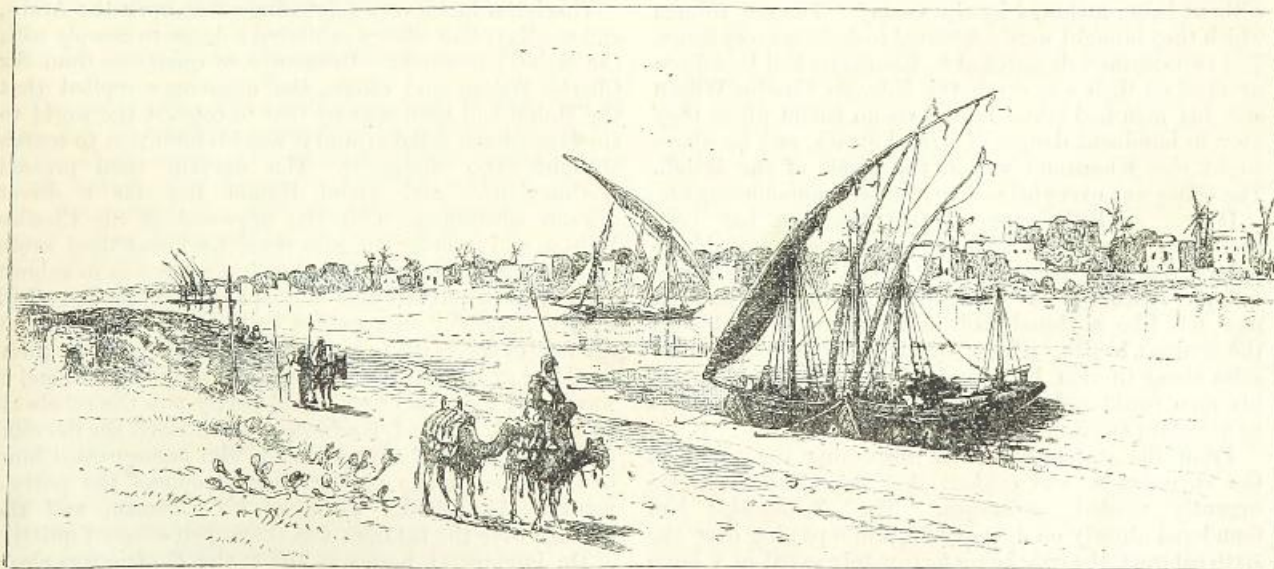
“Nearly all the Egyptian men were slain in spite of their casting themselves down and praying for mercy. Faragh Pasha’s head was then carried off to Mohamed Ahmed. We heard this when the Kordofan soldiers, who guarded us at the Dormas Gate, talked among themselves. We were there for some days; we saw nothing, but only heard what these soldiers told us. They said two steamers with English had come up and gone back.”

The mournful news of the fall of Khartoum reached England early in February. The victories gained by the British troops had filled every heart with hope, and on learning that the flying column had reached the Nile, and had been joined there by General Gordon’s steamers, everybody had anticipated the speedy intelligence that Khartoum was relieved at last. But the news that came proved very different. Not only had the city been captured by treachery, but its gallant defender was slain. It had not fallen to his lot to return home with the laurels of victory upon his brow. He had died defending the city he had gone to succour, and the fanatical foe had not even respected his lifeless remains. His corpse, pitted with spear thrusts, had no doubt been thrown into the Nile, to become the prey of the crocodiles, so that not even the palm of martyrdom could be laid upon his grave. And yet those last months of his life were one long martyrdom, as terrible as ever canonized saint was called upon

to bear. Still, he had seldom complained; his thoughts were not of himself but of those who had been entrusted to him. He had made the sacrifice of his own life, all that he desired was to save “his people.” No man ever showed more touching resignation than he did, no man ever felt a greater love for his fellow creatures. But it is said that he was not loved in return. No less an authority than the prime minister has declared that he merely exercised a power of fascination over a few of the natives and soldiers who were in personal contact with him, and that he mistook this for a general attachment.*

This statement is capable of being refuted. It has been shown in the preceding pages that when Gordon reached Khartoum his popularity was unbounded, that the people trusted entirely in him, and for months assisted him in the mighty work of defence. Still there were no doubt many of the Mahdi’s partisans within the city, and as time wore on, and Khartoum became more closely invested, traitors tried to undermine the confidence of the people. Gordon had achieved wonders without the least succour from outside, but it was impossible for him to raise the siege, unless he were helped by England. He promised the people deliverance, and he relied upon fulfilling his promise, never imagining that he would be so long abandoned that deliverance would prove an impossibility. He said again and again “you will be saved, the English are coming.” But England made no sign. The people watched and waited, longing for the succour which did not arrive, and, at last, as the traitors in the city steadily continued their efforts, the public confidence was shaken. Was this surprising? The proverb tells us that hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and the people of Khartoum must evidently have been in despair on finding that all of Gordon’s promises remained unfulfilled. In the belief that he could not save them, it is scarcely to be wondered at that they thought of saving themselves by submitting to the Mahdi. But whose fault was that? Not Gordon’s assuredly. If the British Government had taken speedy action, the conspiracy to hand the city over to the False Prophet would not have had time to mature; the confidence of the people would not have been shaken; and Gordon would not have been butchered by the fanatical followers of the Mahdi.

* Mr. Gladstone in his speech on the Vote of Credit, April 27, 1855.



KHARTOUM IN PEACEFUL TIMES.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sad effect of the news of the fall of Khartoum on the troops at Gubat.—Rejoicings among the rebels at Matamah.—Wreck of one of Sir Charles Wilson's steamers.—A flag of truce.—Letter from the Mahdi demanding surrender.—Ruse of Khashm-el-Moos.—Wreck of the second steamer.—Sir Charles Wilson and his men in peril.—Lord Charles Beresford comes to the rescue.—Engagement with the foe.—Bravery of Benbow the engineer.—General Earle's expedition up the Nile.—Arrival at Kirbekan.—Attack upon the enemy.—The Black Watch carries the hostile position with the bayonet.—General Earle shot dead.—Capture of the enemy's camp.—The advance to Abou Hammed countermanded.—Lord Wolseley orders a general retreat.—Sir Redvers Buller assumes the command of General Stewart's column.—Attack upon a convoy of wounded.—Mortality among wounded men at Gakdul.—Death and funeral of Sir Herbert Stewart.—The whole force concentrated at Korti.—Lord Wolseley's general order and promise of an autumn campaign.—The Suakim and Berber railway.—A succession of engagements with the tribes in the neighbourhood of Suakim.—The abandonment of the Soudan decided upon.—The anti-Mahdi enters El Obeid.—The Mahdi attacked by small-pox at Omdurman.—His death.—Contest between his followers.—Pretended assassination of Olivier Pain by order of the British Staff.

