

Soudan will have to be conquered sooner or later. Egypt herself cannot do it. If it were not for England, the Arab would even now have looked upon the bazaars of Cairo. And until he is conquered he will not only be a menace, but a source of continual warfare to Egypt. If England doesn't do it, some other European power must, or Egypt and the Suez Canal will be in possession of a lot of fanatical Dervishes, and the only way to conquer him is to capture his stronghold, the source of all his strength and wealth and the metropolis of Equatorial Africa, Khartoum. You were right, my boy, Khartoum will have to be taken."

That was eleven years ago, and that scene and those words have burned themselves into my memory. And when I read that Dongola is the object of the present Anglo-Egyptian expedition, that the campaign will end with its capture, and that it will be the outpost of Egypt, I think of the words of the grave Scotch Major. And I also know that the consensus of intelligent opinion given by those who have studied the military and political situation of Egypt and the Soudan, is that, however diplomacy may demand the assertion that Dongola is the point of the campaign objectively, this war will be carried on till the British and Egyptian flags float side by side over the palace in which Gordon was murdered. The last war has taught England much. She knows that Egypt will have to be held at the point of the bayonet if it is to be defended by outposts, and England now knows that war is a material part of the religion of the Soudanese Arab, and until his power is completely shattered he will throw his half-naked body against the border forts of Egypt.

For centuries the Soudan has been a source of trouble and expense to the Khedives. Although once an Egyptian Province, it can never be said to have been healthy under Egyptian control, and when the internal troubles of the Government in Cairo were such as to lead to its practical abandonment, Mahdist fanaticism appeared in all its blood-thirstiness to arouse the sons of the desert to an effort which overcame even the genius of Gordon, and the last ves-

tige of Egyptian rule was wiped out. "On to Cairo!" was then the cry, and as Hamdab, Korti and Dongola were each in turn abandoned during 1885-86, in spite of the protest of military men who were skilled in Arab warfare, and understood the spirit of Mahdism, the Arab tide flowed northward, and soon the garrisons of Wady Halfa were busily engaged in dispelling the rushes of the Dervishes. 'Tis the Arab's way. You give an inch and he struggles for an ell.

There is nothing so surprising to any one who has been in the Soudan, or who knows the Arab, as the comparative indifference with which the present war is looked upon by the generality of men on this side of the Atlantic. Although the Arab is at his last ditch, and the man, his civilization and his religion are anomalous in this stage of the world's progress, still the conquest of the Soudan is a matter that will demand not only consummate generalship on the part of the commander and a splendid courage and disregard of hardship on the part of his troops, but also the sacrifice of many lives, for the Soudanese Arab fights to his death. Saturated with Mahdism, and convinced that his cause is the cause of God, that death in a holy war means an eternal paradise, he unites with his fanaticism an innate courage that places him amongst the greatest warriors of the world's history. With all our discipline, with the most improved magazine rifles and smokeless powder, a war with the Arab of the Soudan is a serious matter. He has never bowed to the yoke of the Turk, as he persists in calling the Egyptian, and the wars of a century have taught him to despise the undisciplined mobs of Fellaheen conscripts that have been sent against him. But beyond his personal courage and prowess—for the desert Arab is an athlete so swift of foot that his attacks in the open can only be repelled by forming a square—there is something more that makes the conquest of the Soudan a serious matter—the climate and the nature of the country. Until quite recently that indefinite region, the Soudan—the land of the blacks—was only known from the fugitive tales of some