General Gordon

by Rev. Stephen Albert Swaine,

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Illustration:
General Charles George Gordon

Chapter I

Early Life.

The Story of the »Hero of Khartoum« has been told again and again. The people of England, and not only of England but, one may say, of the world, have been intensely interested in it It is the story of a great and brave soldier and God-fearing man. But though so often told it has not yet been specially told—except in a fragmentary way—for the benefit of the young. And yet what story are they likely to be more interested in than such a moving one as Gordon‘s? The heroic always appeals powerfully to youth, and the heroic is seen in Gordon‘s life almost from thebeginning. Adventures „by flood and field“ are sure to attract their attention, and absorb their interest; and here we have no lack of them, stranger many of them than such as are portrayed in the wildest dreams of fiction, and having the advantage of being true. The boys and girls of England we want to grow up brave, and good, and true. Where then shall we find an example more likely to paptivate their imaginations and influence them in such a direction than that of the Christian soldier who—though not faultless, for no man is—manfully sought to serve Christ, and was lost and dead to everything except to God and duty?

This book, then, is for you, young friends. The story I have to tell I wish to tell after the manner of a story-teller. Throughout I shall speak directly to you, and if you like we will imagine ourselves sitting cosily round the fire on a succession of winter evenings, when lessons and out-door amusements are over for the day.

Well, to begin at the beginning, we must speak of Woolwich, which, as you know, is famous for the large arsenal and dockyard which the Government has there. It is possible that many of you have visited the place, and seen some of the immense guns which are made there, the wonderful Nasmyth hammer, of enormous weight and worked by steam, which is so necessary in their manufacture, and also the curious assemblage of war-weapons and models of fortifications and dockyards to be found in the Rotunda. If you have never visited Woolwich you have, let us hope, that treat in store for you.

It was at Woolwich, on January 28th, 1833, that General Gordon was born, so that, perishing as he did at the hands of fanatical and savage men on Jan. 26th, 1885, he was only fifty-two when he died. Only fifty-two, and yet how

much he had gone through, how much had suffered, how much had done! He crowded more into those fifty-two years than most men would, or could, in twenty times the number. If „we live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial“; and „he most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best,“ as the poet Bailey so finely says, then General Gordon lived a very long life. And yet fifty-two years may seem a long lifetime to some of you who are in the heyday of youth. You will not think so when you have lived to be fifty-two. Make the most of the years as they come to you, for they will be gone only too soon.

General Gordon‘s father was himself a soldier; indeed, his ancestors for several generations were soldiers, so that the military instinct was strong within him. Two of his brothers were soldiers also. But of all the military Gordons—and at the present time there are at least a hundred officers in the army bearing the name—the most distinguished, both as a soldier, a ruler of men, and a good man, has been Charles George Gordon, the subject of our story. The father of our hero was a man of strongly marked character, and is said to have lived by »the code of honour«. He could be most stern when occasion demanded it, but was known generally as a kind-hearted, genial, and generous man, who endeavoured to be always just in his practice and aims. He revered the ideal of the British officer, and although he was proud of his son and his son‘s achievements, he did not at all like his serving among foreigners, or being attached to any army but that of his native land. This was a prejudice for which most of us prejudiced Britons would give him the more respect.

Not a few great men have had mothers of fine and noble character. General Gordon‘s mother was the worthy parent of so worthy a son. She appeared to those who knew her as a woman of perfect temper, cheerful under the most trying circumstances, contending with difficulties without the slightest display of effort, and having a genius for making the best of everything. She came of a mercantile rather than a military family—a family, nevertheless, of courage and enterprise. Her father, Mr. Samuel Enderby, was a merchant of London, and was the owner of a fleet of whalers. His ships voyaged to the icy regions of the Arctic Seas, and also traversed the Southern Ocean. They did much to open up to civilization and help to settle the, at that time, little known countries of Australia and New Zealand. In 1831 a Mr. Biscoe, sailing in one of the Enderby ships, discovered in those southern latitudes an extensive tract of land, which, in honour of his employer, he named Enderby Land, and in 1839 the Balleny Isles were discovered by Messrs. Balleny and Freeman, captains of whalers in part owned by the Enderby firm. Two of the Enderby ships also were, in earlier days, connected with one of the most momentous events recorded in modern history. They were chartered by the English Government to carry tea to America, the identical tea which has become so celebrated in the story of American Independence. The ships were boarded, as is well known, in Boston Harbour, and the tea thrown overboard. Thereby the Colonists made, as Dr. Philetus Dobbs has said—some of the American boys and girls who read this will know who Dr. Philetus Dobbs is—„one of the biggest cups of tea ever known.“ They made, too, thereby the first overt act of resistance to taxation by England, which led to the great War of Independence, resulting in the severance of the thirteen American Colonies from the British Empire. It will thus be seen that the families from which General Gordon sprang had played a not-undistinguished part in the history of their country and the world; and this

would be seen yet more were the whole history of those families to be given. Another thing may be noted. On his father‘s side the General had an unquestionably Scottish origin, and on his mother‘s an equally unquestionable English. Both Northern Britain and Southern Britain may claim to have equal parts in their great common hero; who is also a hero of the world, a man whom mankind at large ought to be proud to acknowledge as of their kith and kin, and an honour to the race.

Singular to say young Charles George was delicate, and, one might have said, physically unfit for the profession which by-and-by he adopted. The life of a soldier makes stern demands upon the constitution, especially when he is on active service. If only all the privations and toils which the young military aspirant was destined to go through could have been foreseen by his friends, they might well have doubted whether one so feeble could have endured them. Of course, the delicate constitution must at length have been hardened to an iron firmness, or it could not have stood the strain. Let the delicate boys, then, take heart of grace—those boys who have been secretly grieving because they are not able to do what some of their robust companions can, and fearing that they will never as men be able to play the part of men in the stirring movements and duties of life. By taking care of their health, and not in any way abusing their physical frame, but seeking by every rational means to strengthen and confirm it, they may outlive and outwork their formidable competitors, who now promise to carry everything before them, but are apt to presume unduly, sometimes disastrously, upon their powers.

Let the boys who are never, or scarcely ever, prize-takers at school, and who sometimes get rebuffs unjustly from their teachers, take heart of grace too. Young Gordon was no dunce, but he does not seem to have distinguished himself at school. Neither does he appear to have made a prominent figure in the work of the Royal Military Academy, which he at length entered. Indeed, one of his instructors once, when he had made some failure, angrily told him he would „never make an officer.“ A certain instructor of Turner, the great artist, told his father that he was „impenetrably dull, sir,“ and that he had „better make him a tinker, or a cobbler, than a perspective artist.“ Yet Turner became a Royal Academician and Professor of Perspective, as well as the greatest of English landscape-painters. And Gordon, notwithstanding his teacher‘s prophecy, became one of the most distinguished officers, and one of the greatest heroes, of modern times. There is hope for the boys who are told that they are dull and will never do anything, if only they will make up their minds that they will.

The spirit of the young fellow was stung and roused by the sneer of his teacher, and we are told that „he tore the epaulets from his shoulders and flung them at his superior‘s feet.“

At length he obtained the anticipated commission. It was dated June 23rd, 1852. Hereby he became a second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. On thus leaving the Academy and entering the army, he was ordered away for service to Pembroke. The building of forts at the entrance to the Haven was in contemplation, and he was engaged with others on the plans. On the 17th of February, 1854, he attained the rank of lieutenant.

This year was a memorable year as that in which the Crimean War broke out. The martial spirit of the country was deeply stirred, and our young lieutenant in fullest sympathy was anxious to be sent to the front. This anxiety increased

as the news came first, of the victory of the Alma, and then the story of the brilliant charge of the Six Hundred at Balaclava. Presently, orders came for him to embark—not, however, for the Crimea, but for Corfu. Here his father had for some years commanded the Artillery, and here he had spent a part of his boyhood. Probably, under ordinary circumstances he would have been glad to visit again the scenes of some of his earlier years, but coming at this juncture the order to go to Corfu was a deep disappointment Hoping that if he could only obtain a respite his destination would be changed, he asked for two months‘ leave to be spent on duty at Pembroke. This he obtained, and presently his hopes were fulfilled. In December he received orders for active service in the Crimea.

Chapter II

Crimean Experiences.

Concerning the battles which have been fought within recent years in Egypt and the Soudan, you, young people, have heard and read. You have been moved by the stirring stories of the battles of Tel-el-Kebir, Teb, Tamai, Kirbekan, Abu Klea, and Gubat. The exploits of Generals Stewart and Earle, and Colonel Burnaby, brave men who fell gloriously in fight, and of other brave men happily now living, have stirred the hearts of English boys as such exploits performed for »Old England« have ever done. Thus were the hearts of your fathers before you moved, as tidings came from time to time from the seat of war in the Crimea, of the valiant deeds there performed by England‘s sons. The names of Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman, and Sebastopol recall those times and the feelings they evoked at home.

Alas, there were not only brave deeds and great victories to tell of, but privations and sufferings, such as happily the British soldier has not often to endure. The cold through the weary winter was intense. Many were frozen to death in the trenches. There was gross mismanagement on the part of those whose duty it was to see that the army was supplied with food, and clothing, and medical stores. Transport vessels laden with necessaries were bandied about from port to port, unable to discharge their cargoes for want of proper instructions, while the officials on shore were ignorant as to what the cargoes were. Then there was difficulty when the stores were landed in getting them to the front, and supplying the needs of those who were facing the foe. In consequence of this our men, amid the rigours of the Crimean winter, were insufficiently clothed. They were also so insufficiently fed that, if none actually died of starvation, they were so reduced as to fall a ready prey to exposure and disease. Never, perhaps, has an army been called upon to do its duty under more trying circumstances; never, perhaps, has duty been more nobly done than in that most trying and memorable campaign. The men became heroes of endurance as well as of valour, and England had, and has, every reason to be proud of them.

On New Year‘s Day, 1855, Gordon reached Balaclava, and immediately reported himself at headquarters. It was several weeks before he was detailed

for duty, for the all-engrossing question of food prevented progress being made with the siege.

At length his first definite order on active service was received by him. It was, by means of rifle-pits, to effect a junction between the English and French sentries, who were stationed in advance of the trenches. The work was perilous, but it was done. One of the words to describe Gordon is that old Roundhead word »Thorough«. What he took in hand he carried through. Consequently, he doggedly persevered under the constant fire of the Russians, while some of his best and bravest companions fell wounded or dead at his side, and others mutinied and deserted, driven to desperation by their privations.

He had more narrow escapes than one. A bullet from a Russian rifle-pit on one occasion passed within an inch of his head. In writing home he referred to this incident, and his comment on it was, „They (the Russians) are very good marksmen; their bullet is large and pointed.“ Apparently he had closely and grimly inspected the kind of missile which one day he might make a still closer acquaintance with. On another occasion he was wounded in the forehead by a stone thrown up by a shot; but, though wounded, he was not incapacitated, and, quickly rallying, resumed duty. Writing home again, he describes the shell practice of the Russians as „beautiful.“ Such was the way in which he expressed his professional appreciation of the skill of the enemy‘s gunners.

Gordon had not a very high opinion of our French allies. He says, „The Russians are brave, better, I think, than the French, who begin to fear them.“ Again he says, „I cannot say much for our allies; they are afraid to do anything, and consequently quite cramp our movements.“ This is quite confirmatory of what Mr. Kinglake, the historian of the war, says, who repeatedly refers to the way in which the English commander was hampered by the excessive cautiousness, to use no severer term, of the French. It appears that the anticipation of the Times, which announced the fall of Sebastopol immediately after the opening battle, the battle of the Alma, might have been fulfilled but for the reluctance of the French to follow up the victory. The distinguished Russian officer, General Todleben, who did, perhaps, more than any other Russian officer for the defence, has since allowed that if the allies had closely pursued the retreating Russians, as Lord Raglan, it is said, was anxious to do, they might have entered the fortress behind them. It is easy to believe that this would have been the case.

However, the defeated Russians were not pursued, and the weary siege became necessary. A good deal of sapping and mining had to be done, and not a little hard hand-to-hand fighting. On the 6th of June a tremendous artillery duel took place, in which one thousand guns were engaged. Gordon was in the trenches all the time, and it was on this occasion that he was wounded in the forehead. The next day the French stormed the Mamelon fort, under cover of a tremendous fire from the English guns. After a success and then a reverse they carried the Mamelon, while the English at the same time secured some quarries which it was necessary to seize. One of Gordon‘s brothers wrote home after this as follows:—„Charley is all right, and has escaped amidst a terrific shower of grape and shells of every description. You may imagine the suspense I was kept in till assured of his safety. He cannot write himself, and is now fast asleep in his tent, having been in the trenches from two o‘clock yesterday morning during the cannonade until seven last night, and again from 12.30 this morning till noon.“

At length, however, this great siege came to a close. The Russians had long since lost heart. They had been repeatedly defeated in pitched battle, and had lost some of their chief defences. They had, it is true, more than once gallantly and successfully repulsed assaults; but they foresaw that the end was near. On the night of the 8th of September the besieged escaped from the doomed fortress by a bridge of boats across the harbour, having previously blown up their magazine and set fire to the town.

Gordon thus describes what he saw on the morning of the 9th:—„During the night of the 8th I heard terrific explosions, and on going down to the trenches at four the next morning, I saw a splendid sight. The whole of Sebastopol was in flames, and every now and then terrible explosions took place, while the rising sun shining on the place had a most beautiful effect. The Russians were leaving the town by the bridge; all the three-deckers were sunk, the steamers alone remaining. Tons and tons of powder must have been blown up. About eight o'clock I got an order to commence a plan of the works, for which I went to the Redan, where a dreadful sight was presented. The dead were buried in the ditch—the Russians with the English—Mr. Wright reading the burial service over them."

The young officer, who has since become so famous, was next at the siege and capture of the Kinburn fortress, afterwards returning to the Crimea, and being engaged for some time in the work of utterly destroying the dockyard, forts, quays, barracks, and store-houses of Sebastopol. From the Crimea he was ordered to Bessarabia, and next to Armenia, to engage in surveying and map-making work.

Concerning Gordon in the Crimea, a distinguished officer, who knew him there, has written:—„In his humble position as an engineer subaltern he attracted the notice of his superiors, not merely by his energy and activity, but by a special aptitude for war, developing itself around the trench work before Sebastopol in a personal knowledge of the enemy's movements, such as no other officer attained. We used to send him to find out what new move the Russians were making."

I will conclude the story of this part of our hero's career by stating that he was mentioned in the official despatches for gallant conduct—an honour which a soldier always desires—and the French Government conferred on him the Cross of the Legion of Honour. Soon after his return home from Armenia he was appointed Field-work Instructor at Chatham, and in April, 1859, he received his commission as Captain.

Chapter III

First Period of his Career in China.

We have now in imagination to travel to China, the scene of some of Gordon's most wonderful exploits. This great country, covering so large a part of the area of the earth, is inhabited by a people differing in most particulars from the other nations of the world. The Japanese come nearest to them, but they differ from the Japanese in many ways, not the least observable being that, while the little people inhabiting the islands of Japan are very open to receive ideas and

adopt customs from the nations of Europe, the Chinese are quite the contrary. This was especially so a few years ago, but lately the prejudices of Chinamen have been somewhat overcome, and Western influence has begun perceptibly to tell upon them as a nation.

One peculiarity of the Chinese was their almost insuperable objection to the admission of foreigners to their country. In consequence of this, difficulties in various ways were arising, and, with a view to preventing such difficulties, in 1859 a treaty was arranged which was called the Treaty of Tien-tsin. The object of this treaty was the opening up of the Chinese Empire to mercantile intercourse with the Western world. The Chinese ministers signed it on behalf of their country with much reluctance, and did their best to frustrate its object. For the purpose of ratifying the treaty, English and French plenipotentiaries proceeded to Pekin, but were stopped on their way. The result was that, as the Chinese Government refused to make any reparation for repeated and gross acts of hostility and insult, war ensued. A military expedition was despatched from England under Lord Elgin, with which French troops were to co-operate in China.