WHILE Sir Charles Wilson was proceeding on his adventurous journey to Khartoum, the troops assembled near Abu Kru, had frequent skirmishes with the enemy entrenched at Matamah. With the little steamer to act as a ferry, parties of Egyptians were despatched to the low island opposite the camp to cut down the green dhurra and beans for forage. The larger vessel, the *Sophia*, was in the meantime utilized by Lord Charles Beresford who went up and down the river shelling rebels and landing detachments of troops who captured several head of cattle, thus securing rations of fresh meat for themselves and comrades. On January 27 the force was surprised to hear a great commotion in Matamah, and at first an attack was anticipated. But although the hubbub lasted throughout the day—the tom toms beating incessantly and shots being fired in the air—the rebels showed no signs of sallying forth, and it soon became evident that they were simply rejoicing. Their reasons for doing so could not be ascertained at the time, and the matter had well nigh been forgotten, when at daybreak on February 1, intense excitement was caused in the camp by the appearance of a small row-boat coming down the Nile.

It proved to contain Lieutenant Stuart Wortley, who with four English soldiers and eight natives, had rowed down the river for a distance of forty miles, fortunately without being molested by the enemy. The sad tidings which they brought were calculated to depress every heart. The two steamers despatched to Khartoum had both been wrecked on their way down the Nile, Sir Charles Wilson and his men had taken refuge on an island where they were in imminent danger of a rebel attack, and far above aught else Khartoum was in the hands of the Mahdi. The camp was overwhelmed 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 the latest. The news now fell like a thunderbolt in the camp, and saddened the stoutest hearts. Eager inquiries were made on all sides about Gordon, but Lieutenant Stuart Wortley and his men could only reply that they had been unable to ascertain anything positively.

From the statements made respecting the wreck of the steamers it was evident that Sir Charles Wilson urgently needed assistance. The *Tellhoweiya* had foundered already on January 29, while passing over the sixth cataract, the crew being fortunately saved in a large nuggar which the vessel had in tow. The guns also and stores were landed on a neighbouring sandbank, where it

was agreed to pass the night, as it was then nearly dark. Several natives at once came over and talked with the Egyptian soldiers; and a Soudanese dervish—the same who had come down to the shore at Khartoum with a white flag—eventually arrived opposite the steamer, having followed the party down the right bank of the Nile on a camel. He still waved his flag, and on being rowed across to the sandbank it was found he was the bearer of a letter from the Mahdi. This dervish was an intelligent, stalwart negro, who evidently thoroughly believed in the False Prophet. He remained for half an hour with Sir Charles Wilson, and added personal persuasion to his master's written appeal. The letter was written in bold, plain Arabic characters, upon tawny white unruled letter paper, and was signed with a large square Arabic seal. It ran as follows:

"In the name of the merciful God! Thanks for the honourable God and prayers be to our apostle Mahomed. From the poor servant of God, Mohamed El Mahdi, son of Abdullah, to the English officers and the Shagiya and all their followers:—

"First thing, surrender yourselves and you will be safe. I briefly tell you, perhaps God will direct you in the way of the righteous. Let it be known to you that the city of Khartoum and all the neighbourhood thereof has been destroyed by the power of God Almighty, which no one can oppose. This thing was done through us; everything is now in our hands. As long as you are a small force, and very likely in our hands you can do whatever you choose, either give yourselves up and prevent bloodshed of the servants of the creatures of God, who are in your hands, and the grace and the peace of God and his Apostle will settle upon you. But if you do not believe what I have written, and you want to know the reality about Khartoum, send a special messenger from yourselves to come here and assure yourselves of the truth of the information, and the peace of God and his Apostle be with your messenger. We shall not kill you till he comes here and sees all about the matter for himself, and we will send him back with a safe escort from us. As God says in his precious Book, 'If any of the ungodly come to you, you must keep him safely until he listens to the words of God, and then do for him whatever he wishes.' If, on the other hand, you like to fight, we shall not oppose your wish. If it were not that we pity you, we should not have written this letter to you. If you yield, you should know that the peace of God will settle upon you, and you will be saved from all hurt. If you do not wish to yield, you shall be punished in this world and the next. It is known that victory is for the believers. You must not be proud of your steamers and many other things. If you do not yield to my advice you shall repent. You must be quick or your wings will be cut. A man who guides the people in the right way, God will guide him also right."

"11th Rabbeah Mani, 1302.

"P.S.—No God but one God. Mohamed is the Apostle of God.

"MOHAMED EL MAHDI, Son of Abdullah."

This letter had a very depressing effect upon the Arabs, and the Egyptian officers exhibited a desire to comply with the Mahdi's demands. In answer to questions from Sir Charles Wilson and others, the messenger replied that the Mahdi had been sent by God to convert the world to the Mussulman religion, and it was his intention to march straight upon Stamboul. The dervish then pressed Khashm-el-Moos and Abdul Hamid Bey for a direct answer, whereupon, with the approval of Sir Charles Wilson, and in order to gain time, Khashm-el-Moos wrote to the Mahdi, stating that his intention was to submit with his men to the Fakir Mustapha, whom he knew had a force of 4,000 men, together with two or three guns, at the foot of the Sixth Cataract. It was feared that there would be great difficulty in getting past that point, and it was hoped that the letter would partly put the rebels off their guard. Indeed, Khashm's letter satisfied the dervish, as well as a neighbouring sheikh who accompanied him, and who had made preparations to oppose the party's return. The sheikh withdrew his riflemen, and the passage over the cataract was thereupon effected quietly.

