

"A jail-bird," and the peddler swung his pack over his shoulder. "That boy young as he looks, I saw him in court myself, and heard his sentence, 'Ten months.' He's a hard one. You'd do well to look carefully after him."

O! there was something so horrible in the word "jail," the poor woman trembled as she laid away her purchases; nor could she be easy till she called the boy in and assured him that she knew that part of his history.

Ashamed, distressed, the child hung down his head, his cheeks seemed bursting with hot blood, his lips quivered and anguish was painted as vividly upon his forehead as if the words were branded into the flesh.

"Well," he muttered, his whole frame relaxing as if a burden of guilt or joy had suddenly rolled off, "I may as well go to ruin at once; there is no use in my trying to do better; everybody hates and despises me, nobody cares about me. I may as well go to ruin at once."

"Tell me," said the woman, who stood off far enough for flight, if that should be necessary, how came you to go so young to that dreadful place? Where was your mother?"

"O!" exclaimed the youth with a burst of grief that was terrible to behold. "I hain't no mother ever since I was a baby. If I'd only had a mother," he continued, his anguish growing more vehement, and the tears gushed out from his strange-looking grey eyes, "I wouldn't ha' been kicked and cuffed and laid on with whips, I wouldn't ha' been sauced, and got knocked down and run away, and then stole because I was hungry. O! I hain't got no mother, I hain't got no mother, I haven't got no mother since I was a baby."

The strength was all gone from the poor boy and he sank on his knees sobbing great choking sobs, and rubbing the hot tears away with his poor knuckles. And did that woman stand there unmoved? Did she coldly bid him pack up and be off—the jail bird?

No, no; she had been a mother, and though all her children slept under the cold sod in the churchyard, she was a mother still. She went up to that poor boy, not to hasten him away but to lay her fingers kindly, softly on his head, to tell him to look up and from henceforth find in her a mother. Yes she even put her hands about the neck of that forsaken, deserted child, she poured from her mother's heart sweet womanly words of council and tenderness.

O! how sweet was her sleep that night, how soft her pillow! She had linked a poor orphan heart to hers by the most silken, the strongest band of love, she had plucked some thorns from the path of a little sinner, but striving mortal.

Did that boy leave her?

Never! He is with her still, a vigorous, manly, promising youth. The unfavorable cast has given place to an open, pleasing expression, with depth enough to make it an interesting study. His foster-father is dead, his good foster-mother aged and sickly—but she knows no want. The once poor outcast is her only dependance, and nobly does he repay the trust.

ALL who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

The Little Messenger of Love.

'Twas a little sermon preached to me
By a sweet, unconscious child,
A baby girl, scarce four years old,
With blue eyes soft and mild.

It happened on a rainy day;
I, seated in a car,
Was thinking, as I neared my home,
Of the continual jar
And discord that pervade the air
Of busy city life,
Each caring but for "number one,
Self gain provoking strife,
The gloomy weather seemed to cast
On every face a shade,
But on one countenance were lines
By sorrow deeply laid
With low bowed head and hands clasped
She sat, so poor and old,
Nor seemed to heed the scornful glance
From eyes unkind and cold
I looked again—Oh, sweet indeed,
The sight that met my eyes!
Sitting upon her mother's lap,
With baby face so wise,
Was a wee child with sunny curls,
Blue eyes, and dimpled chin,
And a young, pure and loving heart
Unstained as yet by sin.
Upon the woman poor and sad
Her eyes in wonder fell,
Lill wonder changed to pitying love,
Her thoughts, oh, who could tell?
Her tiny hands four roses held,
She looked them o'er and o'er,
Then choosing out the largest one,
She struggled to the floor.
Across the swaying car she went
Straight to the woman's side,
And putting in the wrinkled hand
The rose, she ran to hide
Her little face in mother's lap.
Fearing she had done wrong,
Not knowing, baby as she was,
That she had helped along
The up hill road of life a soul
Cast down, discouraged quite,
As on the woman's face there broke
A flood of joyous light.

Dear little child! she was indeed
A messenger of love
Sent to that woman's lonely heart
From the great Heart above.
This world would be a different place
Were each to give to those
Whose hearts are sad, as much of love
As went with baby's rose.

—Harper's Young People.

The War in the Soudan.

BY MISS EVA HOLT.

THE SOUDAN is a vast region of undefined limits in Central Africa, peopled by wild and warlike tribes. The three causes of the war are, first, the outrageous oppressions and exactions of the Khedives, second, the uprising of the slave-traders, third, the fanaticism of Islamism.

El Mahdi's revolt dates back as far as July, 1881, when he commenced his operations against the Egyptians. He claims he is the long-looked-for Messiah of the Mohammedans, and from this he has been nicknamed the "False Prophet."

But this is not the cause of the war, it is more of a political than a religious war, and the direct cause is the suppression of the slave-trade by Egypt.

In June, 1882, a riot occurred at Alexandria in Egypt, and during the same month El Mahdi massacred a force of six thousand Egyptians. In January, 1883, he renewed his operations and captured both Bara and El Obeid, making the latter place his residence and base of operations. On the 4th of March Gen. Hicks arrived at Khartoum, and in the service of the Khedive, took command. In April he defeated a rebel force of five thousand men; in May, El Mahdi was defeated near Khartoum, and was forced to flee. In August a rebel attack on Sinkat was repulsed. On the 8th of September Gen. Hicks marched from Khartoum with an Egyptian force of seven thou-

sand men, commanded partly by Egyptian and partly by English officers. On the 3rd of November, not far from El Obeid, this force was met by El Mahdi's, and completely destroyed.