Captain Gordon among others was ordered out to China on active service, and started in July, 1860. On reaching Hong-Kong he heard that the Taku forts had already been bombarded and captured by the allies, and that the French and English were fairly on their march for Pekin, the great capital city of China. Anxious to prevent the defilement of their metropolis by the feet of foreign soldiery, the Chinese authorities sought to stop their victorious march by suing for peace. Commissioners were thereupon despatched from the headquarters of the allies to a town about ten miles from Pekin to make necessary arrangements. On their way back, on account of a quarrel which took place between a Frenchman and some Tartar soldiers, they were all seized by the Chinese general and thrown into prison. Now it is a maxim, well known and observed among nations, that a flag of truce and the persons of envoys are sacred. Consequently this act was a great outrage, and the generals in command of the allied forces determined that it should be punished in a signal manner, especially as the envoys and those with them were not only imprisoned but treated in a very barbarous and cruel manner. Pekin was at once invested, and the guns were in position and ready to open fire when the city was surrendered. The Chinese were compelled to pay; £10,000 for each Englishman, and £500 for each native soldier who had been killed, and to deliver up the remaining prisoners. In order also to leave as signal a mark of the occupation as possible, and to impress upon the Chinese rulers the danger of treachery and foul play, it was determined to destroy the Summer Palace of the Emperor.

This palace was a very superb structure, and covered an area of many miles. It is said that an ordinary royal palace could have been hidden in one of its courts. Within its enclosing walls were gardens, temples, groves, grottoes, lakes, bridges, terraces, and even artificial hills. Gordon in writing home said, „You would scarcely conceive the magnificence of this residence or the tremendous devastation the French have committed. The throne and room were lined with ebony, carved in a marvellous way. There were huge mirrors of all shapes and kinds, clocks, watches, musical boxes with puppets on them, magnificent china of every description, heaps and heaps of silks of all colours, embroidery, and as much splendour and civilization as you would see at Windsor; carved ivory

screens, coral screens, large amounts of treasure, &c. The French have smashed everything in a most wanton way. It was a scene of utter destruction which passes my description."

The reference to the French may seem strange, as one would suppose from it that the English had no part in the looting. The meaning is this. Before Lord Elgin gave his order to commence looting, the French had entered the palace and remorselessly looted and wrecked the greater part of it. Of all the valuables contained in it they had the pick; and years afterwards, under the Second Empire, the Empress Eugenie and the ladies of the French court wore superb jewellery which had come from the Imperial Summer Palace at Pekin. However, the French did not, perhaps could not, take everything. „We got," says Gordon, „upwards of £[3-1] apiece prize-money before we went out here; and although I have not as much as many, I have done well. Imagine D---- giving 16s. for a string of pearls which he sold the next day for £500." After the place had been pillaged it was burned down, property being destroyed which Gordon valued at more than four millions of money.

Lord Elgin was severely blamed for having been a party to the pillage and destruction of the palace, but he maintained that the order he had given was a just one, since war would become much more terrible than it is if flags of truce were not respected, and the persons of men journeying on a mission of peace were not held sacred from harm.

Soon after the close of the campaign, Captain Gordon attained—to use military language—his »majority«; that is, he was promoted to the rank of major. He received also for his services at Pekin a medal and clasp.

The troops took up their winter quarters at Tientsin, Major Gordon having the command of the Engineers, Here he remained till the spring of 1862, probably very much longer than he had anticipated. In the meantime he visited the Great Wall of China, of which you have heard as being one of the wonders of the world. This wall—the »Myriad-mile Wall« the Chinese call it—was built by an Emperor of China who flourished about 200 years before Christ. It extends along the northern boundary of the country, and was intended as a protection against the Tartar tribes. It is carried over lofty hills, through deep valleys, and across rivers, its builders having disdained every obstacle and triumphed over every difficulty which they had to encounter. It is more than a thousand miles long, twenty feet high, twenty-five feet thick at the base, and fifteen at the top.

The Major's object was not simply to visit and view the wall, though, of course, as a military engineer, he was deeply interested in that, but he wished to increase his knowledge of the physical features of the country. In particular, he knew that there was a pass through which lay the route to Russian territory, and he was anxious to ascertain if there was any other.

On this excursion he and his companions had a somewhat amusing adventure in connection with the settlement of an hotel bill. The charges which had been made for the accommodation they had received were most exorbitant. Before disputing them they took the precaution of sending on their baggage-cart in charge of a Chinese lad who accompanied them. They then offered what they knew to be fair payment for what they had received. This the Chinese Boniface refused. They tried to mount their horses, but the people prevented them, and an uproar was created. „Let us go," said they, „to the mandarin." To this all agreed, and they walked towards the mandarin's house. When they reached the mandarin's, they turned their horses' heads and scampered after

their baggage as fast as they could. The people yelled and rushed after them, but it was useless; they were soon out of sight. Possibly they left in some way the landlord‘s fair remuneration; but more probably they felt that as he had refused to take it, and persisted in his dishonest demands, he did not deserve it at all.

The difficulty of travelling on this excursion was great. The roads were in a very bad state, and sometimes the cold was intense, so much so that raw eggs were frozen as hard as if boiled. The travellers had also to encounter robbers. At length, however, they arrived again in safety at Tien-tsin.

Occasionally Major Gordon took a ride to Taku and back, a distance of one hundred and forty miles. On one occasion, in performing this journey, he encountered a tremendous dust-storm. He thus describes it:—„The sky was as dark as night; huge columns of dust came sweeping down, and it blew a regular hurricane, the blue sky appearing now and then through the breaks. The quantity of dust was indescribable. A canal about fifty miles long, and eighteen feet wide, and seven feet deep, was completely filled up, and boats which had been floating merrily down to Tien-tsin found themselves at the end of the storm on a bank of sand, the canal having been filled up and the waters absorbed. ... The boat-owners looked very much disgusted at their predicament, which was not pleasant. The storm lasted sixteen hours. The darkness was such that it enforced candles being lighted at three p.m., and it came on very suddenly. Numbers of junks were lost, and forty-five Chinamen drowned at Taku. Two officers of the 31st Regiment were en route for Taku by boat, and one of them started to get a coat when the storm began. He lost his way, fell into every ditch he could find in the neighbourhood (and there are not a few), and had to sleep in a grave all night. He was brought in quite wild and blind the next morning.“

This reminds us of the simoom, a noxious hot wind, bringing with it clouds of sand, which blows on the borders of Arabia. But the sand-clouds of the simoom are not nearly so dense as the sand-cloud described by Gordon. Certainly China is a wonderful country in more ways than one. England is sometimes abused—by Englishmen chiefly—because of the changeable character of its climate, and especially because of the fogs which prevail in certain months of the year; but I think we should all agree that an English, even a London, fog is preferable to a Chinese sand-storm.

With this closes what may be termed the first period of Gordon‘s career in the Flowery Land, as Chinamen have designated their country; the second is filled with events of a still more stirring character.

Chapter IV

Leader of the »Ever-Victorious Army«.

It is now necessary to say something about a very extraordinary movement which began in China about the year 1851. The movement was partly political, that is, it had reference to the government of the country, and partly religious in its nature. The leader was a certain schoolmaster who rejoiced in the odd name—all Chinese names are odd—of Hung-tsue-schuen. This man gave out

that he was inspired, and that he had seen God, who had named him the »Second Celestial Brother«, Jesus being the first. He also declared that he was a prophet of vengeance and freedom, that he was to exterminate the hated Manchu race, and restore what is called the »Ming dynasty«. At the same time he said he was sent to be the friend of the poor, and the champion of the oppressed.

Although so manifestly an impostor, this man gained a large following. The human race is very credulous, and it is astonishing how readily the ignorant and superstitious will attach themselves to a man who will boldly proclaim himself a messenger from the Most High, however extravagant his pretensions. But Hung was helped by the appeal he made to human passions, as well as by religious sentiment. The classes he appealed to were certainly oppressed and miserable, and were ready to embrace any cause which promised to give them deliverance from, and vengeance upon, their oppressors.

Hung's own clansmen numbered some 20,000, and with much address he won them to his side. The movement commenced in the province of Kwang-tung, where were large numbers of »hakkas«, or strangers, from other parts of the Empire. These seem to have been special objects of oppression to the mandarins, as the magistrates and rulers of China are called. They were for the most part the very dregs of the population, and as one of Hung's doctrines was that all property was to be held in common, not much inducement beyond this was needed to prevail on them to join the adventurer.

Finding himself at the head of a considerable army of desperate men, Hung was encouraged to proclaim himself the »Heavenly King«, and to choose several men from among his followers who should bear rule under him, and be in fact his chief officers. He chose five, and called them Wangs or Kings. They were known as the Faithful King, the Eastern King, the Western King, the Warrior King, and the Attendant King. These were high-sounding titles, and those who bore them were possessed of almost unlimited authority, in some circumstance quite so, to flog and decapitate. It may be supposed, therefore, that the Wangs were held in great respect. This, however, did not prevent their subjects from bestowing nicknames upon them, such as Yellow Tiger, the One-Eyed Dog, and Cock-Eye; by which they were more commonly designated than by the grand titles which their master had bestowed upon them.

The »Heavenly King« met with a success which must have surprised him. It was estimated that in 1851 he had under his leadership an army numbering three hundred thousand. Before this host, animated by religious fanaticism, passion, and desire for plunder, in a country like China, where the central government is too weak to make its power adequately felt in the distant parts of the unwieldy empire, what could stand? Town after town fell, and at length Hang-Chow was captured, the capital of the great eastern province of Che-Keang. This city was once, when the Mongols ruled in China, the capital of the empire, and in later days it retained its magnificence. It is a great centre of wealth and of learning, being famous for its colleges and temples, and also for its silk manufactures and embroidery. It contains a population of some seven or eight hundred thousand persons.

The capture of Hang-Chow increased both the fame and power of the »Heavenly King«. He now felt prepared for the still greater achievement of the capture of Nankin, the old capital of the country, and second city of the empire. This feat was successfully performed on March 19th, 1853, and Nankin becanie

the headquarters of the Taipings, as the followers of Hung were called, and the place of the royal residence. In capturing the city these vandals destroyed the famous Porcelain Tower, 322 feet high, which was erected in the fifteenth centurj- by the Emperor Yang-Loh, in memory of his mother. Moreover, they put a large proportion of the population to the sword.

With the growth of Hung's success grew also his ambition. It now seemed as though he would before long supplant the occupier of the Imperial throne at Pekin, and rule in his stead. The sovereignty of China, however, was not sufficient to satisfy the »Heavenly King« and Second Celestial Brother. He gave out that the Taiping empire would embrace the world, and had a map of it—in which England, France, Russia, Spain, and Holland figured up in a comer of it as so many small islands—exhibited at the entrance-gate of his palace.

For ten years now the rebellion had been proceeding and gathering strength, when the Chinese Government applied to the commanders of the allied English and French forces, which had, as we have seen, occupied Pekin, and were still in the country, for help. These decided that they could not take part in the civil contest, but that they might defend Shanghai, and assist the authorities in keeping order within its walls. Shanghai contained a number of wealthy merchants, not only native but European, and these began to be concerned for the safety of their possessions and trade. They therefore subscribed money for raising a foreign force which they could send out of the city, and by which they could keep the enemy at bay. The task of raising this force they entrusted to two American adventurers, named Ward and Burgevine. A reward was offered to them for the capture of Sung-Kiang, a place about twenty miles from Shanghai, which was in the hands of the rebels. The small force, consisting of about a hundred men in the first place, was led to the attack by Ward, but was repulsed with the loss of several killed and wounded. On a second occasion, assisted by Chinese troops, they were completely successful. Ward was elated with his success, and made raids upon the rebels beyond the place he had taken. But the Faithful King, hearing of his people's defeat, marched against Ward and his „foreign devils," as Ward's men were called, and drove them back, marching this time on Shanghai itself. This was a mistake, as he found, for there were British and French troops there. These, in accordance with what had been previously decided, joined the troops of the Chinese Emperor, and drove the rebels back again with great loss.

After this more than a year elapsed before the Taipings again attacked Shanghai, when once more the Chinese troops were assisted by our men and the French. This time the English commander was wounded, and the French commander killed. In September, 1862, Ward was killed, and Burgevine succeeded to his command, which now consisted, not simply of a few foreigners who had been got together, but of a thousand fairly-well-drilled Chinamen besides.

Burgevine was a brave man, no doubt, but he was not fit for command and responsibility. Those who would command others must be capable of commanding themselves; this Burgevine could not do. He was a filibuster, and not a general. One day, because the mandarin who was the local treasurer, whom he had not the smallest right to command or coerce, refused to pay him a large sum of money which he demanded, he struck him. He then ordered his men to break open the treasury, and carry off the money.

For this high-handed act he was at once deprived of his command by the governor of the province. The name of this governor was Li-Hung-Chang, also called the Futai, who has since proved himself to be an able statesman and soldier.

The force which Ward and Burgevine had raised had been named by the Chinese, always fond of high-sounding titles, the »ever-victorious army«. It was now without a leader, and Li-Hung-Chang asked the English general. General Staveley, to supply one from among the officers under his command. At once General Staveley thought of Major Gordon as the likeliest man for the post. „What he was before Sebastopol he has been since," said he—„faithful, trusty, and successful. Before Pekin and at Shanghai he has evinced just the qualities that are needed now. Although he has never been in command, he will rise to the occasion, to which he is more fitted than any man I know." Before he could be appointed, however, It was necessary to obtain the consent of the military authorities at home.

In the meantime, as Gordon wished to finish a military survey of the country for thirty miles round Shanghai which he had in hand, an officer named Captain Holland was placed in temporary command. This officer, with between seven and eight thousand men under his command, including Imperialist troops, soon proceeded to lay siege to the walled city of Taitsan. But he had been misinformed as to its defences, and had miscalculated his power; the result was defeat. Three hundred men and four foreign officers were killed and wounded, and two thirty-two-pounders lost. This victory greatly elated the Taipings. One of the Wangs, in describing the afifair, wrote:

> „Oh, how we laughed, on the morning of the assault, as they advanced nearer to the creek which they brought no bridges to throw over! How we laughed as we saw the ladder they had thrown over getting weaker and weaker beneath them, and at last fall into the creek, leaving half the party on one side and half on the other. ‹What general is he,› cried our chief, ‹who sends his men to storm a city without first ascertaining that there is a moat?› ‹And what general is he,› cried another of our leaders, ‹who allows a storming party to advance without bridges? See, O chief, these unfortunates!› So we laughed and so we jested, as we saw the slaves of the Tartar usurper advancing to destruction."

The Taipings did not laugh much at the defeat of their opponents after this. The »ever-victorious army« henceforth justified its name by its deeds, for Gordon was in command. The War Office authorities at home gave their consent, and he accepted the appointment.

Major Gordon's parents did not much like their son thus to enter the service of China. They had prejudices, as before intimated, against an English officer serving in a foreign army, or under any flag but that of the Union Jack. There were others, too, who severely criticised his action. Some good people in England and elsewhere sympathised with the Taipings, partly because they professed a kind of Christianity, and partly because they regarded them as fighting for freedom and against oppression. Major Gordon himself accepted the post offered him because he believed that he would be performing a great service for humanity. What reason was there for such a belief? Let us see.

Mr. Michie, an Englishman employed in mercantile pursuits, visited Nankin in March, 1861. Here he had a good opportunity of acquainting himself with the Taipings, and he writes: „They do nothing but burn, murder, and destroy; they hardly profess anything beyond that. They are detested by all the country people; and even those in the city who are not „brethren“ hate them. Trade and industry are prohibited; their land taxes are three times heavier than those of the Imperialists. ... They don‘t care about the ordinary slow and sure sources of revenue; they look to plunder, and plunder alone, for subsistence.“

Consul Harvey, of Ningpo, writing in March, 1864, says: „Desolation is the only end obtained, as it always has been, wherever the sway of the marauders has had its full scope, and their power the liberty of unchecked excess. ... It is notorious that their forces are swelled considerably by all the bad characters of the districts they pass through, and who, being under no possible moral control (except so far as military obedience and a pseudo-discipline are concerned), commit every excess known, and, let me add, almost unknown, to the human mind.“

The Rev. Mr. Roberts, who himself visited Nankin, was quite disillusionised as to the Christian character of the Taipings. He describes the leader as violent and bloodthirsty, ordering individuals to be put to death for a word without trial. A person writing from Chanzu at a late period in the campaign, describes what he rightly calls „the desolation of the country and the misery of the inhabitants,“ produced by the rebels. He says „Hundreds of gaunt, starving wretches, with hardly any other means of sustenance than human flesh, and the few scraps of refuse they can pick up from the Imperialist troops, wander helplessly about, more dead than alive, amid the ruins of their villages and of their suburbs. The living are too weak to bury the dead, and the latter lie about on the ground in every stage of decomposition, tainting the air and horrifying the beholder.“

Another, writing from Gordon‘s camp, says: „It IS horrible to relate; it is horrible to witness. To read that people are eating human flesh is one thing; to see the bodies from which the flesh has been cut is another. No one can eat a meal here without a certain degree of loathing. The poor wretches have a wolfish look that is indescribable, and they haunt one‘s boat in shoals, in the hope of getting some scraps of food. Their lamentations and moans completely take away any appetite which the horrors one has witnessed may have left one. I ought to be tolerably callous by this time, but no one could witness unmoved such scenes as these. The rebels have evidently swept up everything edible, and left the unfortunate inhabitants to die.“

These are the testimonies of persons who were on the spot, and had knowledge of the condition of things. They testified of what they had seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears. Why have I quoted them? Because I want you to feel that Major Gordon had ample justification for seeking to put down a rebellion which produced such misery; that he was, in fact, influenced, not by a spirit of adventure or romance, in accepting the command of the »ever-victorious army«, but by that spirit of humanity for which he was ever distinguished. With regard to it, he himself, writing home, says:

> „I have taken the step on consideration. I think that any one who contributes to putting down this rebellion fulfils a humane task, and I also think tends a great deal to open China to civilization. ... I can say that if I

had not accepted the command I believe the force would have been broken up, and the rebellion gone on in its misery for years. I trust this will not now be the case. ... I think I am doing a good service."