On January 31, however, just as the *Bordein* was clearing the final rapids, past the island of Mernat, she struck on a rock, breaking her bow so badly that the water

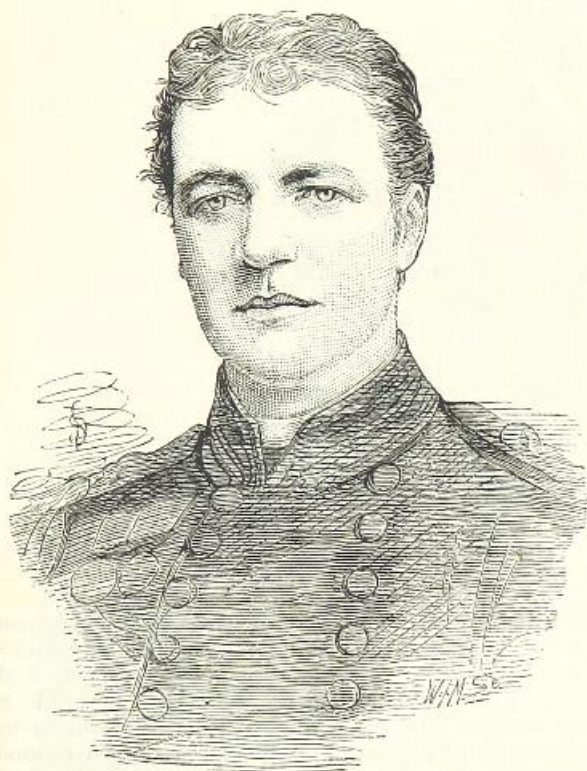
rushed swiftly in. The vessel was thereupon brought up to a small island, where Sir Charles Wilson determined to bivouac, and remain until relieved, although the enemy's position was merely some four miles off. Everything was saved from the steamer excepting some of the ammunition, the loss of which was greatly to be regretted as a fight might speedily ensue. Succour was, indeed, urgently required, and in the evening Lieutenant Stuart Wortley started off with the small rowing boat, in which he safely reached the British camp on the morning of February 1.

As soon as he had reported the peril in which Sir Charles Wilson and his men were placed it was decided that Lord Charles Beresford should start with the steamer *Sophia* to the rescue of the party. Everthing was ready the same evening, and twenty picked marksmen of the Royal Rifles attached to the Mounted Infantry were

begun, in spite of the guns on shore. The chief engineer, Mr. Henry Benbow, showed remarkable courage and prompt industry on this occasion, and he was subsequently complimented on his conduct by the Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, the day wore on, and towards sunset Sir Charles Wilson's men marched some three miles further down the river-bank, and then halted for the night. The steamer joined them early in the morning, having again engaged the enemy's battery on the way, and then the whole force was embarked and safely conveyed to the British camp near Abu Kru despite all the efforts of the rebels.

While Sir Herbert Stewart's flying column journeyed across the Bayuda desert, and won the hard-fought battles of Abu Klea and Gubat, the troops under the command of General Earle had journeyed up the Nile to avenge the murder of Gordon's coadjutor, Colonel Stewart. A frequent succession of cataracts made the progress of the force especially difficult above Hamdab, and it was only on February 1, that the troops at last reached Berti, where the enemy was expected to make a stand. But Sheikh Suleiman Wad Gamr had retreated two days previously, and it was necessary for the column to press forward in pursuit. So great, however, were the physical difficulties at this point of the Nile's course, that the troops did not succeed in reaching the vicinity of Kerbeka near Dulka island—some seventy miles above Merawi—until February 9. The column comprised the Black Watch, the South Staffordshire regiment, a squadron of Hussars, and the Egyptian Camel Corps with two guns.

As the enemy were known to be in force a few miles away, orders were immediately given for the erection of a zereba, and while the troops were thus engaged, the Arabs, swarming on some heights in front, opened a brisk fire. The British pickets at once advanced, and after a short skirmish the enemy drew off behind the hills. Strong guards were posted when it became dark, and everything was in readiness to repulse an attack if the rebels ventured from the heights. However the night passed off quietly, and in the morning (February 10) the troops formed up and, marching in two parallel columns, executed a circuitous movement in view of taking the enemy in flank. In the meantime two companies of the Staffordshire regiment with two guns, drew up directly in front of the rebels so as to engage their attention, and opened fire. For some time a desultory action was kept up by the Arabs on the one hand, and the Staffordshire men and the two guns on the other; and meanwhile the bulk of the troops advanced steadily over almost impracticable ground, pushing such parties of the enemy as they met before them, and seizing each successive ridge by short determined rushes. They pressed forward in this manner until the advanced guard reached the right rear of the enemy, which rested on the river—thus completing the movement by which the Arabs were entirely surrounded. The hostile position was very strong, consisting of rocky and broken ground, strengthened by loopholed walls, from behind which the Arabs kept up a heavy and well-directed fusillade. Finding that it was impossible to dislodge them by a musketry fire, General Earle at last gave orders for the Black Watch to carry the position with the bayonet. The regiment responded gallantly to the command. The pipers struck up, and with a cheer the men moved forward with a steadiness and valour which the enemy were unable to resist. Rifle puffs shot out continuously from the loopholed walls, but without a check the Black



LORD CHARLES BERESFORD.

taken on board. On coming in sight of the enemy's position, within three miles of the island where Sir Charles Wilson had landed, a vigorous action was engaged in on both sides. The enemy had a large party of riflemen on the river-bank, together with a battery of three guns. The *Sophia* answered their fire with the Gardner she had on board, while the men of the Mounted Infantry dexterously plied their rifles at a range of five hundred yards. The steamer had almost passed the enemy's position when a round shot from the battery entered her side, and pierced a hole in the boiler. A dense cloud of steam poured out, which was seen afar off by Sir Charles Wilson; and he, thinking that the boiler had burst, and that the steamer could not come up nearer to him, instantly moved his party, with their guns and stores, from the island to the right bank of the river, whence he engaged the enemy's battery. Fortunately, however, the vessel was not permanently disabled; and, having anchored a short distance above the enemy's position, the work of repairing the boiler was at once



GENERAL EARLE.

Watch advanced, scaled the rocks, and at the point of the bayonet drove the Arabs from their shelter.

General Earle went forward with the men, and on reaching the crest of the hill he approached a hut which he no doubt believed to be deserted; although, according to some accounts, he had been previously warned that several Arabs were inside. However this may have been, it appears from the statement made by Sergeant Watts of the Black Watch, that the General entered the hut to examine it. The Arabs who were inside at once sprang towards him, and he had barely discharged two chambers of the revolver he carried, when one of the rebels shot him through the head, throwing his gun at him afterwards. General Earle fell lifeless to the ground, but he did not die unavenged. The troops instantly surrounded the hut, and the rebels inside were all slain after a brief resistance.

