

At the battle of Omdurman, close by Khartum, where the gallant General Gordon had lost his life in trying to hold out against the Mahdi, Kitchener inflicted a crushing defeat upon the rebels and reconquered the province. It is now under the joint rule of Britain and Egypt, and the country is quickly recovering from the devastation and slaughter which it had to endure while under the power of the Mahdi.

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan consists for the most part of great grassy plateaus, dense thickets, and barren steppes, watered by the Nile and the myriad branches of its important tributary, the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Tangled forests skirt the sluggish rivers and brooks, which are often blocked by floating islands formed of water-plants and other forms of vegetation. For many miles a way had to be cut for steamboats through the *sudd* or



KHARTUM.

mass of floating weeds, but there is now regular communication to Gondokoro, on the borders of Uganda. Wherever there is a good supply of water, the land is astonishingly fertile: durra fields wave ten feet high; cotton, sugar, and wheat grow luxuriantly. Where, however, water is scarce, the land is little better than desert. Parts of the Sudan are very rich in big game. Herds of elephants, zebras, giraffes, and antelopes are seen, and in their wake prowl the lion and the leopard.

The people of the Sudan are mostly negroes. Cattle-grazing, agriculture, and hunting are their chief occupations. Some of the tribes show great skill in working iron, wood, and clay; and others are, according to their lights, good agriculturists.

Before the Mahdi insurrection, the total population of the Egyptian Sudan was estimated at about ten millions. The