A good service he undoubtedly did, for which he is gratefully remembered in China, and will be yet for many a long day.

Chapter V

As a Commander and Conqueror.

A FORMIDABLE task now lay before the young commander, and he addressed himself to it with great earnestness and energy. He went to work, however, not in a fierce haphazard way, but intelligently, and with a plan. Only thus was he likely to succeed. He had under him a force of between 3,000 and 4,000 men. But their discipline and morality were defective, and like the redoubtable Oliver Cromwell he knew well the value of discipline and morality in an army, and at once set to work to improve them. He reorganised his army on the English model, abolished the mischievous practice of giving rewards for captures, and forbade looting. At the same time he secured for his men regular pay. He possessed the happy power of making those who served under him love, respect, and obey him, and an improvement was soon manifest.

His object was to break the back of this miserable rebellion. How was it to be done? That was the question which he earnestly pondered. He knew it could not be done by petty raids upon the Taipings, petty operations of defence and skirmish, such as had hitherto characterised the attempt to suppress it. He came to the conclusion that he must strike at the very heart of the rebellion, and destroy it in those places, and respects, whence it derived its vitality and power. His very first goal, therefore, was far away from Shanghai, towards Fushan. He had two steamers at his disposal as transports, and in these he took some 200 of his artillery, and about 1,000 infantry. On the 3rd of April he reached Fushan, and proceeded at once to attack it. His ulterior object was to relieve Chanzu, a loyal city some ten miles inland, which was besieged by the Faithful King and his army. A 32-pounder and five 12-pounder howitzers were brought to bear on Fushan, and the bombardment proceeded for three hours. After this a storming party, led by Captain Belcher, one of the English officers who served under Gordon, carried the position by assault. The operation was entirely successful, and Chanzu was at once relieved.

Gordon describes the governor of the latter place as about thirty-five years old, and says :—„He looked worn to a thread with anxiety. He was so very glad to see me, and chin-chinned most violently, regretting his inability to give me a present, which I told him was not the custom with us people."

This brilliant achievement increased the general confidence in him, and won for him, by decree of the Emperor, the grade of Tsung-Ping in the Chinese service, or Brigadier-General.

Gordon next sought to capture Quinsan, where was the Taiping arsenal and shot manufactory. To wrest such a place from the rebels would, of course, be a very important achievement. He was turned aside, however, by unexpected

news which reached him. It was to the effect that Taitsan, another rebel stronghold, had made proposals of surrender to the Governor of the Province, that soldiers had accordingly been sent to occupy the place, who had been treacherously made prisoners, and two hundred of them beheaded. So shameful a breach of faith deserved prompt punishment, and the commander at once made for Taitsan to administer it.

This was a very courageous proceeding, for Gordon had no more than 3,000 men under his command, while the garrison numbered 10,000, and had among them a number of English, French, and American renegades to serve their guns. At first Gordon‘s men were repulsed with much slaughter; but the second attempt proved entirely successful. A brave English officer, Captain Bannen—who gallantly led the assault on both occasions—was killed, as well as several other officers; indeed, the loss generally on Gordon‘s side was very heavy, being about one in ten.

Seven of the prisoners were condemned to death, as having been specially concerned in the act of bloody treachery before referred to. Before they were executed they were tortured, their bodies being pierced with arrows in various places, and pieces of skin flayed from their arms. In this condition they were tied up for five hours, awaiting the cutting-off of their heads. This became known in England, and many severe and bitter things were said against Gordon. They were not deserved, however, for he had protested against the torture, but was powerless to prevent it. The prisoners were in the hands of the provincial governor and his mandarins, and they punished them according to Chinese custom and law.

The commander of the „ever-victorious“ now recurred to his plan of taking Quinsan. The force he led against it numbered 600 artillery and 2,300 infantry. The Taipings outnumbered him by four or five to one. Their position was very strong, as the city was walled, with a hill in the centre, which, with two or three guns on it, would have made it a perfect citadel, and from which all the movements of the attacking force could be seen, and their strength ascertained. The city was also surrounded with a ditch more than a hundred and twenty feet wide. Gordon, however, saw that it had a weak place. The only road between Quinsan and the neighbouring city of Soochow, two places of vital consequence to each other, ran between a lake on the one hand, and a series of large creeks on the other. He concluded that if he could command this road with an armed steamer he could cut off all communication. He laid plans accordingly, first of all investing the city with his own army and 7,000 Imperialists who were supporting him.

On May 30th the steamer was ready, having on board three hundred picked riflemen. She was accompanied by a flotilla of small gunboats. About eight miles from Quinsan, on the road to Soochow, was a small village held by Taiping soldiers. This Gordon possessed himself of, stationing in it the three hundred riflemen. At this juncture a large rebel force was seen coming from Soochow to the help of their brethren at Quinsan. The steamer opened fire upon them—a thing they had not at all anticipated—killing many, and causing them to retreat in confusion. The steamer followed them up, and in their efforts to get beyond the reach of her murderous shells the flying mass of men became jammed, as they could not flee either to the right or left, but only straight before them along the road.

Confusion was made still worse confounded when the retreating body met fresh reinforcements coming up, with whom they became hopelessly mixed, the whole of them being at the steamer‘s mercy. Up to the very walls of Soochow the fugitives were pursued, and then, in the morning, the steamer returned. Gordon, who was on board, found that in the meantime the Quinsah garrison had been making an attempt to get to Soochow. Again the »Hyson«, as the steamer was named, belched forth her shells, and the desperate Taipings were compelled to retreat. The. town was subjected to several hours‘ bombardment, and the next day capitulated. Some S,ooo of the Taipings were computed to have perished in these engagements, some having been shot, some wounded, and some murdered by the villagers, who had suffered numerous barbarities at their hands, and who rose and avenged themselves on their discomfited enemies as they tried to escape. Gordon took 800 prisoners, and treated them so differently from what they had anticipated, that he transformed them from enemies into friends. Some of them joined the ranks of the »ever-victorious army«" and fought against their old friends the rebels.

Writing home again after the capture of Quinsan, Gordon says:

> „The rebels certainly never got such a licking before, and I think there will not be much more severe fighting. ... My occupying this city enables the Imperial Government to protect an enormous district, rich in corn, &c.; and the people around are so thankful for their release it is quite a pleasure. They were in a desperate plight before our arrival.“

In Gordon‘s eyes Quinsan possessed so much importance that he determined to make it his headquarters. Some of the rowdy class of officers and men did not like this. They preferred their old head-quarters at Sung-Kiang, for there they could dispose of the loot which, despite orders to the contrary, it was supposed they had possessed themselves of in considerable quantities. It was not long before a mutinous spirit manifested itself, and the artillery refused to fall in, even going so far as to threaten to blow their officers to pieces. In addition to this, they posted up a mutinous proclamation.

This was a very serious condition of things, and calculated to test the metal of the commander severely, and show what sort it was. Gordon shrewdly guessed that the non-commissioned officers were at the bottom of it, so he demanded from them the name of the writer of the proclamation, and why the men refused to fall in. They professed they did not know. They were told, hereupon, with quiet determination, that one in five of them would be shot. They received this announcement with groans, one of them being particularly loud and demonstrative. At once the commander concluded that this man, who was a corporal, was the ringleader. With his own hand he dragged him from the ranks, and gave order to two of the infantry to shoot him. The order was at once obeyed. Gordon then sent the other non-commissioned officers into confinement, telling them that if at the end of an hour the men did not fall in, and the name of the writer of the proclamation was not given up, every fifth man among them would be shot. This had the desired effect. The name was disclosed, and proved to be that of the corporal on whom justice had already been done. The men fell in, and thus the mutiny was quelled. It was perfectly clear that in the »ever-victorious army« there could be no divided authority. The commander was a strong man, and must be obeyed.

Shortly after this Gordon was very much tried, partly by his commissioned officers, with whom he could not deal in such a summary way as he did with the corporal, and partly with the Chinese authorities, who in various ways broke their word to him, and failed to send money for the pay of the troops. So disheartened and disgusted did he become that he determined to resign his command. But just at this point he received tidings which made him determine, against his own inclinations, and purely for the good of the country whose cause he had adopted, to retain it. Burgevine the American, who for a short time had had the command of the »ever-victorious army«, after being deprived of that post, plotted and schemed for a time to get it back again. In this he failed. He next collected a band of foreigners of the loose and worthless class, who usually infest such ports as Shanghai, and then, having with the assistance of the master possessed himself of a small Chinese war-steamer, he transferred himself and following to Soo-chow, joining the rebels and becoming a Wang. It was the receipt of the information of this latter fact which induced Gordon to withdraw the notice he had already given of his resignation. He quite saw what a formidable addition to the Taiping army Burgevine, with his Europeans, would be. Moreover, he had reason for fearing that some of his own men, who had not been able to subdue their love of plunder, would desert to the enemy if the grasp upon them of the strong hand were resigned. The Taipings, thus reinforced with well-armed and trained men, would yield to their lust of plunder and spirit of revenge for the defeats inflicted upon them, and devastate the whole country. A sense of duty, springing from a desire to prevent such misery, kept him at his post.

It may here be said that Burgevine soon got tired of the Taipings. He afterwards sought an interview with Gordon, ostensibly for the purpose of saying that he intended to quit the rebel service, but really, as it proved, to make proposals to the young English soldier that they should between them found an independent kingdom in China, It is needless to say that he did not know the character of the man he had to do with, or that his proposals were rejected with scorn and contempt. After this he attempted to escape from the Taipings, and failed. Gordon, thinking that his life would be in danger as soon as they heard of his having made overtures to him, especially after the unsuccessful attempt at escape, notwithstanding the treacherous and contemptible character of the man, interceded for him, and got him sent to the American Consul. At Gordon‘s request no proceedings were taken against him, on condition that he was sent out of the country. It was afterwards found that at the very time that he was making friendly overtures, he was seeking to entrap the man who so befriended him. The generosity which thus appears in the conduct of Gordon was an essential part of his character, and helps to reveal how truly noble he was.

Not to prolong the narrative, let me now state that after Gordon had addressed himself to his great task a series of successes rewarded his efforts, all leading up to the great object he now had in view—the capture of Soochow. At length the city was invested, and he determined to hazard a night assault. This assault was led by himself and Majors Howard and Williams. Although it did not succeed, it was so desperate, and inflicted so heavy a loss on the rebels, that most of their leaders concluded that the fall of the place was inevitable. After more severe, and this time successful, fighting so much loss was inflicted

on the rebels, and so many of their defences taken, that the city was surrendered.

In the negotiations relating to the surrender of Soochow, Gordon had undertaken that those who surrendered should receive honourable and humane treatment, and that the city should not be looted. He had previously stipulated with Governor Li and General Ching, the commander of the Imperialist troops, that, as long as he remained in command, warfare should be conducted in accordance with the practice of Western nations, and that no prisoners should be murdered. He felt justified in believing that the promises he had received would be kept. In this he was mistaken, for Governor Li, without Gordon‘s knowledge, had all the Wangs barbarously put to death and gave the city up to plunder. Entering the city some time afterwards, Gordon saw that something was wrong. He rode towards the palace of a Wang to see what he could learn there: here he found the uncle of the Wang, who entreated him to escort the ladies of the palace to his house, and to assist in defending them. He did so, but was no sooner in the courtyard of the house than he was surrounded by some thousands of armed Taipings, who shut the gates on him and made him a prisoner. Their intention was to hold him as a hostage for the good treatment of their leaders, for as yet they knew not of their death. It was fortunate for Gordon that they did not, for he would probably have been put to torture if not murdered.

The brave commander was detained as a prisoner all night, but in the morning induced the Taipings to allow his interpreter to take a letter to the captain of a small naval force lying near. This letter contained instructions to the captain to capture Governor Li, and keep him under restraint until the Wangs were given up. The letter never reached its destination, for the Imperialists intercepted and destroyed it. In the afternoon he succeeded in persuading the Taipings to allow him to go in search of his interpreter. At length he reached his own people in safety, and learned the terrible truth that the Wangs had been treacherously murdered when they came, according to arrangement, to deliver up the keys of the city. He was so affected with the news that he burst into tears. This was the first expression of his feelings; the next was one of fierce anger. Arming himself with a revolver he went forth in quest of the Governor, quite satisfied that he had forfeited his life by his vile treachery, and determined that he should pay the penalty of death for it. But the Governor had been warned of Gordon‘s fury, and fled to the city. Search was made for him for several days, but in vain. The »ever-victorious army« was then marched back to Quinsan. Here he informed his troops that it was impossible for him to serve any longer under Governor Li, and that he should hand over his command to the English general until such time as the whole circumstances of the treachery at Soochow had been inquired into, and punishment inflicted upon the authors of it.

Some time afterwards, by Imperial decree, a medal of distinction was conferred on Gordon, together with a large sum of money, as a further token of Imperial approbation. This gift was sent to him by the Governor, and also extra pay for his troops and sums of money for the wounded. This last he accepted, but the gift for himself he spurned. When the messengers entered his presence with bowls full of gold, he took up the stick which he had carried throughout the campaign, and was the only weapon that he had used in battle, and flogged them from the chamber. He then penned this note to His Imperial Majesty:

„Major Gordon receives the approbation of His Majesty with every gratification, but regrets most sincerely that, owing to the circumstances which occurred since the capture of Soochow, he is unable to receive any mark of His Majesty the Emperor‘s recognition, and therefore respectfully begs His Majesty to receive his thanks for his intended kindness, and to allow him to decline the same.“

Chapter VI

The Taiping Rebellion Suppressed.

For the massacre of the Wangs at Soochow, the Chinese Government were pressed to degrade, and otherwise punish, Governor Li. This, however, they declined to do, as they believed that he had acted for the best interests of the country. Indeed, it seems that, while he had no sufficient excuse for his conduct, there were, nevertheless, extenuating circumstances. The Wangs were, if the Governor‘s word is to be taken, unreasonable in their demands and defiant in their behaviour. When these things came to Gordon‘s knowledge, they so far softened him as to induce him to reconsider his position. Governor Li, moreover, consented to issue a proclamation taking upon himself full responsibility for the massacre, and entirely exonerating Gordon from all participation and blame in the matter. Several other things had to be considered by the latter. He knew of a certainty that the notorious desperado, Burgevine, was meditating further mischief, and intending again to throw in his lot with the rebels, while three hundred Europeans of no character were ready to go over with him. He knew that if he resigned finally, another British officer would not be appointed in his place. He believed that if he again took the field he could put down the rebellion in six months, while he feared that if he did not, many of his men would go over to the other side, and that the rebellion would go lingering on again in its misery for years. Under all the circumstances, therefore, for the sake of China and for the sake of humanity, he resolved to put aside his resentment and complete the work he had begun.

One thing that perhaps helped him to arrive at this decision was information which had come to him during the time of his inactivity. It was to the effect that two thousand fugitives from Soochow had made their way to Wosieh, where the rebel leader, the Faithful King, was in command. Finding such an arrival extremely inconvenient, this worthy disposed of the difficulty by beheading the whole lot.

By the third week in February, 1864, Gordon was again at the head of his force and in the field. His object was, to use his own words, „to cut through the heart of the rebellion,“ and to divide it into two parts by the capture of Yesing and Liyang. In the meantime Nankin was besieged by an Imperialist army, and a force composed of French and Chinese was to undertake the task of rescuing Hangchow from rebel hands. Finding Wosieh untenable, the Faithful King abandoned it, and it was occupied by the »ever-victorious army«. An old woman here told the commander that, about a month before, four barbarians had been killed near the pagoda. At the spot indicated a terrible sight met Gordon‘s gaze.