While this action was proceeding the squadron of the 19th Hussars under Colonel Buller pushed on beyond the scene of conflict and captured the enemy's camp three miles in the rear. General Brackenbury, who had assumed the command on the death of General Earle, now ordered the whole of the Staffordshire men to storm a high and rocky hill on which a number of rebels had taken refuge. The enemy clung most desperately to this position, and disputed the ground inch by inch. But the Staffordshire men were not to be denied, and gallantly pressing forward, they at last drove the enemy from the hill. This brought the fight of Kirbekan to a close. It

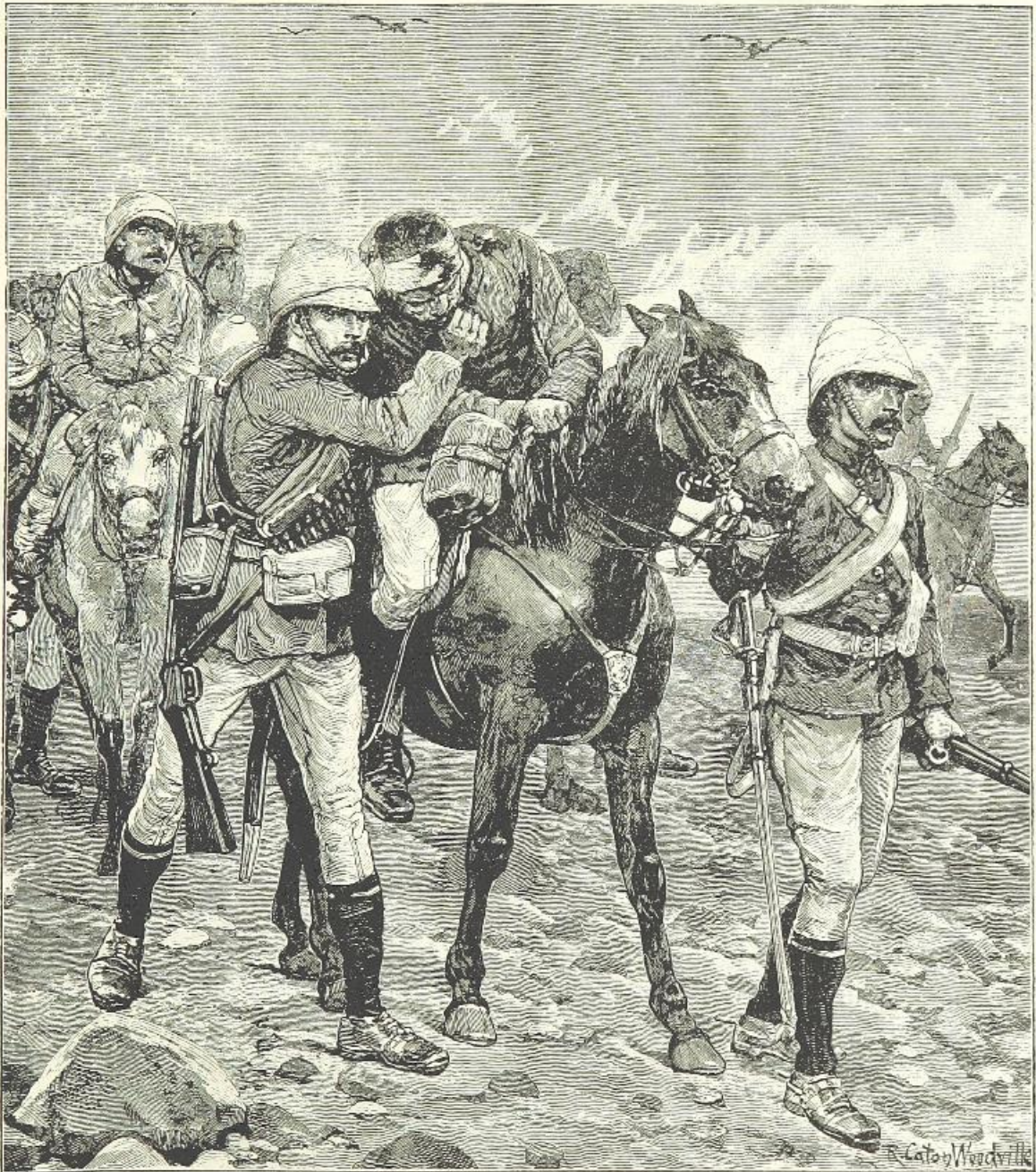
had lasted for five hours, and had been a gallantly contested affair from first to last. The enemy's force consisted of the Monassir and Rabatab tribesmen, with numerous dervishes from Berber. It was impossible to judge accurately of their numbers, as their position extended over a large range of rocky and broken ground. At all events their losses were very heavy, for the dead, among whom were several ameeris, lay piled up on the ridges which they had so stubbornly defended, in heaps. On the British side one had to deplore the death of General Earle, of Colonels Coveny and Eyre, (of the Black Watch and the Staffordshire, respectively) and of seven non-commissioned officers and men. The wounded were more numerous however, comprising four officers and forty-one men of the rank and file.

This was the last action of any real importance in the campaign. General Earle and the brave men who had fallen with him were reverently interred on the battlefield; and General Brackenbury then proceeded in the direction of Abou Hammed. He had already pushed forward a considerable distance, and would no doubt have accomplished the mission assigned to him, when fresh instructions reached Lord Wolseley from England, and the column was ordered to retreat upon Korti. This was a task of no little difficulty, but General Brackenbury skilfully accomplished it, and the column returned in safety to the headquarters camp. About the same time a similar duty devolved upon Major-General Sir Redvers Buller, whom Lord Wolseley had despatched to Gubat on

