



DRAWN BY F. H. BRIGDEN, AFTER PRINT.

WADY HALFA.

venturesome traveller, and they told only of impassable cataracts, of an ocean of sand and of deadly disease; and even now, with an extended knowledge obtained from several campaigns and careful observation on the part of the officers in Egypt's service, Britain might well hesitate to enter upon a task presenting difficulties that have been found insurmountable by the Persians in almost prehistoric times, by the legions of Rome in her palmiest days, difficulties that set at naught the dash and daring of Napoleon's bravest general, Dessaix, and the military skill and ambition of Mehemet Ali. No, the conquest of Soudan will be no picnic, and, knowing as I do the scene of the present hostilities, I can understand the exultant tone that runs through the British military papers when they note the successes that the little Anglo-Egyptian army have already attained.

The Nile from Wady Halfa to within a short distance of Dongola is almost an unbroken succession of cataracts, and is unnavigable for half the year. This entails the transport by canal of supplies to the army in the field during the most trying season. And well might the military critics in England be jubilant at the success of the 8,000 Egyptians and 2,500 British at the outset of the campaign, for the advance already made has been through a country which

presents every conceivable obstacle to the handling of disciplined troops and the transport of artillery and supplies.

Although the long disused railway around the second cataract from Wady Halfa has been rendered serviceable, and construction is being pressed forward from Sarvass, at the head of the cataract, its progress, on account of the engineering difficulties, is necessarily slow. The construction, by-the-way, of this railroad at enormous expense, is pointed to as proof conclusive by those who assert that the present war is one of conquest, and that permanent occupation is decided upon by the authorities in Soudan and Cairo. However that may be, the railroad has only been of service, so far, in transferring the supplies unloaded from the steamers and native craft at Wady Halfa, fifteen or twenty miles nearer the advancing army.

Water is one of the most essential factors in North African warfare, and the line of march has necessarily been far from the banks of the Nile. And when I recall the misery of only two days' camel ride through steep defiles and over scorching sands in that part of the country traversed in the present campaign, and remember the frequent glimpses I had during the Nile expedition from the tops of the mountainous cliffs overlook-