There was an open grave, into which four charred skeletons had been cast, while strewn about were fragments of burnt bones, scraps of clothing, and a pen-knife. They were the. remains of four Europeans who had officered an Imperialist steamer called the Firefly. The Faithful King had tortured and burned the unfortunate men, who had somehow fallen into his hands, in revenge for the execution of his brother Wangs at Soochow. This sickening sight, as may be supposed, only strengthened in Gordon the determination to put down with all speed a movement which, in one way and another, seemed to be a very carnival of murder.

On the 30th of April the town of Yesing was assaulted, and some severe fighting took place. The next day it surrendered. This was one of the two towns which, as I have said, he had planned to take in order to „cut through the heart of the rebellion." The other was Liyang, against which he advanced a few days afterwards. Here the Taipings were thoroughly disheartened by what had taken place. The officer in charge quite intended to defend the place, and sallied forth with a part of his army to meet the attacking force. But those who remained in the city closed the gates upon him, and compelled him to surrender.

The next place that Gordon sought to possess himself of was the town of Kintang. The garrison expressed their willingness to surrender, and were on the point of doing so, when they were largely reinforced from another town. Kintang therefore which was now held by some of the most desperate of the rebels, was at once assaulted. After a bombardment lasting three hours a breach was made in the walls. A storming party was now ordered up, but the resistance they encountered was so desperate that they were compelled to retire. A second attack was made, led by Gordon in person. Presently a cry was heard, „The commander is wounded!" It was even so. The brave leader had been shot in the leg, and blood was flowing from the wound. He was urged to retire, but would not. Nearly faint from loss of blood, he was at length taken by Dr. Moffit, the principal medical officer of the force, and carried by main force to a boat.

While the commander thus lay incapacitated, a third attack was made under the leadership of his aide-de-camp. Major Brown. This also failed, and the major was wounded. There was no alternative but to withdraw, a hundred men having been killed and wounded, including fifteen officers, of whom two of the bravest and most efficient, Major Taite and Captain Banning, were among the slain.

When it became known in Pekin that Gordon had been wounded, the utmost anxiety was shown. The British Minister wrote:

> „I beg you not to look upon your position from a military point of view; you have done quite enough for your reputation as a gallant and skilful leader. We all look to you as the only person fit to act with these perverse Chinese, and to be trusted with the great interests at stake at Shanghai. Your life and ability to keep the field are more important than the capture of any city in China."

The Emperor was deeply grieved, and issued a proclamation, in which he said:

> „Gordon being excessively brave and fearless was wounded in consequence. We are on this account deeply moved with grief and

admiration. We order Li-Hung-Chang to visit Gordon and inquire for him daily, so as to keep his mind at rest, requesting him to wait until he shall be perfectly restored to health and strength. Respect this."

The wound was not likely to be a fatal one; all that was necessary, Dr. Moffit said, was that the sufferer should be quiet. This Gordon found to be impossible when he heard that the Faithful King had succeeded in occupying Fushan, his first conquest. Although unable actively to exert himself in the field, he placed himself at the head of his troops and started for Wosieh. Here he left the greater part of the force to garrison the town, and again started with his light infantry and a regiment only 400 strong, together with 600 Liyang men, who had all been Taipings a few days before, but had enlisted under him to fight against their former masters. Surely one knows not whether more to admire the pluck of the wounded commander, or to wonder at his confidence!

The Taipings were at this time bent on getting possession of Quinsan, and made the city of Waissoo the centre of their operations. On the latter place Gordon now moved with his artillery by water, while the remainder of his force, under Colonels Howard and Rhode, went by land, with orders to meet him at a certain place and avoid an encounter with the rebels' stockades. Unfortunately these latter stumbled on a camp of the Taipings, and being suddenly assailed by a large body of cavalry, who had been lying in ambush, the men were panic-stricken and fled. The greatest confusion prevailed, and over 400 were killed and wounded, among whom were three captains.

When Gordon arrived before Waissoo, unsupported by his infantry, he was in the greatest peril. He had no choice but to retreat and reorganize his army. This done, he again approached Waissoo, being reinforced with 6,000 Imperialists under Li-Hung-Chang. The attack which they soon made on the town proved entirely successful, and then they marched on Chanchu-fu. The Chinese general was anxious to have the honour of capturing this stronghold, and accordingly made an opening in the wall with his artillery and then led up his men to storm it. He was repulsed with heavy loss. He was now glad to accept the help of Gordon, and it was arranged that a combined attack should be made. When, however, the time for making the assault came, the Imperialists were found wanting. Gordon's men succeeded in mounting the breach led by about a dozen officers, but so desperate was the defence under Hu-Wang, or »Cock-Eye«, that they were compelled to fall back. A combined movement was now made, the men of the »ever-victorious army« attempting one breach, and the Imperialists another which had been made. It was of no use, however, as the Taipings were so numerous, and set absolutely no value on their lives. The retreat was consequently sounded, and the men fell back, leaving ten officers dead behind them, not to speak of non-commissioned officers and privates.

Capture by assault seemed out of the question, so Gordon brought his engineering skill into play, and showed the Chinese how to approach the wall by trenches. Governor Li also prepared proclamations written in such large characters that those within the city could read them where they were posted up. In these he offered a free pardon to all who would leave the city, with the exception of Hu-Wang. Large numbers embraced the invitation and came over, thus weakening the defenders.

At length it was determined to make another attack, this time on the anniversary of the day on which, a year before, the city had fallen into the

hands of the Taipings. The walls were battered down in several places by the fire of the heaviest artillery the besiegers could command, and then the Imperialists stormed. They succeeded in clambering up the broken walls, but again encountered so fierce an opposition that it seemed as though they would be driven back. Seeing this, Gordon placed himself at the head of a number of his men and dashed up to their support. This decided the day, and the united forces, at the point of the bayonet, drove the enemy before them and entered the city. Hu-Wang at this moment rushed to the rescue, but he was driven back to his palace and there made a prisoner. He was a man of great courage, and of a high and fierce spirit. It took ten men to bind him, and when brought before Governor Li he refused to make submission, declaring that if it had not been for Gordon and his men he would have defied the Imperialists to take the city. He and four other Wangs were executed.

Two hours after the fall of Chanchu-fu, Gordon wrote in pencil on a slip of paper the following note:

„My dear Mother,

„Chanchu-fu was carried by assault by the Quinsan force and Imperialists at 2 p.m. this day, with little loss. I go back to Quinsan on May 13th, and shall not again take the field. The rebels are now done; they have only Tayan and Nankin, and the former will probably fall in a day or two, and Nankin in about two months. I am happy to say I got off safe.

„Your affectionate Son,

„C.G.Gordon.“

The back of the rebellion was indeed broken. The two places mentioned by Gordon fell in due course. The »Heavenly King«, who was in Nankin, had been urged to escape, but he declined. When he saw that the end was come, he hanged all his wives and then committed suicide.

The »ever-victorious army« was soon afterwards disbanded, and Gordon returned home laden with honours. By Imperial decree he was „rewarded with a yellow riding jacket to be worn on his person, and a peacock‘s feather to be carried on his cap.“ These were distinguished honours similar to our Orders of the Garter and the Bath. He had also „bestowed on him four suits of the uniform proper to his rank of Ti-Tu, in token,“ so lams the Imperial decree, „of our favour and desire to do him honour.“ The rank of Ti-Tu, be it remarked, is the highest rank in China, next to that of the Emperor, and those who receive it are thereby constituted members of the Emperor‘s body-guard. He was also offered a large sum of money, but he refused to take it. Some time before he had written „I shall leave China as poor as I entered it,“ and he kept his word. Such disinterested conduct is almost unique.

Not only from the Chinese did his services receive recognition, but also from the Europeans in Shanghai. The merchants there presented him with an engrossed and illuminated address, in which, among other handsome things, they said: „We should alike be wanting towards you and towards ourselves were we to pass by this opportunity without expressing our appreciation and admiration of the line of conduct which you personally have pursued. In a position of unequalled difficulty, and surrounded by complications of every possible nature, you have succeeded in offering to the eyes of the Chinese nation, no less by your loyal and, throughout, disinterested line of action, than

by your conspicuous gallantry and talent for organisation and command, the example of a foreign officer serving the Government of this country with honourable fidelity and undeviating respect.“

One who served under Gordon in the »ever-victorious army« has written of him as follows:

„What perhaps is most striking in Gordon‘s career in China is the entire devotion with which the native soldiery served him, and the implicit faith they had in the result of operations in which he was personally present In their eyes, General Gordon was literally a magician, to whom all things were possible. They believed him to bear a charmed life; and a short stick or rattan cane which he invariably carried about, and with which he always pointed in directing the fire of artillery or other operations, was firmly looked on as a wand or talisman. These things have been repeated to me again and again by my own men, and I know they were accepted all over the contingent. These notions, especially the men‘s idea that their General had a charmed existence, were substantially aided by Gordon‘s constant habit, when the troops were under fire, of appearing suddenly, usually unattended, and calmly standing in the very hottest part of the fire. Besides his favourite cane, he carried nothing except field-glasses, never a sword or revolver; or, rather, if the latter, it was carried unostentatiously and out of sight.“

Such then in brief is the story of Gordon in China, and of the exploits and experiences which obtained for him the name, by which he came to be popularly known, of »Chinese Gordon«.

Chapter VII

Good Deeds at Gravesend.

On Gordon‘s return home he might have been lionised as a hero—as, indeed, the hero he was—but that was distasteful to him. He carefully avoided all demonstrations, being content quietly to rejoin his corps, and begin duty again as a Royal Engineer. He received an appointment at Gravesend, his special duties being in connection with the Thames defences. This was in the year 1865. In the meantime he had been made a Colonel.

Gordon is now to appear in a somewhat new light to us. Hitherto we have been regarding him as a man of war; we are now tor a time to contemplate him as a man of peace. He was pre-eminently a religious man, and this will now be seen very clearly. Free from the distractions of war, he was able to devote himself to quiet unobtrusive endeavours in the service of God and humanity at home. The poor, the sick, the unfortunate, were all the objects of his compassion, and all who were in need he was ready to help.

He was very fond of children, and was especially interested in boys who were employed on the river or on the sea. Many a little street arab he rescued from his sad and neglected condition, and put in the way of becoming a respectable and useful member of society. For the benefit of such boys he established

classes, and taught them himself to read and write. He called them his „kings," a designation probably suggested to him by his Chinese experiences. For some of them he obtained berths on board ships, not ceasing to take an interest in them, and, as far as possible, to care for them even when they were at the ends of the earth. For instance, over his mantelpiece he had a map of the world, and this map had a number of pins stuck in it. One day, a friend observing it, inquired what it meant. His reply was that the pins marked the course of his „kings" on their voyages—that „they were moved from point to point as the boys advanced, and that he prayed for them as they went day by day!" Is it any wonder that these boys loved him, or that the walls of Gravesend bore witness to their affection in legends chalked in bold characters, like „GOD BLESS THE KERNEL," and „C. G. IS A JOLLY GOOD FELLER"?

Says one who knew him: „The workhouse and the infirmary were his constant haunts, and of pensioners he had a countless number all over the neighbourhood. Many of the dying sent for him in preference to the clergy, and ever ready was he to visit them, no matter what weather or at what distance. ... All eating and drinking he was indifferent to. Coming home with us one afternoon late, we found his tea waiting for him—a most unappetising stale loaf and a teapot of tea. I remarked upon the dryness of the bread, when he took the whole loaf (a small one), and crammed it into the slop-basin, and poured all the tea upon it, saying it would soon be ready for him to eat, and in half an hour it would not matter what he had eaten. He always had dry, humorous, little speeches at command that flavoured all his talk, and I remember the merry twinkle with which he told us that many of the boys, thinking that being invited to live with the Colonel meant delicate fare and luxury, were unpleasantly enlightened upon that point when they found he sat down with them to salt beef, and just the necessary food."

This latter statement, perhaps, will not be understood unless you are informed that some of his »kings«, who had need of being lodged as well as clothed and fed, Gordon used to have to live with him in his house.

You will not be surprised after this to learn that the Colonel engaged in work in Ragged and Sunday-schools. Let us now just take a peep at him in a Sunday-school. We will do so by means of a reminiscence supplied to a religious magazine by one who was a Sunday-school teacher with him. It is as follows:

> „A few young men and maidens—one of their number not out of his teens—who thought the vocation of a Sunday-school teacher the noblest upon earth—had commenced a mission school in an outlying part of the town, under the leadership of a grave and elderly man. The school premises were anything but convenient; but the funds at their disposal permitted of no other accommodation. A private house had to do duty for. a school, or rather, two rooms over an archway, next to a public-house. Small as the school was, its worthy superintendent was often sadly in need of extra help; and very clever he was in laying hands suddenly upon the unwary and benevolent who seemed likely to serve his purpose. Under these circumstances Colonel Gordon occasionally visited us. He would sit on a low hard form in one of these crowded rooms, teaching a group of urchins, on a summer afternoon, in a temperature sufficient to parboil any except the thickest-skinned. It was against the traditions to hand over the

best classes, that is, the elder classes, to any Supernumerary however distinguished; hence it came to pass that some of the youngest children fell to the Colonel‘s care. Once only was he prevailed upon to address the whole school. This function was always performed under difficulties, as only half the scholars could ever see the speaker, the two rooms being one above the other. With the scholars in the upper room, it was a case of ‹hearing a voice, but seeing no man.› To minimise the awkwardness of this arrangement, Gordon stood upon the staircase in order to be nearer to those who were yet excluded from all sight of him.

„One of his fellow-workers in the school on that occasion remembers that address, with the tout ensemble of the speaker, as if it had been delivered yesterday. We did not know then what work he had done in China, or what fame he had achieved; we knew him only as »the Colonel«, who lived in »Fort House«, and as one who was ready for every good work. But had we known it, it would have been impossible for us to have been overawed by his presence, for he was as modest as a child. And yet, standing here upon these rickety stairs, a hero disguised in the simple morning dress of a plain English gentleman, one could not fail to mark in that fine head, determined chin, and well-knit frame the presence of an uncommon man. The full light of the westering summer‘s sun fell upon him through the curtainless window of that shabby school-house, as he opened his small Bible and read as his text from this queer pulpit the words, *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

„His little sermon was slowly uttered, and with considerable hesitation, and now and again he would pause for the right word. His voice was delightfully sweet and low. The address was brightened by no illustrations; nor was it (it must be said) quite level to a child‘s mood; but one of his hearers can remember now, after twenty years, that far-away look in the speaker‘s eyes, as of one lost in wonder at the grandeur of the truth taught in the passage which he was expounding.

„The address ended, he folded his hands and prayed in the briefest and simplest manner, mere words seeming superfluous to one who knew, evidently, what it was to *dwell in God*.“

This great and good man has been called eccentric; and so he was. What is it to be eccentric? If you know the meaning of the two Latin words ex and centrum, from which the word is formed, you will not need to be told. Some of you have learned Latin at school, and know that it means *out of*, and centrum *centre*. If again, you turn to a dictionary, and look out the word „eccentric,“ you will find it having some such meanings as these attached to it—„Deviating from the centre; not having the same centre; deviating from stated methods, usual practice, or established forms.“ Yes, it must be allowed that Gordon was eccentric; not that he deviated from the true centre, but from the centre that the world had fixed. He tried to make Jesus Christ his centre, and consequently „departed from the usual course,“ and was somewhat „irregular“ and „odd.“

For instance, he had a great objection to going to the dinners of the great and wealthy, and would usually decline invitations to them. He would say, „Ask the poor and sick; don‘t ask me who have enough.“ Was not this in accordance with the teaching of Jesus, who said, „When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, call

not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.“ It is true that Jesus Himself sometimes accepted invitations from the rich, and was being entertained by „one of the chief Pharisees“ when He uttered these words; and Colonel Gordon may have forgotten that we have social duties, not only towards the poor, but towards those as well off as ourselves, or better off. At the same time we must admire his perfect honesty and consistency, and respect and love him for his unselfishness and regard for the poor.

His belief was that „he had no right to possess anything, having once given himself to God.“ On one occasion he said to a Christian lady, „You, who profess the same thing, have no right to the gold chain you wear; it ought to be sold for the poor.“ To this belief he might have been led by what the Lord said to the rich young man who came to Him as a seeker for eternal life—„Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.“ It is said, however, that „he acknowledged the difficulty of others regarding all earthly things in the light that he did.“

There is an interesting story in Mr. Egmont Hake‘s biography of him—to which I am indebted for much of what I have related—and this story I will give in Mr. Hake's own words:

> „He had a great number of medals, for which he cared nothing. There was a gold one, however, given to him by the Empress of China, with a special inscription engraved upon it, for which he had a great liking. But it suddenly disappeared; no one knew where, or how. Years afterwards it was found out, by a curious accident, that Gordon had erased the inscription, and sent the medal anonymously to Canon Miller, for the relief of the sufferers from the cotton famine at Manchester.“

This is the way in which some of his deeds of mercy were done. One day he saw a doctor‘s carriage at the door of a poor house, and, concluding that there was illness and distress in that house, when the carriage had gone, he went in to see what was the matter, and, if possible, render help. He found a man, the husband and father, ill with ague, and at once provided a few things that were sorely needed.