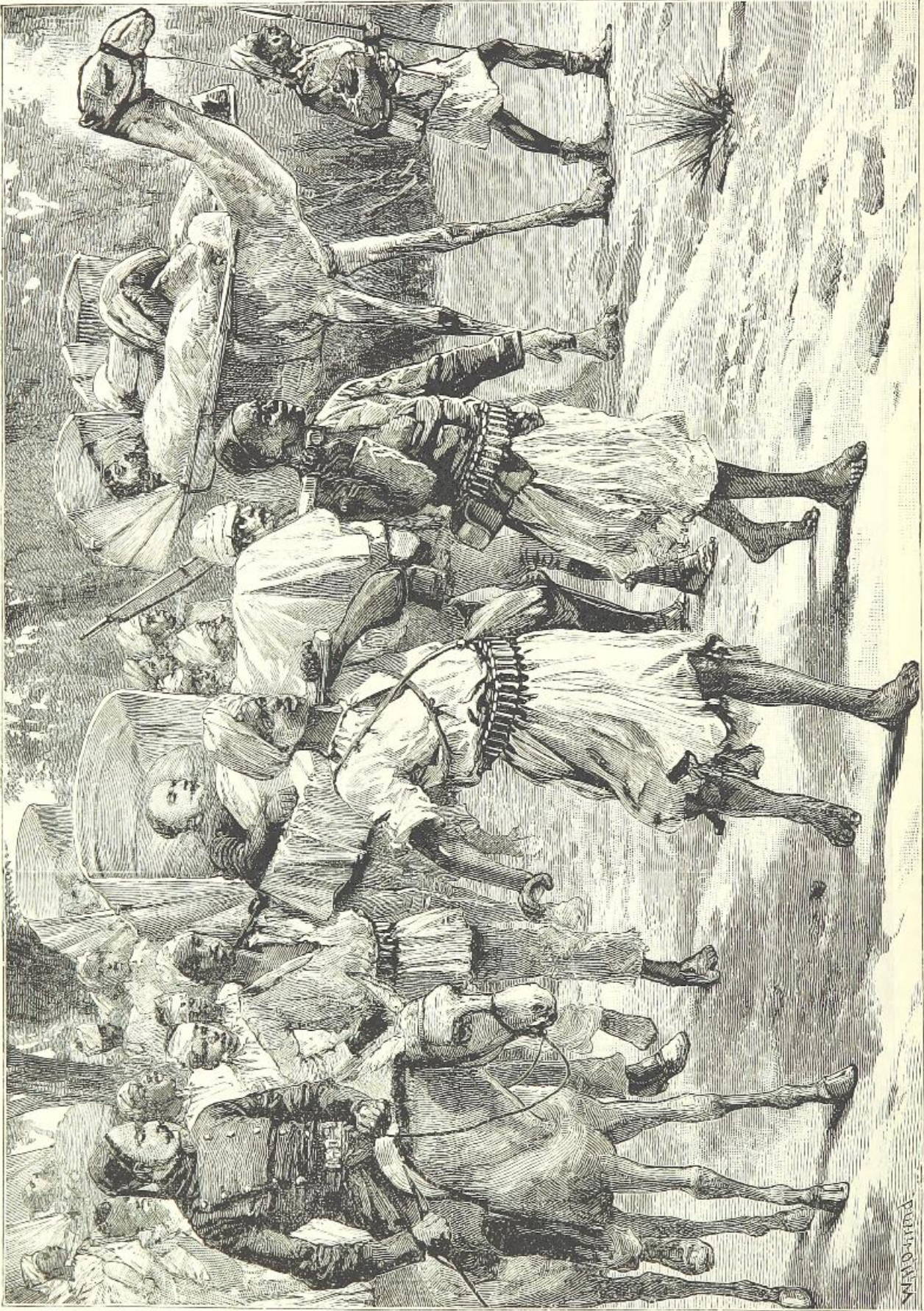
hearing that Sir Herbert Stewart was wounded. General Buller's original instructions were to seize Matamah and march upon Berber, and for this purpose the column was to be reinforced by the Royal Irish and the Light Camel Corps; but events were moving fast, and in lieu of a fresh advance a general retreat was decided upon. Accordingly on reaching the camp near Matamah on February 12, Sir Redvers Buller immediately ordered an evacuation, and everything was prepared for the retreat across the Bayuda desert. The wounded were the first to be sent off, the convoy again being placed under the command of Colonel Talbot. Starting on February 13, the party covered a distance of eleven miles and then halted for the night. On the following morning just after breakfast, and when the troops were ready to march, an

attack was made by some Arabs, who were on their way to reinforce Matamah. Flanking parties were immediately thrown out to protect the convoy, and skirmished against the enemy in the bush, the Heavies eventually forming square on the right front of the column. Fortunately about this time Colonel Stanley Clark and the Light Camel Corps, *en route* for Gubat, arrived on the scene. At first the escort of the wounded took them for a fresh party of the enemy and fired upon them, but the mistake was eventually found out, and the Arabs retired at the sight of this unexpected reinforcement.

The transport of the wounded across the Bayuda desert was mainly effected by the Turkish and Egyptian soldiers who had joined the British force when Gordon's admiral and the steamers reached Abu Kru. On the



CONVEYING WOUNDED SOLDIERS ACROSS THE BAYUDA DESERT.



GENERAL STEWART AND OTHER WOUNDED MEN BORNE BY GORDON'S SUDANESE SOLDIERS TO KORTI.

PHOTOGRAPH

march first to Abu Klea, thence to Gakdul and finally to Korti, the bearers displayed the utmost patience and perseverance, and Lord Wolseley fittingly recognized their services when they reached the headquarters camp. Unfortunately however, but a fraction of the wounded arrived there. Numbers of them succumbed on the way, and notably at Gakdul, where they were consigned to a lonely cemetery in a gorge near the reservoirs. Here also were buried a number of men who had fallen sick, for enteric fever, due to exhaustion, bad quarters and poor feeding, was becoming very common and fatal, as the doctors could do but little to stay its ravages. Every day added to the number of graves over which the dead men's comrades raised mounds of stones, adorned with rough crosses bearing the letters R. I. P., and the name and regiment of the deceased.

One of the first to pass away on the return to Gakdul, was the gallant soldier who had led the column to victory across the desert, the brave and energetic Sir Herbert Stewart. The battle of Abu Klea had won him the rank of Major-General and the admiration of all classes of his countrymen. When it became known that he had been wounded at Gubat, the greatest solicitude was expressed for his recovery, and at first the reports of his condition were most hopeful. But it appears that the doctors had despaired of saving him from the very first. He expired on arriving at Gakdul Wells, on February 16; and was buried, like so many others, in the little graveyard near the reservoirs. The scene was a most impressive one. The troops formed a procession in the valley headed by the firing party and the band of the Royal Sussex. The pall-bearers were Majors Byng and Gould, Lieutenants Lord, Browning, Douglas, and Dawson, and Captain Rhodes. Colonel Talbot read the service, and there was not a moist eye among all those present when the brave soldier's remains were consigned to their last resting place amid the desert sands.

