

ENGLAND IN AFRICA.*

It is more difficult to get a well-digested account of the events of the last fifty years than of the times of the Cæsars or Antonines. Hence the importance of the service which Mrs. Latimer has rendered English readers in her recent books on France, Russia, and Turkey, and England in the nineteenth century. She condenses in a single volume what one can only otherwise find in endless files of newspapers, magazines and reviews.

Thirty years ago the interior of Africa was a vast unexplored region. It is now nearly all partitioned out between the great powers of Europe. Already the jealousies of their respective frontiers and spheres of influence threaten the peace of the world. We have no reason to be ashamed of the preponderant influence of Great Britain in this great country. While her combined possessions cover less area than those nominally under the control of France, much of the latter is in the great desert of Sahara, while in her civilizing and Christianizing influence Britain surpasses all the rest together.

Four interesting chapters are given to the recent history of Egypt and the Soudan. The recklessness of the Turkish rulers is astonishing. Mehemet Ali actually proposed to Lesseps to tear down the great pyramid of Gizeh to make a dam on the Nile. He pulled down the temples of Abydos, Arsene and many others to build his manufactories, and only a wholesome fear of European intervention prevented further vandalism.

The story of the revolt of Arabi Pasha is well told. Some hundreds of European and native Christians were killed in the busy commercial city of Alexandria, the very boot-blacks in the street taking part in the fray. The guns of the British fleet and the forces under Colonel Wolseley soon put an end to Arabi's revolt, and a handful of British cavalry, making a forced march over desert sands of one hundred and thirty miles in two days, took possession of Cairo with its population of four hundred thousand and its garrison of ten thousand men.

On the deck of a Nile steamer, from

the lips of a British officer who took part in the campaign, we heard the story of this vigorous campaign by sea and land. It did us good to see the Royal Staffordshire Regiment holding the citadel of Cairo, the stronghold of the Mamelukes; and, on the borders of Nubia, a dapper English subaltern, with his Soudanese camel corps, were a guarantee of law and order and liberty beneath the tropic.

The story of General Gordon, the modern Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*, is like a page of ancient chivalry. At Khartoum, which he held for Egypt, he put up boxes at the gates to receive petitions from the people. He inspected the prisons, and to reassure the debtors, who dreaded demand for arrears of taxes, he burned all the ledgers in the tax office and made a bonfire of all the whips and instruments of torture.

The strange fanaticism of the Madhists, looking for their Moslem Messiah, took revenge in the murder of the kingliest man in Africa. He could easily have escaped but he refused. "Whom seek ye?" he asked, gazing on the sea of angry faces of the fierce dervishes. "Gordon Pasha," they cried. "I am he," he answered, and in a few moments his lifeless body was hurled down the stone stairs. Other victims of the Ma'hi were Father Ohrwald and two nuns, who after eight years' imprisonment escaped, riding on camels five hundred miles in seven days.

Mrs. Latimer traces succinctly the benign rule of the British in Egypt. The finances of the country are in as sound a condition as those of any of the states of Europe. On all sides are to be seen signs of prosperity and content. Trade and commerce are flourishing; vast reforms, affecting the well-being of the whole population, have been carried out. Schemes of irrigation, costing \$4,000,000, have increased the annual value of the cotton crop \$15,000,000, and still greater works are contemplated.

The story of the exploration of "Darkest Africa," the heroism of Livingstone and Stanley, the missionary triumphs of Uganda and Kaffraria, more heroic than any military achievements, are well sketched. England's "Little Wars" in Abyssinia, Ashanti, with Boers and with Lobengula are concisely and clearly told. A British army of twelve thousand men drawn from the Bombay Presidency, in

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