„I am not going to stay long this time,“ said he, „but I shall come again. I have been sent to you.“

„Sent!“ was the surprised reply.

„Yes; sent by God. None of these things happen by chance. You in your weakness need just what I can give you, and so I was made to pass your door just as the doctor left it. Don‘t you see that all this must have been arranged by One who knows all things, and directs events according to His will?“

The sick man shook his head, and the stranger, with a kindly smile, left him to think over what had been said. Other visits were paid, and other talks on religion took place; and when the sick man recovered and went to work again, it was found that in character he was a new man.

A young bricklayer, whom he had previously befriended, was taken seriously ill. He was sent to lodgings where he would be properly nursed and cared for,

the Colonel paying for the lodgings, the doctor‘s attendance, and meeting all other expenses. At length, by the physician‘s advice, the lad was removed to the infirmary, rapid consumption having set in.

„Shall I see you there, Colonel?“ asked the sufferer, with eyes which spoke his strong desire for that joy.

„Certainly,“ was the kindly response. „I have a good many friends there, and am often calling to see them.“

„I know that I am going to die.“

„But you are not afraid, for now you know Who says *I am the Resurrection and the Life*. He will be as near to you in the infirmary as here, and as near to you in death as in life.“

„Oh, yes, I know Him now.“ And so he did, for the Colonel had led him to Christ by his example and teaching.

Here is another example of Colonel Gordon‘s goodness. A boy in the employ of a tradesman in the town had robbed his master, who was very angry, and loudly declared that he would send him to prison. The poor mother was broken-hearted, but she had heard of Colonel Gordon, and knew that he was ever ready to help the distressed. So she went to him, and tearfully told her story.

„I cannot understand it, sir,“ she said. „He has always been an honest boy, and I do believe that this is the first and last time. If he could only have another chance! But if he is sent to prison I am afraid it will end in his ruin.“

„I am afraid it will,“ replied the sympathetic soldier. „I will do what I can for him. What would you like me to do?“

„Oh, sir, if you would intercede with his master, and persuade him not to send my boy to jail, I will be grateful to you all my life!“

So the Colonel went to the master, who was still very angry, and thought the boy should be punished. „What will become of the boy?“ demanded the master. „I cannot keep him here now.“

„Oh, no, of course you cannot; but if you promise not to prosecute him I will take charge of him, and, perhaps, we can make a man out of the rascal yet. At least, I should like to try, if you will let me.“

„Very well, Colonel, I will not punish him, and I hope he may repay your kindness.“

„Thank you very much!“

The boy was then spoken to earnestly, gravely, and kindly. It was pointed out to him that he had narrowly escaped being sent to prison, and that he had broken the laws of God as well as the laws of man.

„But,“ said his benefactor, „you shall have a chance; your master has kindly forgiven you, and if you ask God He will forgive you also. And I will help you, if you behave well in the future and try to do your best. Will you?“

„Yes, sir, indeed I will,“ replied the boy; and he did. The Colonel sent him to school for a year, and then got him a berth on board a ship. He is now a man, and bears a good character, while both he and his mother bless the name of Gordon.

The house in which the Colonel lived had a large garden attached to it, One day a poor man was walking in the garden and remarked—„It is a comfort to have a garden. I often think if I were rich I should like to cultivate my own potatoes and green peas. It would be a pleasure to see them grow, and see the progress they made from week to week.“

„But anybody can do that," said the Colonel. „Have you not a bit of ground attached to your house?"

„Not a square yard."

„Very well, then, I will lend you a yard or two of mine. Put what you like in that corner there, and come and gather in the crop when it is ready." This man was not the only one to whom the privilege was extended. Indeed, it was said that „nearly all the garden, a large one, was cultivated by different poor people, to whom he gave permission to plant what they chose, and to take the proceeds."

These are but samples of the good deeds of Gordon in his peaceful life at Gravesend. The testimony of a policeman of the town, to whose boy he had been kind when sick of a fever, was, „Graves-end never had, before or since, a better Christian gentleman, nor one so deeply interested in young men and lads."

Truly enough might he have made use of the words of Job—*When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me it gave witness unto me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.*

Chapter VIII

First Acquaintance with the Soudan.

In 1871 Colonel Gordon left Gravesend, to the great regret of the inhabitants, by whom he was very generally and most highly esteemed. He had been appointed British Commissioner to the European Commission of the Danube. His new sphere was Galatz, a place with which he was familiar, for he had worked there in his earlier years. Here he worked steadily and faithfully, endeavouring to remove the difficulties which impeded the navigation of the mouths of the famous river on which the town is situated.

After he had been at Galatz about a year, he met, when on a visit to Constantinople, the famous Egyptian statesman, Nubar Plsfiia,[8-2] who was looking for a successor to Sir Samuel Baker, an Englishman who for several years previously had been serving under the Egyptian Government as governor of the tribes in Upper Egypt. Nubar asked Colonel Gordon if he knew of any officer of the Engineers who would be willing to accept the appointment. The Colonel would not immediately give a reply, but at length, in July, 1873, wrote saying that, subject to the approval of the British Government, he would himself take it. The Khedive, as the ruler of Egypt is called, thereupon made application for Colonel Gordon's services, and, a favourable reply being given, the Colonel started for Cairo about the end of the year.

So our hero was appointed a governor in the Soudan, of which we have heard so much, and a second great career began thus to open before him. The Khedive told him that he should give him £10,000 a year for his services, but he refused to accept so much. „Fix your own terms, then," said the. Khedive, and Gordon said he would take £2,000 a year, as he thought that would cover his expenses.

It is necessary now that I should tell you a little about the wonderful and, at that time, but little known country with which the name of Gordon was destined to be so closely connected.

The Soudan is the name given to a vast tract of Africa, stretching from Egypt on the north to the Nyanza Lakes on the south, and from the Red Sea on the east to the outermost boundary of Darfour on the west. If you look at one of the many excellent maps of the country which have been published, you will be able to understand better how far-extending it is. It will assist you farther if I add that Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is scarcely farther from St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia, than from the extreme southern border of the Soudan. The name of the country signifies »the country of the Blacks«.

Tlie famous river Nile flows through the country, and Khartoum, the capital, stands just where two rivers, called the White Nile and the Blue Nile, meet, and join to form the great river which flows through Egypt proper, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean Sea. A large part of the country is desert, the fertile parts being confined to the course of the river, which, as you may know, periodically overflows its banks, and, on going down again, leaves a rich deposit of mud, in which the natives sow their seed.

The Soudan was first taken possession of by Egypt in 1819, when Ismail, the son of the famous Mehemet Ali, was sent by his father to establish a government in Khartoum. It was not, however, till after 1853 that the rule of Egypt extended more than 100 miles south of Khartoum. Beyond this the country was chiefly opened up by traders, who dealt in the ivory which the country produced in large quantities. These traders were not long in discovering that »black ivory« was a far more profitable commodity in which to deal than white, this black ivory being the poor black people who inhabited those regions. Hence sprang up the dreadful slave trade, which has inflicted so much misery on the country.

Some of the slave-traders became very rich. One in particular, whose name was Zebehr, rose to be so powerful that he lived in princely style, was the lord of thirty stations, and set up as the equal and rival of the Khedive himself. This opened the eyes of the Egyptian ruler, and he began to see what a peril the slave traffic was to his authority and power; so, although he had previously encouraged it, he resolved to stamp it out. It was for this purpose that he engaged the services of Colonel Gordon.

Gordon travelled by way of Suakim and Berber, leaving the latter place by boat on March 9th, 1874. His staff consisted of Romulus Gessi, an Italian, a very able and daring man, whom Gordon had known as an interpreter in the Crimea; Mr. Kemp, an engineer; Mr. Russell, son of Dr. W. H. Russell, the well-known correspondent of the Times; a Mr. Anson; a Colonel Long, an American; two young men of the name of Linant; and Abou Saoud, a man, formerly a slave-trader, whom he took with him on account of his knowledge of the country.

On arriving at Khartoum he was met by the Governor-General, who showed him much respect. Concerning his reception, he playfully wrote to a member of his family as follows:—„The Governor-General met your brother in full uniform, and he landed amid a salute of artillery, and a battalion of troops with a brass band. It was a fine sight. The day before, your brother had his trousers off, and was pulling the boat in the Nile, in spite of crocodiles, who never touch you when moving. He cannot move now without guards turning out.“ The playful

mood he was in is again manifest from the following:—„Your brother‘s title is »His Excellency Governor-Colonel Gordon, the Governor-General of the Equator«. So no one can or ought to cross it without permission of his Excellency.“

After staying a few days in Khartoum, he set out for a place called Gondoroko. The steamer went very slowly, so that he was able to notice particularly the various animals along the banks of the river— storks, monkeys, crocodiles, hippopotami, buffaloes, camelopards, &c. One night he was thinking rather pensively of dear friends at home, and of the difficulties and dangers of the task he had undertaken, when he was taken somewhat aback by hearing loud peals of laughter. Says he, „I felt put out, but the irony came only from birds, who laughed at us from the bushes in a very rude way. They are a species of stork, and seemed in capital spirits, and highly amused at anybody thinking of going up to Gondoroko with the hope of doing anything.“

After entering the Saubat river the party made the acquaintance of a tribe of people called Dinkas, black people who, for the most part, were pastoral in their habits, that is, tended flocks and herds. The chief was induced to come on board the steamer with four of his tribe. He was very polite, but his politeness was not exactly pleasant. He was „in full dress,“ says Gordon—„a necklace.“ His form of salutation was to lick the white man‘s hands, then to hold his face to his own, and make as though he was spitting. Gordon objected to the spitting, and also to his feet being kissed, but secured the gratefulness of the chief by presenting him with a lot of beads.

At last Gordon was able to write in his diary: „Gondoroko, 16th April.—Got here to-day, much to the surprise of the people, who never expected one‘s arrival at all, and did not know of my nomination.“

You will recognise the old Gravesend Gordon in the following:

> „Aug. 3.—I took a poor old bag of bones into my camp a month ago, and have been feeding her up; but yesterday she was quietly taken off, and now knows all things. She had her tobacco up to the last, and died quite quietly. What a change from her misery! I suppose she filled her place in life as well as Queen Elizabeth. .... A wretched black sister of yours is now struggling up the road, but she is such a wisp of bones that the wind threatens to overthrow her, so she has halted, preferring the rain to being cast down. I verily believe she would never get up again unhelped. I have sent her some dhoora, which will produce a spark of joy in her black and withered carcase. She has not even a cotton gown on, and I do not think her apparel would be worth one-fiftieth of a penny.
>
> „Aug. 4.—I am bound to give you the sequel of the lady whom I helped yesterday in the gale of wind. I had told my man to see her into one of the huts, and thought he had done so. The night was stormy and rainy, and when I awoke I heard often a crying of a child near my hut within the enclosure. When I got up I went out to see what it was, and, passing through the gateway, I saw your and my black sister lying dead in a pool of blood ; her black brothers had been passing and passing and had taken no notice of her. So I went and ordered her to be buried, and passed on. In the midst of the high grass was a baby about a year or so old, left by itself. It had been out all night in the rain, and had been left by its mother—

children are always a nuisance! I carried it in, and seeing the corpse was not moved, I sent again about it, and went with the men to have it buried. To my surprise and astonishment, she was alive. After a considerable trouble I got the black brothers to lift her out of the mud, poured some brandy down her throat, and got her into a hut with a fire, having the mud washed out of her sightless eyes. She was not more than sixteen years of age. There she now lies; I cannot help hoping she is floating down with the tide to her haven of rest. The babe is taken care of by another family for a certain consideration of maize per diem. I dare say you will see—in fact I feel sure you will see—your black sister some day, and she will tell you about it, and how Infinite Wisdom directed the whole affair. I know this is a tough morsel to believe, but it is true.

„Aug. 5.—The Rag is still alive. The babe, who is not a year old, seized a gourd of milk and drank it off like a man last night, and is apparently in for the pilgrimage of life. It does not seem the worse for its night out, depraved little wretch!

„Aug. 5.—Just a line. I hope you will not fret. Your black sister departed this life at 4 p.m., deeply lamented by me; not so by her black brothers, who thought her a nuisance. When I went to see her this morning I heard the ‹lamentations› of something on the other side of the hut. I went round and found one of our own species, a visitor of ten or twelve months to this globe, lying in a pool of mud. I am not sure whether he was not less in age. I said, ‹Here‘s another foundling!› and had it taken up. Its mother came up afterwards, and I mildly expostulated with her, remarking however good mud might be for the spawn of frogs, it was not good for our species. The creature drank milk after this with avidity.“

Gordon was most anxious to gain the confidence of the people. With this object in view he travelled from point to point, showing kindness to all as he went. To some he gave grain, and to others he gave employment and paid them for it. He instructed them also in the use of money. First, he gave a man so many beads for his work; next he gave him half a piastre, or one penny, and offered to sell him beads for that amount. The people soon caught the idea, and he fixed certain prices for certain things, and put together little lots for sale. In fact, as he himself says, he made a regular shop.

Gordon was particularly severe with the slave-traders, confiscating their cattle when the cattle could not be returned to their rightful owners, and either setting the slaves free and sending them home, or taking them into his own employ. One of the dealers whom he arrested was a man of the name of Nassar. He said of Nassar that he was a miserable creature, but he had one good point, for „when he was taken to prison he prayed very fervently, with the knowledge that God could help him.“

The journeys of Colonel Gordon in the wild country, and among the savage men he had to govern, were sometimes very dangerous, but his life was preserved in a most wonderful way, even when his companions were being stricken down either by disease or the bullets of foes. For example, on one occasion he had passed some thirty of his men over the river, when the natives came down upon them. Gordon at once crossed over himself. As soon as they

saw him coming they made a rush at his men, but were repulsed. He then tried to parley with them, but they would not receive his overtures. Knowing him to be the chief, they tried to surround him. He let them come quite near, and then drove them back with bullets. In the attack they were very courageous, not being deterred from coming up close by a heavy fire. Their manner of coming to close quarters was by crawling on their bellies. This made it very difficult to hit them. One of the brothers Linant had already died; the other one proposed to head a party and attempt to bum their assailants' houses. Gordon, fearing that unless he in some way overawed them they would attack the steamer, agreed to this. Accordingly, about forty men were despatched for the purpose. Unfortunately Linant and most of the party were killed. Gordon then had to get out of his position of peril as best he could. Happily, he was not further molested by the tribesmen. One man, however, a »wizard«, climbed to the top of a rock, and grinned, and jeered, and prophesied evil, while Gordon was giving his orders. The Governor took up his rifle. „I don't think that's a healthy spot from which to deliver an address," he said; and the »wizard« prophesied no more.

Sometimes he would be in peril from a different cause. At a place called Lardo, for example, during a storm, he was roused in the night by loud cries and shots close to the house. „I guessed what it was," he said, „and rushed out. Three elephants had chosen to try to land at the place cut in the bank to enable the servants to get water from the river. The sentry, however, saw them, and made them give up their intention. You see, if they landed and got frightened they would break down my house in a moment, and do a deal of damage. This is a favourite landing-place for them."

A fortnight later, as he was journeying to a place called Kerri, he had an experience which he thus describes:—„During a heavy thunderstorm to-day, while putting the side of my tent straight, I received, at the moment of a flash of lightning, a couple of severe shocks similar to what a strong electric machine would give. What an escape! The verdict on people killed by lightning was in olden times, *killed by the visitation of God*. The heathen considered death by lightning was a special mark of distinction."

After three years of travelling, negotiations, and fighting, Gordon returned to England, not having been so successful as he desired, although in various ways he had done good work. In his efforts to suppress the slave-trade he had been thwarted at almost every turn by the complicity of officials, and had been especially hampered through not having undivided authority in the Soudan, the governors of other provinces and districts, in which he had none but a moral influence, being for the most part jealous of him, and in sympathy with the traffic.

Chapter IX

Governor-General of the Soudan.