At this time the English and Europeans began to take an interest in the war. Mr. Gladstone was preparing to withdraw the English troops from Egypt, and let that country try the experiment of a semi-constitutional government. Orders had been given for the withdrawal of the troops, when the massacre of Gen. Hicks' army occurred. The withdrawal was countermanded, but Mr. Gladstone's constitutional aversion to any policy savouring of conquest, restrained him from active assistance, until he was forced into it by the condition of Khartoum, Sinkat, and Tokar. Mr. Gladstone's opinion has always been that Egypt would be stronger if she abandoned Soudan, and if his policy had been carried out, the present condition of affairs would never have been brought about. The representative of England at Cairo was instructed not to interfere with the Egyptian Government in its course in Soudan, and the declaration was made that England had nothing to do with the Soudan, and Egypt must act on her own responsibility. The Khedive had just enough power to get into trouble, and not enough to get out.

Khartoum, an important city at the junction of the Blue and White Nile, was in danger. Egyptian garrisons at different points were surrounded by hostile tribes, and were in danger of massacre, and no limit could be placed to the contagion of revolt which was spreading throughout the Soudan. The helplessness of Egypt became apparent, and the cry arose for English troops to "vindicate" English honour; but to send out troops to conquer El Mahdi would be to commit England to a policy of conquest and annexation, and to surrender the convictions of the English Government that the Soudan should be left to the Soudanese. Mr. Gladstone stood firm, and still advised, and afterwards commanded, the Khedive to abandon Soudan.

A revolt now broke out in Eastern Soudan, headed by a courageous chief, Osman Digna, who, collecting an army of eighteen or twenty thousand men, laid close siege to the garrison at Sinkat and Tokar, and even threatened Suakim, an important port on the Red Sea. The same motive which led England into the struggle now became influential. The route to India was threatened by an insurrection on the Red Sea, and to protect that route and Suakim an Egyptian army of four thousand was collected and marched to the relief of Tokar, which was under the command of Gen. Baker.

While on the way there, they were attacked by Osman Digna and completely routed, one-half of their number being killed. At Sinkat, soon after, the news of a massacre of the garrison spread through that town, and was found to be true, and the soldiers, being on the verge of starvation, were all killed.

This aroused England, and troops were hastily despatched to Suakim, and Tokar was to be relieved by English soldiers, but before this could be done, news reached Gen. Graham's relief force, that that garrison had been persuaded to surrender.

Notwithstanding this, Gen. Graham set out and encountered Osman Digna and defeated him.

To relieve Khartoum, Gen. Gordon, known as "Chinese Gordon" from his military success in China, was appointed nominally in the employ of the Khedive, but really under pressure from England. Leaving the Nile, Gen. Gordon with his lieutenant struck across the desert, and after an eight day's march reached Berber, and then Khartoum, without mishap. On his way, and upon his arrival, he won faltering tribes over to his side by bribes and threats, and promised relief to the people from their oppressions.

Gen. Gordon's policy is a postponement of the slave question until the existing complications are solved. In accordance with this policy, he sent a commission to El Mahdi proclaiming him as Sultan of Kordofan, of which El Obeid is the capital. El Mahdi is said to have received this with an ecstasy of delight.

Gen. Gordon proposes that Egypt should extricate all the imperiled garrisons, hand over the Western Soudan to the native chiefs, and retain for Egypt the provinces lying east of the White Nile and north of Sennaar. It is not yet decided whether England likes the retention of Eastern Soudan, but recent events have strengthened his position. A part of the garrison at Khartoum has been removed to Berber, but five or six thousand still remain.

March 10, 1884, the situation was critical and needed immediate attention. The next day the situation approached a crisis. March 12 a great battle was imminent, and it took place the next day, resulting in a victory for the British, who completely routed Osman Digna's army. Over seventy British were killed and about one hundred wounded. Gen. Graham fought another battle the next day, and defeated the Soudan soldiers. After this battle Osman Digna's camp and three villages were burned.

The result of this war is yet to be determined, but it probably will end in victory for the Egyptians, who have the assistance of the English.

Oriental Bowing.

THE people of the East have, from ancient times, shown their respect by bowing in the presence of those whom they wish to honour, sometimes prostrating themselves at full length upon the ground. This seems very strange to us, because it is not our habit. We simply bow the head and the upper part of the body. We never think of stretching ourselves upon the ground in the presence of any one.

As far back as the time of Abraham this custom was practiced. When the three strangers came to see him, "he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground." So Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times when he was coming into the presence of his brother Esau. The brethren of Joseph bowed themselves to him in Egypt as the governor of the land, thus fulfilling his youthful dream in which he saw in the harvest-field their sheaves bowing down to his.

If the reported numbers in the school census of England and Wales are correct they make an unusually favourable showing of the Sunday school work in those countries. The day schools are reported to have 4,273,500 pupils, and the scholars in the Sunday schools are given at upwards of 4,000,000.