But little if anything now remains to be recorded. The incidents of General Buller's masterly retreat from Abu Kru are still fresh in the minds of every one. By March 8, the whole of Lord Wolseley's troops were once more assembled at Korti, and the Commander-in-Chief was able to thank them for their services in the following general order, by which he, moreover, announced that the campaign was at an end.

"The Queen, who has watched with the deepest interest the doings of her soldiers and sailors, has desired me to express to you her admiration for your courage and your self-devotion. To have commanded such men is to me a source of the highest pride. No greater honour can be in store for me than that to which I look forward of leading you, please God! into Khartoum before the year is out. Your noble efforts to save General Gordon have been unsuccessful, but through no fault of yours. Both on the River and in the Desert you have borne hardships and privation without murmur; in action you have been uniformly victorious; all that men could do to save a comrade you have done, but Khartoum fell through treachery two days before the advanced troops reached it. A period of comparative inaction may now be expected. This Army was not constituted with a view to undertaking the siege of Khartoum, and for the moment we must content ourselves with preparations for the Autumn advance. You will, I know, face the heat of Summer and the necessary, though less exciting, work which has now to be done with the same courage and endurance you have shown hitherto. I thank you heartily for all you have done in the past. I can wish nothing better—I can ask nothing more of you in the future than the same uncomplaining devotion to duty which has characterised your conduct during the recent operations."

In thus announcing a contemplated advance in the autumn, Lord Wolseley proved a false prophet, for a very few months were to witness the definite withdrawal of the British troops. Whilst he had been advancing up the Nile, a strong expeditionary force, including a brigade of

Guards and a contingent of colonial volunteers from Australia, had been mustered at Suakim, under General Sir Gerald Graham. It was proposed to utilise these to cover the formation of a railway along the alternative Suakim and Berber route, and even after the news of General Gordon's death and of the fall of Khartoum there appeared to be a likelihood of this design being persisted in. Osman Digna and his Hadendawas were on the alert to oppose Sir Gerald Graham's advance, and several severe engagements ensued. Sir John McNeill, having been entrusted with the task of forming an advanced zereba, chose a spot surrounded by thick scrub, out of which a horde of Arabs suddenly broke and assailed the working parties. It was with some difficulty that these were rallied, and a stampede amongst the camp followers and baggage animals increased the danger by hindering the men from getting into formation. An almost identical surprise was effected at Hasheen, on March 22, and although the loss inflicted on the Arabs, especially on the last occasion, was very severe, a number of sheikhs being shot down, and the banner presented by the Mahdi to Osman Digna captured, the British were temporarily crippled by the slaughter of their transport animals, which were stampeded and speared by hundreds. Under these circumstances the construction of the railway was pushed on, and early in April by its aid General Graham advanced to Handoub, where a strong zereba was formed.

Reconnaissances were made in force, the enemy's cattle being "lifted," their huts burned and their wells blown up with dynamite, the last tactic leading to a humanitarian protest in the House of Commons. Otao and Tambouk were in turn seized upon and occupied, and the railway carried forward to these points, despite the repeated attempts of the Hadendawas to tear up the line at night. They did not venture, however, to show fight in the open field, and Osman Digna was reported to be at the head of a very reduced following. At the beginning of May, Lord Wolseley, who had returned from Korti to Cairo, came on to Suakim and inspected the troops there and also the railway, the scheme of which he condemned. However, by this time, in deference to public opinion, or rather popular clamour, coupled with the possible need of all the forces of the empire in the conflict with Russia, thought to be impending, it had finally been decided to abandon the Soudan. A special general order announcing this intention, and thanking the troops, was issued by Lord Wolseley, and their withdrawal from the neighbourhood of Suakim and from the upper Nile was rapidly carried out. The force at Suakim, with the exception of a garrison strong enough to hold the town, was re-embarked, and by the end of May the garrisons along the Nile began to fall back. It was resolved to hold Wady Halfa, Korosko, and Assouan; and Tumbal Walid Hamid, descendant of the kings of Argo, was appointed governor of the territory between Sukkot and Hannek, on the evacuation of Dongola, which took place in July. On the 9th of that month, Lord Wolseley left Suakim, arriving in London four days later. He was shortly afterwards raised to the dignity of a viscount, and numerous honours and rewards were accorded to the officers who had taken a prominent part in the campaign. A vote of thanks to the whole force was also moved on August 12, in the House of Lords by Lord Salisbury, and in the House of Commons by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

Whilst the retirement of the British troops was in progress, intelligence was received of the death of the Mahdi, which took place from small-pox on June 20. His position had previously been considerably weakened by

famine and dissensions. In March, Muley Hassan Ali, the anti-Mahdi, had made a triumphant entry into El Obeid, mounted on a white horse and holding in his hand a drawn sword, which he declared had been given him by the Prophet Mahomet, to slay the Mahdi and drive the infidels out of Egypt, and a little later his followers inflicted a severe defeat on Mahomed Ahmed's troops, and slew two of his lieutenants. The Urba tribes had revolted, and the garrisons of Sennaar and Kassala not only held out but had inflicted severe losses on their besiegers.

The Mahdi had established himself with about 6,000 men at Omdurman, where he is described as wearing a white shirt and trousers, and gold embroidered sandals. He was concentrating troops for the invasion of Egypt, and had received Osman Digna, who came to congratulate him on the retreat of the British, and to whom he presented a sword of honour. He sickened on June 19, and was carried by his own desire to a tent outside the camp. No doctors were available, but two captive missionaries, who were supposed to have some knowledge of medicine, were called in and declared that he was suffering from small-pox and was beyond help. On learning this the Mahdi called in his nephew, gave him his sword and appointed him his successor.

On the following day, his condition growing worse, he took leave of his relatives, enjoining them to prosecute the war against the Christians. He died at about five o'clock the same evening and was buried immediately, his tent being burnt. Abdullah Kalifa-el-Taishi, one of the four Khalifs formerly appointed by him, claimed to succeed him, but his authority was not generally acknowledged and much dissension ensued.