The rule of Gordon Pasha—for Gordon had been elevated to the rank of Pasha by the Khedive of Egypt—had hitherto simply extended over the equatorial provinces owning the sovereignty of the Egyptian prince. The

Governor-General of the Soudan proper was an Egyptian pasha, named Ismail Pasha Yacoub. Gordon‘s relations with this man in particular had made it impossible for him to deal successfully with the slave-trade outside his own provinces. He resolved, therefore, that unless Ismail Pasha Yacoub were removed, and his governorship transferred to him, he would not return to his work. His resolution he communicated to the Khedive, who by this time had become thoroughly convinced of the great value of the English colonel‘s services, and who, anxious to retain them, acceded to his demand. In February, 1877, the Khedive wrote to him:

> „Setting a just value on your honourable character, on your zeal, and on the great services that you have already done me, I have resolved to bring the Soudan, Darfour, and the provinces of the Equator into one great province, and to place it under you as Governor-General. As the country which you are thus to govern is so vast, you must have beneath you three vakeels (or deputy-governors), the first for the Soudan properly so called, the second for Darfour, and the third for the shores of the Red Sea and the Eastern Soudan. There are two matters to which I would draw your attention: the first, the suppression of slavery; the second, the improvement of the means of communication. As Abyssinia, for a great distance, lies along the borders of the Soudan, I beg you, when you are on the spot, to look carefully into the state of affairs there; and I give you power, should you think well, to enter into negotiations with the authorities of that kingdom, to the end that a settlement may be arrived at of the matters in dispute between us and them.“

Having been thus made supreme, Gordon set out for his province. His last words in writing from Cairo were:—„I go up alone, with an Infinite Almighty God to direct and guide me; and am glad to so trust Him as to fear nothing, and, indeed, to feel sure of success.“

Gordon determined first of all to attend to the matters in dispute with Abyssinia. The king of this country was known as King John the Second, or Johannis. He had been at war with Egypt because she had added to her dominions a country called Bogos, which he was anxious to get for himself. The Prince of Bogos, whose dominion had thus been taken away .by Egypt, was Walad el Michael. This unfortunate man had fallen into the hands of King John, and been imprisoned by him, but was released on the understanding that he would assist the Abyssinian monarch in fighting against Egypt. At first they beat the Egyptian troops, but were afterwards beaten in turn.

This was the state of things when Gordon set out for Abyssinia. Before he reached Keren, the capital of Bogos, he was met by two hundred cavalry and infantry, who were to act as his body-guard, and escort him into the city. He did not like this, and wrote:

> „I am most carefully guarded. At six yards‘ radius round this tree where I am sitting, are six or eight sentries, and the other men are in a circle round them. Now, just imagine this, and put yourself in my position. However, I know they will all go to sleep, so I do not fret myself. I can say truly, no man has ever been so forced into a high position as I have. It is irksome beyond measure. Eight or ten men to help me off my camel, as if I

were an invalid! If I walk, every one gets off and walks. So, furious, I get on again."

Outside the city the Bogos army was drawn up to receive him; drums were beaten, musicians played, and dancers danced before him. He succeeded in making an arrangement with Walad el Michael, who was made the Governor of two or three neighbouring tribes. Having, in the meantime, heard that his presence was urgently needed in Khartoum, he sent the chief general of King John with a message to his master to the effect that he must accept the conditions offered to him, and took his departure from Bogos.

He arrived in due time at Khartoum, and on May 5th was installed as Governor-General. He was expected to make a speech, but all he said was, „With the help of God I will hold the balance level." This, we are told, delighted the people immensely. He afterwards directed gifts to be distributed among the deserving poor, and in three days had given away upwards of a thousand pounds of his own money. Here, to his disgust, he had to live in a great palace, and had some two hundred servants and orderlies in attendance. His fame had preceded him, especially in reference to his readiness to attend to the people's grievances. As soon, therefore, as it became known that Gordon Pasha received the people freely, great crowds besieged him in his palace in the hope of getting a hearing. As it was impossible to see all, a box was instituted, something like a letterbox, into which petitions were put, and each case was carefully noted and considered.

He now set out for the disturbed province of Darfour. The country was in revolt, and the Egyptian soldiers in three places were besieged by the rebels in their barracks. He determined, therefore, to attempt their relief. It was a long journey to Darfour, but he was „quite comfortable," he said, „on the camel, and happier when on the march than in towns with all the ceremonies." His camel was a very fine one, and astonished the escort by the pace at which it went. Not far from the town of El Obeid this very lively camel almost brought about an accident, which Gordon would much have regretted. He says, in reference to it:—„I nearly acted as Juggernaut to a little black naked boy to-day; my camel had shaken the nosering out of its nose, and ran off with me. I could not stop it, and of course the little black ran right under the camel, who, however, did not tread on him, though it was a miracle he escaped being killed. Nothing is so perverse as a camel; when it funs away, it will go anywhere."

You have seen how he transformed the rebel Taipings into friends in China; his hope was that he would be able to make the rebel tribes on the Darfour frontier his friends in a similar way, and then afterwards lead them against such as preferred to remain in armed opposition. His hope of a bloodless victory was fulfilled, and he made peace with all the tribesmen round him. He did this by redressing their too real and palpable grievances. They had been horribly maltreated by some irregular soldiery, called Bashi-Bazouks.

„Praying for the people ahead of me," wrote he, „whom I am about to visit, gives me much strength, and It is wonderful how something seems already to have passed between us when I meet a chief (for whom I have prayed) for the first time. I have really no troops with me; but I have the Shekinah, and I do like trusting to Him, and not to men. Remember, unless He gave me the confidence, and encouraged me to trust Him, I could not do it; and so I consider that I have the earnest of success in this confidence."

Gordon was now not far from Shaka, the headquarters of the notorious Zebehr, the slave-trader, before mentioned. Zebehr himself was away in Egypt or Turkey, but his son was in charge in his absence. This son, whose name was Suleiman, had some 6,000 armed men at his back, but the intrepid Governor-General determined to beard the lion in his den, although he had only 500 soldiers, and these not to be depended on. His hope was that he should be able to reinforce his little army from the garrisons on his way. At a place called Toashia, however, where the garrison consisted of 350 men, he found them half-starved, and fit for nothing. He, therefore, sent them away to be disbanded. Then he hoped to be assisted by a sheikh, whose brother he had befriended; but again he was doomed to disappointment. He added at length to his numbers by pardoning other chiefs who had rebelled, and who professed a readiness to join him, but he felt that he could not depend upon them. In the midst of all he was surrounded by thousands of „determined blacks," who looked as if they would swallow him up. He felt that he was in a most perilous position, as indeed he was. „I prayed heartily for an issue," said he, „but it gave me a pain in the heart ... I do not fear death, but I fear, from want of faith, the results of my death—for the whole country would have risen. It is, indeed, most painful to be in such a position. It takes a year's work out of one. However, thank God, it is over, and I hope to reach Dara to-morrow."

When the Governor-General rode into Dara, the people were astonished to see him. „They had been six months without news from without," says Gordon. „It was like the relief of Lucknow."

After various trying experiences, Gordon heard that Suleiman, with his frightful six thousand, was on the point of attacking the Government at Dara. He had previously formed the plan of subduing the slaver, not by arms, but by his own strong spirit. So without more ado he mounted his camel, and, unarmed, and virtually alone, rode off to the slaver's camp. „I rode," says he, „to the tent in the camp; the whole body of chiefs were dumbfoundered at my coming among them. After a glass of water I went back, telling the son of Zebehr to come with his family to my divan. They all came, and, sitting there in a circle, I gave them, in choice Arabic, my ideas: that they meditated a revolt; that I knew it, and that they should now have my ultimatum, viz., that I would disarm them and break them up. They listened in silence, and then went off to consider what I said. They have just now sent in a letter stating their submission, and I thank God for it. ... The sort of stupefied way in which they heard me go to the point about their doings, the pantomime of signs, the bad Arabic, etc., was quite absurd. Fancy, the son of Zebehr only three days ago took his pistol and fired three shots close to my cavass, because the poor fellow, who was ill, did not get up when he came to him.

„You should have seen his face when I told him all this, when he protested his fidelity. However, I said it was all forgiven."

The son of Zebehr became afterwards furious with himself for having thus submitted. He waxed very bold,.and demanded to have rich robes and a governorship given him. He was informed that until he had gone to Cairo and saluted the Khedive, or given some other proof of his fidelity, no such place as he requested would be given him. Gordon used to speak of this impudent young Arab as the »Cub«, and after delivering his message to the chiefs who had come as the messengers of Zebehr's son, he turned to one of them and asked whether he was a father. The chief replied he was. Thereupon Gordon said, „Then do

you not think a good flogging would do the »Cub« good?“ The chief said he thought it would.

Soon after this, Gordon determined to go to Shaka and make the submission of Suleiman as complete as possible. The slaver came out with his chiefs to meet him, and showed great reverence. He said that Gordon was his father, and he wished him to make his home with him. The Governor-General accepted the invitation, although to do so was to put himself in much peril. His very boldness seems to have confounded and paralysed these savage men. He made himself quite at home, and wrote a letter from the »Cave of Adullam«, as he called the slaver‘s retreat. „I am in the son‘s house,“ he wrote. „He never used to let any one sit in his presence, and must be shocked at the familiarity with which every one was treated by me. He is sitting out in the verandah—I expect, to excite my pity. However, a short diet of humble pie will not be bad for him. What an amount of trouble he has given me and every one!“

He only stayed two days with Suleiman, and no doubt this was fortunate, for he afterwards discovered that the slave-dealers had been meditating an attempt to make him prisoner.

It was not long after this that Suleiman broke out into open revolt, and proclaimed himself lord of a large tract of country called the Bahr Gazelle. Gordon had his hands full with other matters, but he at once despatched his trusty lieutenant, Gessi Pasha, with a military force, to suppress the rebellion.

Several battles were fought, in one of which, although Suleiman and his hordes fought with great bravery, they lost a thousand men killed. Gessi was himself several times in much danger, owing to the smallness of his force as compared to the numbers Suleiman could bring against him; and also in consequence of his ammunition running short. But at length he proved entirely successful, broke the rebellion, and took the rebel slave-trader prisoner. Suleiman was tried by court-martial as a rebel: and for his many crimes against humanity, as a kidnapper of men, women, and children, and for selling them into slavery, as well as for being a rebel against the Government, was condemned to death and shot.

How richly those who engaged in the inhuman traffic of slave-dealing deserved condign punishment a few facts will show. These facts I will give in Gordon‘s own words. He says, referring to the large numbers of slaves he encountered, and released, on his marches about the country: „We must have caught 2,000 in less than nine months; and I expect we did not catch one-fifth of the caravans.“ „At Edowa, a party of seven slave-dealers, with twenty-three slaves, were captured and brought to me, together with two camels. Nothing could exceed the misery of these poor wretches. Some were children of not more than three years old; they had come across that torrid zone from Shaka, a journey from which I on my camel shrink.“ „I hear that Kalaka is in a great state, for they know of my coming. One of the slave-dealers shot a man, for which I will shoot him when I get to Kalaka. … There must have been a thousand slaves in this den. … I arrived at Toashia, and found that there were neither slave-dealers nor slaves! So said Abel Bey. However, by great menaces, I soon had 100 slave-dealers, fifty donkeys and camels, and 300 slaves captured. The number of skulls along the road is appalling. The number of slaves captured during this campaign must have been 1,700. They are delighted, and are mostly women and children. … From Oomchanga to Toashia—during, say, a week—we must have captured from 500 to 600. I suppose we may consider that

nearly that number must have been passing every week for the last year and a half or two years, along this road. And this during my tenure of office. The slaves just captured have been four or five days without water. They were in the most terrible distress. I have made a calculation of the loss of life in Darfour during the years 1875—1879. It comes to 16,000 Egyptians, and 50,000 natives of Darfour. Add to this the loss of life in the Bahr Gazelle—some 15,000—and you will have a fine total of 81,000, and this exclusive of the slave trade, which you may put down at 80,000 to 100,000."

Every caravan route was lined with human bones, bleaching in the sun. Gordon had great piles of the skulls made as monuments of the horrible cruelty of the slavers. Is it any wonder that his soul burned with righteous wrath against the human vultures who thus so fearfully preyed upon their fellows, or that he should have written, „I declare, if I could stop this traffic I would willingly be shot this night."

After the breaking up of Suleiman's gang, Gordon, at the Khedive's request, undertook a mission to King John of Abyssinia, who was still menacing the Egyptian dominions, and was not in a very amiable mood. The King received him very coldly, and declined to have much to do with him. Just as he was leaving he was treacherously arrested. The following amusing story is told of the way in which Gordon conquered the King:

> „When Gordon Pasha was lately taken prisoner by the Abyssinians, he completely checkmated King John. The King received his prisoner sitting on his throne, or whatever piece of furniture did duty for that exalted seat, a chair being placed for the prisoner considerably lower than the seat on which the King sat. The first thing the Pasha did was to seize this chair, place it alongside of his Majesty, and sit down on it; the next, to inform him that he.met him as an equal, and would only treat him as such. This somewhat disconcerted his sable Majesty; but, on recovering himself, he said, ‹Do you know, Gordon Pasha, that I could kill you on the spot if I liked?› ‹I am perfectly well aware of it, your Majesty,› said the Pasha; ‹do so at once if it is your royal pleasure; I am ready.› This disconcerted the King still more, and he exclaimed, ‹What! ready to be killed?›
>
> „‹Certainly,› replied the Pasha; ‹I am always ready to die, and, so far from fearing your putting me to death, you would confer a favour on me by so doing, for you would be doing that which I am precluded by my religious scruples from doing for myself; you would relieve me from all the troubles and misfortunes which the future may have in store for me.› This completely staggered King John, who gasped out in despair, ‹Then my power has no terror for you?›
>
> „‹None whatever,› was the Pasha's laconic reply. His Majesty, it is needless to add, instantly collapsed."

Fortunately Gordon was able to effect his escape. He had managed to send a telegram to the Khedive, asking him to send help to him at Massowa, a port in the Red Sea, for which he had determined to make. He reached Massowa in safety, but found that his appeal to the Khedive had been in vain. Happily, however, the English gunboat Seagull was there, and it was with joy and thankfulness that Gordon went on board to find a refuge in her. He immediately sent off the following telegram to the Khedive:—„I asked your Highness, when I

was taken by King John, on 14th November, by telegraph, to send a regiment and a steamer with two guns to Massowa. Your Highness has not done so, and had not the English gunboat been here the place might have been sacked."

Before setting out for Abyssinia he had resolved to retire from his position as Governor-General of the Soudan, partly because of events in Egypt, where the Khedive Ismail had been deposed in favour of his son Tewfik, and partly because his health had been giving way, and he felt he needed rest. He therefore at once sent in his resignation, and returned to England. This was at the end of the year 1879.

Chapter X

Now Here, Now There.

Colonel Gordon, otherwise Chinese Gordon, otherwise Gordon Pasha, was now in England again. And right glad he was, after all his troubles and toils, to enjoy rest for a brief space in his native land, among beloved members of his family in Southampton and at Chelsea. But it was only for a brief space. Men of the stamp of Gordon are always wanted, and in more directions than one.

A new Indian Viceroy had been appointed, in the person of the Marquis of Ripon. The appointment created some surprise, and in some circles disappointment and condemnation, for this nobleman was a Roman Catholic. The surprise, perhaps, was still greater when it became known that the new Viceroy had offered to Colonel Gordon the opportunity of becoming his private secretary, and that the Colonel had accepted the position. Both the Marquis and the Colonel were men of strong religious character, but of very different beliefs, and the connection of the two so closely seemed, for other reasons as well as that, to be altogether incongruous.

Gordon proceeded to India, but had not been there long before he discovered that he had made a mistake. There were those who saw from the first that the move was a false one. It seemed absurd that the »uncrowned king«, as he had been styled, the man who had been virtually the sovereign of the Soudan, should be engaged in mere office work. He felt that it was his duty to resign his appointment, and at once return home. It was not lack of sympathy with Lord Ripon in the least that induced him to take this step, but well, Gordon shall tell the reason himself. He wrote:

> „In a moment of weakness I took the appointment of private secretary to Lord Ripon, the new Governor-General of India. No sooner had I landed in Bombay than I saw that, in my irresponsible position, I could not hope to do anything really to the purpose, in the face of the vested interests out there. Seeing this, and seeing, moreover, that my views were so diametrically opposed to those of the official classes, I resigned. Lord Ripon's position was certainly a great consideration to me. It was assumed by some that my views of the state of affairs were the Viceroy's, and thus I felt that I should do him harm by staying with him. We parted perfect friends. The brusqueness of my leaving was unavoidable, inasmuch as my stay would have put me into the possession of secrets of State that—

considering my decision eventually to leave— I ought not to know. Certainly I might have stayed a month or two—had a pain in the hand, and gone quietly; but the whole duties were so distasteful, that I felt, being pretty callous as to what the world says, it was better to go at once."

