

1888 model. Like the Norwegians, the Americans have adopted the Krag-Jorgensen rifle, with a calibre of 7.62mm., initial velocity 932m., weight of bullet 14.2 grains. By the end of the year it is expected that the supply necessary for the armament of the whole of the National troops will be completed. Although using a small-bore rifle at present, the Germans are now experimenting with a new one which has a calibre of 7.2mm., initial velocity 620m., weight of bullet 14.5-14.7 grains. The English Lee-Metford rifle has a 7.7mm. calibre, with initial velocity 670m. (cordite cartridge), and a bullet weighing 14 grains.

The Bombardment of Alexandria.

In September, 1881, political troubles developed in Lower Egypt, culminating, a year later, in civil war, and in the active intervention of Great Britain.

The chief agitators were some officers of the Egyptian army, who claimed the title of "Nationalists," and their professed aims were the liberation of their country from "the thralldom of the foreigner," and to maintain the supremacy of the Mahomedan religion. They were credited, however, by their opponents with purely selfish intentions, some alleging that their sole object was to resist a scheme of army reform which would affect their special privileges; others ascribing to them the more ambitious project of overthrowing the Egyptian Government, and, while nominally acknowledging the supremacy of the Turkish Sultan, to become the virtual rulers of Egypt.

The leader of the "Nationalists" was Ahmed Arabi Pasha, a peasant's son, who had risen from the ranks to a colonelcy, and, through the supremacy of his party, the Khedive was forced (September, 1881) to appoint him Minister of War.

By some he has been lauded as a hero and a patriot; others have denounced him as an unprincipled scoundrel; while many have excused him as the tool of intriguing men, too cowardly to run the risks of leadership.

By flattering promises of pay and promotion, the party obtained the support of the Egyptian army, and they eventually assumed a military dictatorship which the Khedive was powerless to resist.

He appealed to his superior, the Sultan of Turkey, and to the two European Powers, Britain and France, who had the financial control of the country, and through whose influence he was placed on the throne, but the former procrastinated; the French, through a change of Ministry, resiled from their promises and obligations; and the British Cabinet adopted a policy of "watching the development of events."

This strengthened the power of the Nationalists, and, to overawe them into subjection by the display of superior force, the three Powers agreed to send warships to Alexandria, where the Nationalists were concentrating a large body of troops.

But the Turkish ships never sailed, and the presence of the Anglo-French squadron at Alexandria created alarm.

The trade of the country became paralysed; the Europeans swarmed to Alexandria and were shipped off in crowded steamers; the *fellahin* fled from the villages, and the larger towns were filled with a starving populace.

Declaring that the absence of the Turkish ships was a proof of the favour

with which the Sultan regarded him, Arabi became more defiant.

He insisted on the withdrawal of the foreign fleets, affirming that their presence exasperated the populace, and he disclaimed responsibility in the event of an outbreak.

By conscription and compulsion he trebled the strength of his army. He levied taxes, he strengthened his defences and constructed entrenchments at various strategic points, and he threw up earthworks round the fortresses of Alexandria, and levelled his guns at the British ships.

The British Admiral, indignant at the repeated insults and the audacity of Arabi, cleared his ships for action, but he was prohibited from firing a shot till permission was given by his own or the Turkish Government.

He refused to withdraw his ships so long as British interests were endangered and Arabi refused to stop his soldiers from working at the fortifications so long as the British fleet remained.

The Admiral (Seymour) telegraphed to Constantinople, and Arabi was reprimanded by the Sultan. He made a show of submission, but kept his soldiers working during the night.

Matters were in this strained condition, when, on the afternoon of Sunday, 11th June, a serious riot broke out in Alexandria, and about 120 Europeans were killed and 50 to 100 were wounded.

Arabi disclaimed responsibility or complicity, but it was clearly proved that the riot had been deliberately planned, and systematically carried out.

The soldiers and the police did not actively support the rioters, but they were passive onlookers.

The riot lasted four hours and suddenly ceased when an infantry regiment took possession of the streets.