After the Mahdi's burial, Abdullah left the camp at Omdurman with the treasure collected by Mohammed Achmet and proceeded to Khartoum, and took up his quarters in the Government House. He entrusted the guard of the city and of his own person to the Baggarah tribe, to which he belonged, and refused to hand over any portion of the Mahdi's treasure to the troops at Omdurman, on the ground that he wanted it for continuing hostilities against the infidels. A few days later an affray took place between his Baggarah followers and the townspeople, who were reinforced by some of the troops, and Abdullah, on attempting to restore order by going amongst the combatants, Koran in hand, was stabbed in the abdomen and removed in a dying condition to the palace. His followers, however, routed their opponents and continued to hold the city.

Anarchy and famine prevailed in Kordofan, whilst the retreat of the British troops was followed by a corresponding advance of the fanatics, some 4,000 dervishes occupying New Dongola. It was reported, too, that Kassala had at length been obliged to capitulate, but its garrison was said to have succeeded in obtaining friendly terms from the Hadendowas, greatly, it was said, to Osman Digna's annoyance.

Some excitement was created by M. Henri Rochefort's reiterated statements, both in print and on the platform, that Olivier Pain, the Frenchman already spoken of on page 118, had been assassinated by order of the English Military Staff. This gratuitous falsehood was warmly welcomed by a certain section of the Parisian public as a lever against the existing government of France, which they alleged was remiss in not making the matter one for diplomatic intervention. The evidence of Father Bonomi, an Italian missionary, who escaped from the Mahdi's camp, with that of other disinterested witnesses, plainly established that Olivier Pain died at Omdurman considerably before the date of his alleged murder.

CHAPTER XX.

What the abandonment of the Soudan is likely to lead to—Consensus of opinion in favour of the restoration of the Khedive Ismail—General Gordon's estimate of the latter—His last letter and accompanying decoration to the Khedive.

DESPITE the Mahdi's death the Soudan continues to present an involved and threatening political problem, its abandonment by the British Government having left it a prey to internal dissensions arising from the warring claims of his successors, and at the same time a standing menace on the Egyptian frontier. Such a condition of things offers a free scope for the renewal of the detested slave trade. Markets have already been established for the traffic in human flesh, and all the energetic efforts of Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon, at the instance of the Khedive Ismail, to bring about its extinction, will have been thrown away. This, however, pales before the danger menacing the budding civilization of North Africa. So long, too, as Egypt remains subject to an irruption of frenetic Arab hordes, the peace of the Moslem world, which the whole of Europe is interested in maintaining, will be continually threatened.

To hope that the existing effete government of Egypt, fettered as it is by extraneous and conflicting influences, will be able to cope with the difficulty which the British abandonment of the Soudan has prepared for it is of course out of the question. Although the Mahdi's death may have temporarily checked the pretensions of Arab fanaticism, who can say that they may not speedily revive, and Egypt be placed in a position of extreme peril. The true solution of the problem is to give Egypt a strong government and to place at its head a firm and able ruler, when not only would it be better in every respect for Egypt herself, but she might then be left to stem the tide of such fanaticism without any fear as to the result. It is certain that no False Prophet would have been allowed to attain to power in the Soudan whilst it was ruled by such an energetic proconsul as General Gordon proved himself to be. Under existing circumstances it is the opinion of those who have studied the subject most carefully, that political expediency and political justice alike demand the restoration of the Khedive Ismail, and in this view all the most eminent authorities on Egypt, English and foreign, coincide. These include Sir Samuel Baker, Sir Julian Goldsmid, M. de Lesseps, Dr. W. H. Russell, Dr. Nachtigal, Mr. Marriott, M.P., Mr. A. M. Broadley, and last, but most important of them all, the late lamented General Gordon.

Mr. A. M. Broadley, whose thorough knowledge of this phase of the Eastern difficulty is based upon close study of the countries in which England has come to be vitally interested, has something very pertinent to say upon the point in his valuable work "A Story of Egypt and the Egyptians." In this able and entertaining volume, Mr. Broadley remarks:—

"It has been said that the absent are always in the wrong; and so it has happened with the Khedive Ismail, who has lived long enough, not only to hear himself spoken ill of by his former friends, but to witness the unedifying spectacle of one whom he has especially benefited unblushingly take credit for having systematically undermined him with a view to his overthrow. Ismail committed many mistakes, but he will make a better figure in history than either Tewfik or Nubar. He went too rapidly and too recklessly ahead in his wild career of developing Egypt by what he called European contact; his plan of concentrating commercial enterprise in his own person was an error of the first magnitude, but the



HIS HIGHNESS ISMAIL PASHA. (From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.)

greatest blunder of all was to entrust to foreigners like Nubar Pasha the government of the country in the very teeth of a growing national sentiment, in a great measure of his own creating.

"Mr. Wallace holds Ismail to be mainly answerable for the misfortunes of these latter days. I am inclined to think he casts the blame upon the wrong shoulders. He tells us that Ismail created the national debt, but he forgets how much of the borrowed money miscarried before it reached Egypt; and to what extent it was spent in public works,* including the Suez Canal, which pays Egypt

* In justice to the late ruler of Egypt we may here quote from Mr. McCoan's impartial pamphlet "The Egyptian Problem" the following summary of the vast sums which the Khedive Ismail caused to be expended in colossal public works, thereby greatly contributing to the well-being of the country:—