The „pain in the hand" is a sarcastic reference to the paltry excuses of ill-health which are sometimes made by official, and other people, to veil the real reasons for their action. Such finesse, to give it no harsher name, was foreign to Gordon's nature, he was so open and honest. This very openness and honesty form not the least admirable trait in his character.

Gordon was now once more a free man. He could not, however, remain inactive. Zanzibar was in his thoughts, and he was meditating starting thither to assist the Sultan of that country in his campaign against the slave-trade, when a communication reached him from his old companion in arms, Li Hung Chang, inviting him again to China He applied to the authorities at home for permission to go, but was refused. It was not known in what capacity he wished to serve, and as there was then some probability of a war between Russia and China, our War Office very prudently determined that it could not suffer this country to be embroiled in the person of one of its officers. Gordon then sent in his resignation, which was not accepted, but permission was given him to go to China on condition that he did not accept any military appointment. As he wished to preserve China from committing herself to what he felt would be a disastrous conflict with Russia, he had no difficulty in complying with the condition laid down. Before setting out for China he said, „My fixed desire is to persuade the Chinese not to go to war with Russia, both in their own interests and those of the world. ... Imbued as I am with only a small degree of admiration for military exploits, I esteem it a far greater honour to promote peace than to gain any paltry honour in a wretched war." These are words worthy of one who was a philanthropist and Christian, as well, as a soldier and a ruler of men.

In China Gordon was very warmly, and even affectionately, received. Li Hung Chang was so overcome with joy, that when he saw him he fell on his neck and kissed him. Largely through his influence peace was preserved. At the same time he gave useful advice as to the proper equipment of the army and the system of tactics to be taught.

He was soon back in England again. But repose was not in him. He went to Ireland, which at that time was very disturbed, and studied the condition of that country. He then visited the King of the Belgians, who was preparing to send an expedition to the Congo, and wished him to take command of it. For a short time he enjoyed a real holiday on the lovely shores of the Lake of Lausanne. Then, having been appointed Commanding Royal Engineer in the Mauritius, he went there. Here he stayed for several months, and did good work in making various plans for the defence of our possessions in the Indian Ocean. While in the Mauritius he was raised to the rank of Major-General.

In an empire so immense as that of England, containing so many millions of people of different races, complications are constantly arising. South Africa, in particular, has frequently been a source of anxiety and trouble. About this time there was a difficulty with the natives of a large tract of country called Basutoland, and it was thought by the authorities that General Gordon was the man to deal with it. Accordingly a telegram was despatched to him, asking him

if he would place his services at the disposal of the Cape Government. He assented, at once started for the Cape, and on the 1st of July, 1882, took over the command of the colonial forces in South Africa.

In company with the Secretary for Native Affairs, he visited Basutoland, in the hope of settling the dispute. Most of the chiefs professed to be desirous of peace, and condemned the conduct of their brother chief, Masupha, who had been the leader in the rebellion. Next, Gordon had an interview with this redoubtable chief himself, but even while the negotiations were going on news arrived that another chief, named Lerothodi, was on his way, in the interests of the Government, to attack Masupha. This greatly enraged the latter, and he at once broke off the conference. Gordon, too, was displeased that such a thing should have been allowed at such a moment, and sent in his resignation. Thus ended his brief career in South Africa. He had not been successful, for he had not been allowed a free hand, and this to a man like him, whose plans were usually so original, was a necessary condition of success.

After again spending a short time in England, he started for the Holy Land. Here he occupied himself in making surveys of Jerusalem, and in an examination of the various holy places. He was greatly interested, too, in the proposition to connect the river Jordan by canal with the Red Sea.

On returning home. General Gordon again had his thoughts directed to the Congo. There a great work had been accomplished by the intrepid explorer, Henry M. Stanley. The foundations of a new state had gradually been laid. All this had been done at the expense, and under the direction of the Belgian king, who was anxious to enlist the services of a man who had had so large an experience in dealing with African tribes as Gordon. At length the latter engaged to go to the Congo, and was even on his way, having got to Brussels to receive his final instructions, when he was stopped by a telegram from the government.

Chapter XI

Gordon to the Rescue.

Who has not heard of the Mahdi? There are few in the English-speaking world who have not. He has made for himself a name in history. For many a long day he will be remembered in England, for he compelled her to spend millions of money, to fight several bloody battles, and to sacrifice not a few of her noble sons, and among them some of the noblest. The real name of the Mahdi was Mohammed Achmet. I say was, for happily the rumours which came in 1885, to the effect that he was dead, and which most people regarded as mere rumours having no foundation in fact, seem to have been true. The fanatical troubler is, apparently, now no more. He was born in the province of Dongola, in the Soudan, and his father was a carpenter. One day he received a severe beating from an uncle, to whom he was apprenticed, and thereupon he ran away. At length he found his way to Khartoum, which is a long way from Dongola, and many a weary mile he must have trudged before he got there. Having arrived at Khartoum, he went and joined a free school which was kept there by a faki, or learned man, who, although he was not possessed of wealth,

and charged nothing for instructing his pupils, was able to dispense large bounties to the poor, as well as have no lack himself. The reason was that he claimed to be a descendant of the great false prophet Mohamed, and was regarded as a holy man, on which account pious Mohamedans made him large gifts.

How young Mohammed Achmet managed to live while he was in Khartoum cannot be said. Probably he was fed, and otherwise cared for by the faki, his master. After a time he left, and went to a place called Berber, where he joined another free school, and completed his education, which was both secular and religious; that is, he was not only taught to read and write, but was instructed in the doctrines and laws of Mohammedanism. After this he joined himself to another faki, who rejoiced in the name of Nur-el-Daim, which means Continuous Light. By this man he was ordained to be a faki himself. After this he began to dream and scheme. He went to an island called Abbas, in the White Nile. Having made for himself a cave, he set up for being a very holy man. He would fast, and burn incense, and pray, repeating the name of God for hours together, which was thought to be a very meritorious thing.

In Mohammedan countries a belief had long existed that on the completion of twelve hundred years from the Hegira, or Flight of Mohammed, a new leader, or Mahdi, would appear. The twelve hundred years were reckoned to come to an end on the 12th of November, 1882. In view of this, Mohammed Achmet gave out that he had a divine mission to establish universal law, religion, equality, and community of goods, and to destroy all who did not believe in him, whether Christian, Mohammedan, or Pagan; that, in fact, he was the Mahdi who had been expected. A great many people believed in him and followed him. He became presently so powerful that the Egyptian Government sent troops against him, but these he utterly defeated, the result being that many more joined themselves to him. Again and again Egyptian soldiers were sent against him, and again and again they were defeated. He had had so many successes that he became quite bold, and laid siege to the town of El Obeid, which was garrisoned by 6,000 men. A very determined attack was made upon it, but this time he was defeated. He made a second and a third attack, and on both occasions was defeated. It is said that on the third occasion as many as 10,000 of his men were slain. Let us hope that is an exaggerated estimate, for the thought of such slaughter is something dreadful to think of. Certain it is, however, taking into account all the various campaigns which were undertaken against him, and reckoning the losses on both sides, that not simply tens of hundreds, but tens of thousands were slain in them. Indeed, it may be said that the Mahdi has occasioned as much bloodshed and misery in the Soudan as the leader of the Taipings did in China.

The Mahdi terribly avenged himself for his losses before long; for he not only took El Obeid, with great slaughter, but when an Egyptian army, 11,000 strong, under Colonel Hicks, or Hicks Pasha, a retired Indian officer, was sent against him, he defeated and utterly annihilated it. The battle of Kashgill, in which Colonel Hicks was killed, was fought on November 5th. The very next day another battle was fought at Tokar, in another part of the Soudan, also with disastrous results. An Egyptian force, with which was Consul Moncrieff, an English official, was sent to relieve the Tokar garrison, but it was utterly routed by Osman Digna, one of the Mahdi‘s lieutenants, and Moncrieff was himself slain.

When things had come to this pass, the English Government, which, in consequence of certain things I need not detail, had come to be largely responsible for the direction of Egyptian affairs, advised the Khedive and his ministers to give up the Soudan. But there was this difficulty—there were in the Soudan thousands of Egyptians, soldiers and civil servants, with their wives and children, and it was necessary, if possible, to get them out in safety. The Government was greatly perplexed, but presently the cry was raised for Gordon. The secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society tells how „an eminent person, well known in the philanthropic world," wrote to him concerning Gordon, who was at the time quietly living at Jaffa, in the following terms:

> „Would that an angel would stand at Earl Granville's side, and say unto him, ‹And now send men to Joppa, and call for one—Gordon. He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.›"

This feeling soon became very general. One newspaper, in particular, gave expression to public opinion when it wrote:—„Why not send Chinese Gordon, with full powers, to Khartoum, to assume absolute control of the territory, to treat with the Mahdi, to relieve the garrisons, and do what can be done, to save what can be saved from the wreck in the Soudan? There is no necessity to speak of the pre-eminent qualifications which he possesses for the work. They are notorious, and are as undisputed as they are indisputable. ... No man can deny the urgent need for the presence of such a man, with a born genius for command, an unexampled capacity for organising »ever-victorious armies«, and a perfect knowledge of the Soudan and its people. Why not send him out, with carte-blanche to do the best that can be done? He may not be able, single-handed, to reduce that raging chaos to order, but the attempt IS worth making, and if it is to be made it will have to be made at once."

Meanwhile, as I have already said, General Gordon had engaged with the King of the Belgians to go to the Congo. He was in Brussels, and on the very point of starting, when a telegram from the Government was received by him, recalling him to London. On the 18th of January, 1884, the news was flashed through the country, „Gordon is going to Khartoum." The intelligence was everywhere hailed with satisfaction. The Times, which has so frequently, and with so much fidelity, reflected the feeling of the country, said:—„It is impossible to exaggerate the feelings of relief and satisfaction universally inspired by the knowledge that General Gordon has undertaken the pacification of the Soudan."

On arriving in London, Gordon had a long interview with members of the Cabinet, and, having received his instructions, he expressed his readiness to start by that same night's mail. So hurried was his departure, that much of his baggage had to be sent after him. He was accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, of the 4th Hussars, who had been on duty at Khartoum the year before. The General had met him, so it has been said, at one of the London clubs, and, struck with his evident ability, felt that he was just the man to give him eflective assistance in his diflicult task.

But two days were spent in Cairo, where he received his final instructions and the firman constituting him, a second time, Governor-General of the Soudan; and on Jan. 26th he took train for Assouan, en route for Khartoum. At

Assouan he took steamer for Wady Haifa, and from Wady Haifa he had to journey on camel-back across the desert.

Here I will relate a little incident which shows very beautifully General Gordon‘s kind thoughtful-ness for others, even when oppressed with the weightiest cares and responsibilities. When he was at Jaffa, there was a native pastor who had a son employed in the telegraph office at Gaza. For some reason or other the lad was dismissed, and, as far as could be discovered, harshly and unjustly so. General Gordon, under whose notice the case was brought, sympathised with the dismissed lad and his friends, and said, „At present I have no influence in Egypt; the Khedive is quite against me; but send the boy to Cairo, and I will see what I can do.“ Subsequently, on his arrival in Cairo, much as he had to engross him, and little as was the time he had in which to attend to most important affairs, he did not forget the Jaffa lad, but went to the telegraph office and obtained for him a situation at a considerably higher salary than he had received in Palestine.

Great was the anxiety concerning Gordon when it was known that, almost alone, he had struck out into the pathless desert. He had with him a large sum of money, no less than £40,000, with which to pay the
troops, and it was feared that he would be robbed, and taken prisoner, or murdered. Once, indeed, a rumour came to the effect that he had fallen into the hands of the foe, but happily the rumour was unfounded, and. at length a telegram came announcing his arrival at the Soudan capital in safety.

Meanwhile, on Feb. 4th, another Egyptian force, numbering 3,500 men, under Baker Pasha, a very able and brave officer, who had been a colonel of Hussars in the English army, made another attempt to relieve the garrison of Tokar, but was utterly defeated and routed. The Egyptians proved themselves to be the most despicable cowards, throwing down their arms and running away, or crouching to their foes for mercy, only to be speared. Soon after this came the news that the neighbouring garrison of Sinkat, in an attempt to cut their way through the beleaguering rebels, had been completely slaughtered and destroyed. For some time previous the English Government had been called upon to send help to these sorely-pressed men, but they turned a deaf ear, and when the news of these disasters came, a wave of indignation passed over the country, to which the Government was obliged to yield.

Just at this time I was one day in a restaurant, when sitting opposite to me were two gentlemen, who, like everybody else, were discussing events in Egypt. One, like the majority of men, was severely blaming the English Ministry for want of decision and states-manship. The other, a partisan of the Ministry, was saying what he could in their defence, but it was evidently in a very half-hearted way. On his mentioning Gordon as having been sent by the Government, his opponent exclaimed, „He there, now, is an Englishman if you like!“ This was the general sentiment. It was felt that our statesmen were not animated with the spirit becoming Englishmen, and the great traditions of England‘s past. It was felt, too, that Gordon alone redeemed England in the eyes of the world; the nation, consequently, turned towards him with affection and admiration.

Not only did Gordon captivate the hearts of his countrymen by his bravery, but he commended himself to the Christian part of the nation by his unaffected and manly piety. One morning, while he was still speeding on his way to Khartoum, the placard of a London newspaper appeared with these words in

large letters upon it: „Gordon asks for the Prayers of the People of England.“ He was not ashamed to acknowledge in Whom he trusted, nor Whose servant he was. In this respect as well as others he is an example to you, English boys and girls, who are to be the Englishmen and Englishwomen of the future.

I have said that the Government was compelled to yield before the indignation of the country. General Graham with an English force was now sent to relieve Tokar. This time the Arabs had to encounter, not a pack of worthless Egyptians, but disciplined English soldiers, and in a desperate battle at Teb, on Feb. 29th, they were defeated with great loss. Another battle was fought at Tamai on March 13th, and again they were routed and put to flight. These victories it was hoped would prove a death-blow to the Mahdi in that part of the Soudan.

Gordon, then, arrived safely at Khartoum. On his arrival he said „I come without soldiers, but with God on my side, to redress the evils of the Soudan.“ He invited the people to come to the palace and state their grievances, admitting the poor as freely as the rich. He found that many were suffering from the burden of taxation laid upon them, and that they feared being called upon to pay their arrears of taxes. Thereupon he sent for the Government books recording those arrears, and made a bonfire of them in front of the palace. „Now,“ said he, „we will have no more of the whip. No one else is going to be bastinadoed; so bring all the courbashes and implements of punishment, and we will make a grand fire of them also.“

Bastinadoing, I should explain, is the whipping of the bare feet—a punishment of great torture. The courbash is an instrument for flogging, answering to the cat-o‘-nine-tails, which used to be so commonly employed in inflicting punishment even in England.

The prison was visited, and all except undoubted criminals, who had richly deserved to be kept in durance, and whom it would have been dangerous to set free, were given their liberty. One poor old man had been so severely bastinadoed, by the previous Governor‘s orders, some six weeks before, that the skin was all torn off* and the sinews exposed. He had to be carried into Gordon‘s presence, for he was quite unable to walk. The Governor-General was very angry, and declared that such cruelty should not go without the punishment which it merited. He telegraphed to the authorities at Cairo to stop £<^o(11-3) of the ex-Governor‘s pay, which was to be paid to the old man as some compensation for the injuries he had received. If the ex-Governor objected to this, he was to be sent to Khartoum to be tried.

Very soon, however, the brave man‘s difficulties commenced. The rebels were gradually coming nearer the city. A small town, named Halfiyeh, a few miles away, was surrounded by 4,000 of the enemy. This town contained 800 faithful men, and the General felt they must be befriended. The enemy had blockaded the place, and he tried to run the blockade with one or more of his steamers, but did not succeed. He now determined on attacking the besiegers, both on land and from the river by guns from the steamers. This attack ended in victory. The garrison was brought away, together with large numbers of camels and horses, and a large supply of arms and ammunition. Mr. Frank Power, the correspondent of the Times, who was in the city, stated that the expedition returned amid such rejoicings as had not been known in Khartoum for many years.