The massacres led to complication between the Egyptian and Turkish Governments and the European Powers whose subjects had been killed or outraged; but the Khedive without his army was powerless, and the Sultan had religious scruples about interfering in what most of his people regarded as "a religious movement against Christian aggression."

Arabi was the only man who could hold the rebels in check; he was master of the situation. Backed by the Egyptian army, he had control of the country.

The railway system and the water supply of the eastern district were in his possession, and he was preparing to destroy the Suez Canal.

The British Government urged the Sultan to assert his authority by sending troops to Egypt, but the French opposed the "retrograde movement," and they refused to join Britain in a "joint military occupation."

Other European Powers made suggestions, and the French proposed a "conference." The situation became daily more critical; the Egyptian middle and peasant classes, who, as a whole, were opposed to the military despotism of Arabi, were in terror, and the soldiery became insolent and defiant.

Arabi, however, flushed with success, or rendered desperate, quarrelled with the Sultan's emissary, he defied the Sultan and the Khedive, and, refusing to submit he was proclaimed a rebel.

The Sultan, warning them of the consequences of a refusal, offered a free pardon to Arabi's supporters, and many of them laid down their arms. The others were declared rebels.

Two days later [July 7] Admiral Seymour received the permission he had long craved for, and he warned Arabi that he would open fire on the fortresses of Alexandria unless the extension of the earthworks was discontinued. Arabi disregarded the warning, and on the 10th

the British fleet cleared for action.

All merchant ships were ordered out of the harbours, the foreign war vessels put out to sea, and Arabi was informed that, unless the British Admiral was allowed to dismantle the forts which commanded the British ships, he would open fire at sunrise next morning.

Before that hour Arabi sent a message to the Admiral that "he would dismount three guns," but negotiations being impossible, the Admiral gave the envoys time to get ashore before he gave the signal to fire.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 11th the signal was run up and the Alexandria sent a heavy shot into one of the rebel batteries.

It was generally believed that when Arabi found the Admiral meant to carry out his threat he would capitulate; but, to the surprise of all the Alexandria's fire was immediately answered, showing that the rebels meant to make a stand.

The signal was then given to the other ironclads, and immediately the eight ponderous ships were pouring missiles from their heavy guns into every fort and battery in Alexandria. Soon the rebels displayed a flag of truce, and the firing was suspended.

But it was only a *ruse* to gain time, and the firing was resumed.

The British fire was somewhat intermittent, for the Admiral's object was *to compel submission*, not to destroy life and property, and every opportunity was given to the rebels to capitulate, but, with unlooked for pertinacity, they continued to serve their artillery.

Gun after gun was silenced; battery after battery was demolished by the accuracy of the British fire; parties were landed and guns were spiked; the gunboats, which at first were out of range, engaged the forts at close quarters, but still the rebels refused to yield.

For ten hours they answered the British fire, and then, about half-past five, they suddenly ceased. But it was not courage but *necessity* which made the Egyptian artillerymen serve their guns so persistently, for when they realised the hopelessness of resistance to the overpowering fire of the British, they evinced a disposition to retire; but Arabi marched up his infantry in their rear, giving their orders that should the gunners attempt to retreat *they were to be shot down*.

But when the infantry saw the gunners fall dead and wounded, magazines exploded, fortresses and towers levelled, buildings in flames, batteries destroyed and guns disabled, their courage failed, and, breaking their ranks, most of them made for the Cairo Railway to escape to some place of safety, while large numbers took advantage of the confusion and deserted.

Some of the better disciplined troops remained for a time at their posts waiting Arabi's orders, but he gave them none, and he refused to lead them out of Alexandria.

They mutinied, and Arabi, finding himself in a dilemma, was forced to yield, and he then gave orders for the Alexandrian garrison to concentrate at Kafrodwar, an important station on the Cairo Railway, fourteen miles from Alexandria, where he was constructing strong entrenchments.

The police followed the example of the soldiers, and the rabble, finding that the British had ceased firing, and that they had made no attempt to take possession of the city, gave full vent to their lawlessness, and plundered and set fire to the better-class houses and public buildings.

All through that night, and all next day, the city was in flames, and two days later Alexandria was a heap of ruins.