Of the public works thus constructed, the Suez Canal (including the Sweet Water Canal and the repurchase of the Wady domain) cost the Egyptian Treasury in money, outlay, and interest £17,427,825, or, deducting the shares sold to the British Government, roundly £13,430,000; 8,400 miles of canals at an average of £1,500 a mile, £12,600,000; 426 bridges at an average of £4,000 each, plus £140,000, the cost of the splendid iron bridge across the Nile from Boulak to Ghizeh, £1,844,000; 971 miles of equipped railway, at £13,000 a mile, £12,523,000; 5,600 miles of telegraphs, £853,000; lighthouses on the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, £188,000; harbour and dock works at Alexandria and Suez, £3,942,000; Alexandria waterworks, £300,000; 64 sugar factories, £6,100,000; or a total of £51,780,000,

nothing, but is alone exclusively responsible for one-fifth of her liabilities. Ismail, it is true, inherited great estates, and purchased others. The members of his family also habitually acquired land in the same way; but the public works on which the money was so lavishly spent were by no means confined to the localities in which the Khedivial properties were situated, but benefited more or less the whole of Egypt. Ismail expropriated no one, nor did he take any man's land without payment. The parallel of Naboth's vineyard is hardly a just one. The reproach is a still harder one for Ismail to bear now, when all his possessions, along with those of his family, have been surrendered as the guarantee for two public loans. If the fellahs paid more taxes in his time, their interests were certainly more efficiently protected than at present. Vigilant and constant care as to irrigation made them better able to bear the greater burden than the lesser burden now. The collection of taxes after, or at the time of, the harvest was far more suited to the character

against £49,779,000, the net produce of *all* the loans contracted during 1862-79. It is thus demonstrated that, however wasteful much of the outlay may have been, £2,000,000 more than the whole net amount borrowed was so spent out of revenue, which also bore the burden of the Abyssinian war and of Nubar's underground diplomacy at Stamboul and elsewhere.

and circumstances of the fellah than a monthly or quarterly cess. An Egyptian peasant is proverbially improvident. He is fond of spending freely the outcome of his toil, and unless the taxes are gathered when he is in funds, as of yore, he will even ruin himself with the village money-lender now. The best answer to the allegation is a reference to the crying question of the fellah's debts. When Ismail went into exile they amounted to two millions sterling; to-day, as I write, they probably exceed twelve. They have thus increased and multiplied since Ismail was replaced by his son, yet Mr. Wallace would even hold him responsible for this misfortune as well.

"Then as to the 'tyranny' of Ismail," continues Mr. Broadley. "The kourbash existed before his time, and it has survived his departure. There was, however, more banishment, exile, and imprisonment, during the two years of Riaz's paternal administration than in all Ismail's reign. If the soles of the peasants' feet can testify against the father, the shores of the White Nile are equally eloquent witnesses against the son. Ismail, like many other rulers, only just missed achieving a great success. When he realised his error, and the extent to which he had been betrayed, he resolved to give Egyptian Nationalism a fair trial. Europe refused to allow him to complete the experiment, and he went into exile. Darker days have overtaken Egypt since he quitted it, and the once strong ruler is now very generally regretted."

A few days before General Gordon started for the East on his noble mission to extricate the beleaguered Egyptian garrisons and restore peace to the Soudan, a gentleman well-known in the political and literary world—then on a visit in the neighbourhood of Southampton, where Gordon was temporarily staying in the house of his sister—sought and obtained an interview with the soldier-philanthropist. In the course of this interview, at which Earl De la Warr was present, General Gordon thus expressed himself with reference to the Khedive Ismail:—

"Nothing has so much contributed to make the Mahdi's cause popular and his success possible as the weak administration, or pretence at administration, which has gone on at Cairo ever since Ismail was deposed. With the Arabs nothing is so strong as power. Nubar may succeed, because he is capable of resisting the intrigues of Tewfik, which have hitherto been fatal to every one of his Ministers. It was my knowledge of Tewfik's weakness, and the certainty I felt of his failure, which induced me to throw up my command at Khartoum four years before. When I heard that my friend Ismail was no longer Khedive of Egypt, I first determined to hold the Soudan, in his name, against all comers. How could I forsake one who was ever loyal in the support he gave me in my war against slavery and the slave-dealers? I prayed for guidance, and as I would not incur the weighty responsibility of a great shedding of blood, I preferred to retire. Nubar's dream is as old as Ismail's time. He would rule Egypt at any price as an Armenian regent. To achieve this he would ever be loyal to England. But this must not be allowed. If Egypt is to have a ruler or regent capable of maintaining a really strong and efficient native government, Ismail must be the man. He is the worst used man in Europe. He was the best and most capable ruler Egypt ever had with all his faults, and the calamities we are witnessing are the natural consequences of the withdrawal of his master-hand."

"This was on Monday, January 14. Five days later Gordon was on his way to Khartoum."

In the face of this strongly emphatic recommendation on the part of the late General Gordon, it may well be gravely considered whether the Khedive Ismail is not the one man capable by long experience and personal influence of restoring both prosperity to Egypt and order to the Soudan,

the subjugation of which a British army has been vainly endeavouring to effect, at an immense expenditure of blood and treasure, by the sword. Always a cordial friend to England during the many years he occupied with dignity and power the Khedivial throne, Ismail Pasha might assuredly be relied upon to respect British interests in Egypt should General Gordon's wish be realised, and a "ruler or regent capable of maintaining a really strong and efficient government" be re-appointed in the person of his highness. There is every reason to believe that the nomination of Ismail—still in the prime of life, for he is only 54—would be readily acquiesced in by the Sultan, who, it must not be forgotten, is at any rate the titular sovereign of the country, while it is quite certain that the ex-Khedive's restoration would be acclaimed by the Egyptian people.

A further proof of the high estimation in which General Gordon held the Khedive Ismail was furnished at the end of April last, when the ex-Khedive received at Naples a small packet which a Soudanese messenger had contrived to convey to the Italian Consul General at Cairo. It contained an Arabic letter, signed and sealed by General Gordon seven weeks before his death, and a well-executed decoration. The following is a translation of the letter, which now possesses a touching interest:—

"To his Highness the august Ismail Pasha, ex-Khedive of Egypt.
[May God protect him.]

"Amongst the many honours which your Highness was pleased to shower upon me during your glorious reign, you have bestowed on me many decorations of which I am proud and for which I am grateful. Having been appointed Governor of the Soudan, I repaired at once to my post, and arrived safe and sound at Khartoum. Two months later communication with the North was cut off and the city was besieged. During the siege it has been my lot to witness many cases in which soldiers, civil employes, and leading men of the country have displayed courage and self-sacrifice in valiantly undergoing difficulties and privations. To reward their commendable conduct and fidelity I have caused decorations to be made for distribution amongst them. I had previously sent a specimen of this decoration to your Highness by the steamer *Abbas*; but as I fear it may never have reached you, I send to-day another for your acceptance.

"Receive it, Highness, in remembrance of my affectionate devotion, with the respectful homage of your grateful and faithful servant.

(Signed)

"C. G. GORDON.

"Khartoum, Dec. 3, 1884."



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