After this success came a reverse. The Arabs were gathering in large numbers on the banks of the river, and firing on the palace and into the city. The General, therefore, organised another sortie, as these sallies are called, in which Egyptian troops and Bashi-Bazouks, commanded by their own officers, took part. He did not himself go with the force, but watched it from the top of the palace, and with a glass observed what took place. It was 2,000 strong, but it was completely routed, and this in consequence, partly, of the treachery of the men in command. These men, who were riding in front of the force, as soon as they saw the enemy, charged back upon their own men and broke their formation. There were slain of the Egyptians 200 men, while the rebels lost only four. As the soldiers were everywhere crying out that they had been betrayed by their own officers, and were demanding vengeance, Gordon had the accused men tried by court-martial. Two of them, Hassan Pasha and Said Pasha, whose guilt seemed clear, were condemned to death, and shot by the men whom they had so shamefully betrayed.

Mr. Hake says:—„The scenes at Khartoum were, during this time, full of interest and excitement. Every day the palace was shelled, or pock-marked with rifle-bullets; but the General, though he spent the greater part of the time in his verandah, was untouched. Many fell about him, some at his feet, but the old charm was still his."

Khartoum was now being rapidly hemmed in. Again and again Gordon appealed for help, but no help came, nor even the promise of help. He asked that a part of General Graham's force, after they had defeated the rebels at Teb and Tamai, should be sent on to Berber, but this was refused. On his old principle of turning enemies into friends, and making a good use of them afterwards, he asked that Zebehr, the old slave-king, should be sent to him, nominated as his successor in the Governor-Generalship, knowing as he did the ability and great influence of the man; but this was refused. He asked that Turkish troops, 3,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, should be allowed him, but this, too, was refused. Everything was refused, and it looked as though he was being abandoned, and must either extricate himself or perish. All the questions which were put to the Government in reference to him, in Parliament, seemed to be treated lightly. Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and Earl Granville, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared that Gordon was in no danger, and that he could leave Khartoum whenever he pleased. This was true of the early part of the weary twelve months that Gordon spent in the fated city; but he was too noble, too chivalrous, to abandon the men who had stood by him and incurred peril and loss for him, and resisted every temptation to escape from the city and stealthily save himself. He elected to remain, and, if necessary, die, leaving to the un-English Englishmen—un-English at least in this respect, however English and noble they may be in others—who at the time held the helm of affairs the, to use his own words, „indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons" of the Soudan.

Popular feeling.was roused, and found vent in a meeting in St. James's Hall, on May 8th, when the Earl of Cadogan presided, and the following resolution was passed:—„That this meeting condemns the abandonment of General Gordon by her Majesty's Ministers as dishonourable to them, and discreditable to the country." The feeling would have been much more intense and general but for the fact that the Government persisted in saying that Gordon was in no danger; They were better informed, they said, than other people, and they

would move when it became necessary. This, of course, tended to keep the people quiet, for none could deny that they were, or at least ought to have been, better informed than others, and their conduct could only be understood on the supposition that they had knowledge of facts as to the General's position which the nation had not, and which it was not politic to disclose.

Chapter XII

The Closing Tragedy.

As no help came, and his telegrams and letters seemed to fail to reach their destination, Gordon sent, while he knew it was still possible, Colonel Stewart and Mr. Power down the river in one of his steamers, that they might enlighten the world outside as to the exact state of things. He had heard nothing for a long time from the Government, and that was a reason for presuming that the Government did not hear from him, that his communications failed to reach their destination. No doubt if the Colonel and the Correspondent had got down in safety they would have told such a story as would have ensured succour being sent with all speed, for the nation would have taken the matter into its own hands; but, alas! they were foully murdered on the way.

At last, in the autumn of the year 1884, Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues made up their minds to send an expedition to Khartoum to rescue Gordon and the garrison. Gordon, however, as we now know, would not have it that it was to rescue him, but the garrison. He called himself Relief Expedition No. 1, and as he had failed Relief Expedition No. 2 became necessary, both having the same object. „I will not be the rescued lamb," he said.

The command of the expedition was given to Lord Wolseley, one of the most distinguished and successful of British Generals. He chose to take his men up the Nile in boats specially constructed for the purpose. The task proved to be one of great difficulty, the boats having to be hauled by main force over the cataracts which at intervals obstruct the navigation of the river. The soldiers, however, worked with a will, and all that it was possible for men to do they did. In a general order to the troops on Dec. 1st, the General said:

> „The physical objects which impede rapid progress are considerable; but who cares for them when we remember General Gordon and his garrison are in danger? Under God, their safety is now in your hands. Come what may, we must save them.
>
> „British soldiers and sailors, it is needless to say more!"

In order to save time, Lord Wolseley abandoned the river route for a part of his army, and sent it across the great Bayuda Desert, under General Sir Herbert Stewart. The place it was to make for was Metemmeh, whither Gordon had sent some of his steamers to meet it. Before the force got there two sanguinary battles—those of Abu Klea and Gubat—were fought, and the brave and skilful General who led it was himself mortally wounded.

When the good news reached England of the brilliant victories of her gallant sons, and of Gordon's steamers being found at Metemmeh, and a message to

the effect that Khartoum was „all right," there was much joy and thankfulness. It was felt that Wolseley and Gordon had joined hands, and that practically Khartoum was relieved. Everybody anticipated with certainty that the next news would be that English soldiers were in the city, and the heroic defender safe. Alas! the next news was very different. It was that the city had been betrayed, and was in the Mahdi's hands, while the fate of Gordon was unknown. Such news was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. The utmost consternation and sorrow prevailed. It was „a day of darkness, and of gloominess, and of thick darkness." Every true English heart mourned as for a personal and heavy loss. Long will that cruel »Black Thursday«, February the 6th, when the sad intelligence was made known, live in England's memory.

From more detailed information which came afterwards, it appears that the Mahdi's people were admitted to Khartoum at ten o'clock on the night of Jan. 29th. The traitor, it is said, who let them in was Faragh Pasha, a rascal against whom treason had before been proved, and who had been condemned to death, but whom Gordon had pardoned. Well would it have been if his vile blood had been spilled, if he was indeed the traitor he is said to have been, that nobler blood and the lives of innocent men, women, and children might have been saved. Gordon appears to have been shot in the street as he was hurrying to take what measures still seemed possible. All the white people, young and old, were massacred, and their bodies thrown into the river.

Such was the account of the way in which the city fell, which was current in this country for some time; but a report furnished to the English Government by Major Kitchener, and published on October 3rd, 1885, gives a different version of it According to the gallant major, who certainly had such opportunities for learning the truth on the subject as few men had, famine was the real conqueror of Gordon and Khartoum. He argues that the stores which the General has stated in his diary the city contained on December 14th, must have been „almost if not quite exhausted about January 1st." Somewhere about January 6th, Gordon, seeing that the garrison were reduced to great want for food, issued a proclamation, giving permission to any who wished to go over to the Mahdi to do so. A great number availed themselves of this permission, and, with his usual humanity, and concern for the people who had been looking up to him and trusting him so long, Gordon wrote letters to the Mahdi, asking him to protect and feed these poor Moslems, as he himself had done. In the month of September, there were 34,000 people in the town, but it is estimated that after this exodus there could only have remained about 14,000.

Not far from Khartoum was a fort, called Omdurman. This had been garrisoned by Gordon's men from the beginning of the siege; but on or about January 13th it fell into the hands of the rebels. This was a sore discouragement and heavy blow to the garrison of Khartoum. On the 18th, as the Mahdi's men had on the south side approached very near to the fortifications, a sortie was then made which led to desperate fighting. About 200 of Gordon's men were killed, and large numbers of the Mahdi's troops. After this the stout-hearted General addressed his troops, praising them for the splendid resistance they had made up till that time, and exhorting them to do their utmost to hold out, as relief was near. The English, he told them, might arrive any day, and then all would be well. He also visited the various posts, and personally encouraged the soldiers to stand firm. At this time, however, they were all reduced to a terrible condition from lack of food. Most of the donkeys, dogs, cats, rats, &c., had been

eaten, while the staple food now was a species of gum, and bread made from pounded palm-tree fibres. When the news came of the victories of the British there was great consternation in the camp of the Mahdi, who called a council of his chiefs. It is said that in this council there was considerable disagreement, and that much resistance to the will of the Mahdi was shown, it being his wish to make at once a desperate attempt to take Khartoum before any reinforcements could enter the city.

Meanwhile, in the city itself, hunger was destroying discipline. Many of the famished troops left their posts at the fortifications, and went in search of food. Some of them were so reduced as to be too weak to do duty. Such was the desperate condition of this unhappy city, when, according to Major Kitchener, on the night of January 25th, or, more accurately speaking, early on the morning of the 26th, a determined assault was made by the besiegers. At all points except one the defenders, although so weakened in every way, made good the defence. When, however, the rebels had once penetrated the fortifications, the defence was virtually at an end, and the city was at their mercy.

Having got into the place, the Mahdi‘s men rushed about the streets murdering everybody they met. „It is difficult,“ says the major, „from the confused accounts, to make out exactly how General Gordon was killed. All the evidence tends to prove it happened at, or near, the palace, where his body was subsequently seen by several witnesses. ... The only account, by a person claiming to be an eyewitness, of the scene of General Gordon‘s death relates: ‹On hearing the noise, I got my master‘s donkey, and went with him to the palace; we met Gordon Pasha at the outer door of the palace. Mohammed Bey Mustapha, with my master, Ibrahim Bey Ruckdi, and about twenty cavasses, then went with Gordon towards the house of the Austrian Consul, Hansel, near the church, when we met some rebels in an open place near the outer gate of the palace. Gordon Pasha was walking in front, leading the party. The rebels fired a volley, and Gordon was killed at once; nine of the cavasses, Ibrahim Bey Ruckdi, and Mohammed Bey Mustapha were killed; the rest ran away.›“ Well may we exclaim, as Gordon himself does in one place in his diary—„these poor people,“ but what in reference to himself as well as to those with him in Khartoum—„Oh! our Government, our Government! What has it not to answer for?“

Major Kitchener records it as his opinion that „Khartoum fell from sudden assault, when the garrison were too exhausted by privations to make proper resistance.“ At the same time it is clear, even from his own account, that Faragh Pasha, the man who has been said to have treacherously opened one of the gates, or at least to have connived at the entrance of the rebels, had been in communication with the Mahdi. He relates, too, that on the 23rd the General had a stormy interview with this man, and that he is reported to have gone so far as to strike him. He says: „It seems probable to me that at this interview Faragh Pasha proposed to Gordon to surrender the town, and stated the terms the Mahdi had offered, declaring in his opinion that they should be accepted. Faragh Pasha left the palace in a great rage, refusing the repeated attempts of other officers to effect a reconciliation between him and Gordon.“ This „stormy interview,“ and the fact that Faragh „left the palace in a great rage,“ refusing reconciliation, together with the fact of his having been in communication with the Mahdi, are the only circumstances, apparently, which give colour to the

story of his treachery. This man, be it observed, had been a slave, and had been made a pasha by Gordon himself. If he really was so vile as in any way to have betrayed his benefactor, he quickly suffered for it. „Three days after the fall of the town," says the major's report, „Faragh Pasha was brought up to show where the Government money was hid. As he was naturally unable to do this, owing to there not being any, he was killed on the public market-place at Omdurman."

A journal of events had been kept throughout the siege. That part of it which related to the siege up to the time of Colonel Stewart's leaving was sent down with him, and fell into the enemy's hands. The other part, up to the leaving of the steamers for Metemmeh to meet the English, was forwarded with them, and has since been published. How trying was the situation for Gordon, how skilfully he conducted the defence, and how true, and noble, and Christian a man England has lost by his death, is manifest from its pages.

In his journal, writing on November 8th, General Gordon says: „We truly have had a wearisome time for 241 days!" And we, as we read of the trying experiences of himself, and the brave men who were staunch to him, must say, Truly they had! On the same day he wrote: „If Lord Wolseley did say he hoped to relieve Khartoum before many months, he must have a wonderful confidence in our powers of endurance, considering that when he is said to have made this utterance we had been blockaded six and a half months, and are now in our ninth month." Here was the mischief. There was too much confidence in Gordon's power of holding out. Indeed, others besides the poor ignorant Chinese seem to have regarded this man as a magician, and to have thought that by a wave of his magic wand he could work miracles. Alas! for such folly. Alas! that it has cost us so dear.

Again Gordon writes: „I am quite sure of one thing, that the policy followed up till lately (and the policy which may be carrried out, of abandoning Sennaar, &c.) is one which will act detrimentally on our army; for what officer, if he was in a fortress, could have any confidence that it might not be thought advisable to abandon him?" This is a thought which has occurred to others, possibly to many. Gordon has not been alone in fearing that lack of confidence in the home authorities may have been engendered in the minds of the men of the army. Such lack of confidence would be most mischievous. Let us hope that the fear will not be realised, and that future Governments in this country will be too honourable, as well as too statesmanlike, to repeat the cruel blunder of abandoning their own officers in the discharge of their duty. Gordon continues, in justification of his holding on: „Her Majesty's Government told me, or rather my friend Baring told me, I was not to leave Khartoum for the Equator until I had permission. I have his telegram (so that if it was possible, or if I could do it) if I did leave Khartoum I should be acting against orders." The „friend Baring" referred to, is Sir Evelyn Baring, who was the agent of the English Government at Cairo.

With regard to the expedition Gordon writes: „There is one thing which is quite incomprehensible. If it is right to send up an expedition now, why was it not right to send it up before? It is all very well to say one ought to consider the difficulties of the Government, but it is not easy to get over a feeling that a hope existed of no expedition being necessary, owing to our having fallen. As for myself, personally, I feel no particular rancour on the subject, but I own I did not care to show I like men, whoever they may be, who act in such a calculating

way; and I do not think one is bound to act the hypocrite‘s part, and pretend to be friendly towards them. If a boy at Eton, or Harrow, acted towards his fellow in a similar way, I think he would be kicked, and atpt sure he would deserve it ... I do not judge the question of abandoning the garrisons or not: what I judge IS the indecision of Government. They did not dare say ‹abandon the garrison›, so they prevented me leaving for the Equator, with the determination not to relieve me, and the hope (well! I will not say what their hope was).“ Gordon had no one on whom he could implicitly rely, and had to superintend everything. As an.example of this, and of the daily difficulties and trials with which he had to contend, we may take the following extract from the Journal, under date November 21st, „To-day I discovered a robbery of Ruckdi, my old clerk, about which there could be no doubt whatever, so I have turned him out, and written to cancel his being made a Bey. A woman came in from the Arabs. She says the Expedition left Merow, for Berber, and that Mohammed Achmet will try, on Monday, the 24th November, to take Omdurman Fort. This is disagreeable news! However, I have done what I can, and one can do no more than trust now. What has been the painful position for me is, that there is not one person on whom I can rely; also there is not one person who considers that he ought to do anything except his routine duty. We have now been months blockaded, and things are critical; yet not one of my subordinates, except the chief clerk and his subordinate, appears to-day. I had to send for them and wait till they come, perhaps an hour. ... There is not one department which I have not to superintend as closely as if I was its direct head. ... I may truly say I am weary of my life; day and night, night and day, it is one continual worry.“

Writing on December 6th, he says: „Tomorrow will be 270 days, nine months, that we have endured one continuous misery and anxiety.“ „The memorable siege of Khartoum,“ says Major Kitchener, „lasted 317 days, and it is not too much to say that such a noble resistance was due to the indomitable resolution and resource of one Englishman.“

The last words which reached us from Gordon were penned on December 14th 1884. While hoping for relief, and hourly looking for it, he seems to have had a presentiment that the city would fall, and that he would perish in its fall. Hence he wrote, and they are almost the last written words which came to us from him: „I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye.“

In a letter to myself soon after his death, his brother. Sir Henry Gordon, wrote:—„I do not grieve so much over General Gordon‘s death as I do over the months of intense anxiety he has undergone in endeavouring to save the lives of those poor people in Khartoum. He was prepared to meet his Maker, and is enjoying the rest he so much coveted.“ And all who mourn him have the consolation that he entered on the blessedness of the pious dead.

He did not live in vain. He did not die in vain. Englishmen are, and will be through the generations to come, the richer and nobler for such a life and death. He lived a pure, high-toned, unselfish, heroic, and Christian life, and his death became his life. He lived for others; he died for others. Not undeservedly might he be called, not only the Hero, but the Martyr of Khartoum. How appropriate to him the words of the poet Montgomery:

„The voice at midnight came:
He started up to hear;
A mortal arrow pierced his frame;

He fell, but felt no fear.
„His spirit with a bound
Left its encumbering clay;
His tent at sunrise on the ground
A darkened ruin lay.
„The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease;
And life‘s long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.
„Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ;
And, while eternal ages run
Rest in thy Saviour‘s joy.“

[**Note:** Notes illegible, due to Chinese type settings.]

(3-1) Amount illegible.
(8-2) Name illegible.
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