

CHINESE GORDON.

THE SOUDAN AND WHAT HE DID IN IT.

General Gordon at the close of the Taping Rebellion, returned to England for a much needed rest with his family. Friends would willingly have lionized him and invitations poured in upon him from all quarters, but he refused them all; he would let no one say that he had done anything heroic, and in 1865 he was content to settle quietly down to the command of his company of Royal Engineers in Gravesend.

For six years he stayed here employed in the construction of the Thames defences and here, as in China, all his spare time and money were given to the poor around him. His house was school, hospital, and almshouse in turn, and his delight in children, especially in boys working on the river or the sea, is one of the sunniest traits in his character. Many he rescued from the gutter, cleaned, and fed, and kept them in his home for weeks until work and place were found for them. He called them his "kings," and marked their voyages with innumerable pins stuck in a map of the world that hung

Arabic name Balad-us-Sudan, meaning the country of the Blacks. As used by the Arabs it means a vast tract of country in the central part of Africa bounded by the Sahara desert and stretching from Senegambia on the west to the province of Darfur, just west of the Nile, on the east. But the Soudan as spoken of by the Egyptians comprises a stretch of territory on both sides of the Nile reaching from about the first cataract, at Assuan, south to the Victoria and Albert Nyanza, a length of about 1600 miles and leaving out the country of Abyssinia, stretching from the Red Sea across the Nile, a distance altogether of about 1200, and is probably very nearly the size of India. The northern half is occupied by Arabs, most of them wandering tribes; and the southern part by negroes, who comparatively speaking are not nomadic but to a large extent cultivate the ground. The climate is very unhealthy for Europeans.

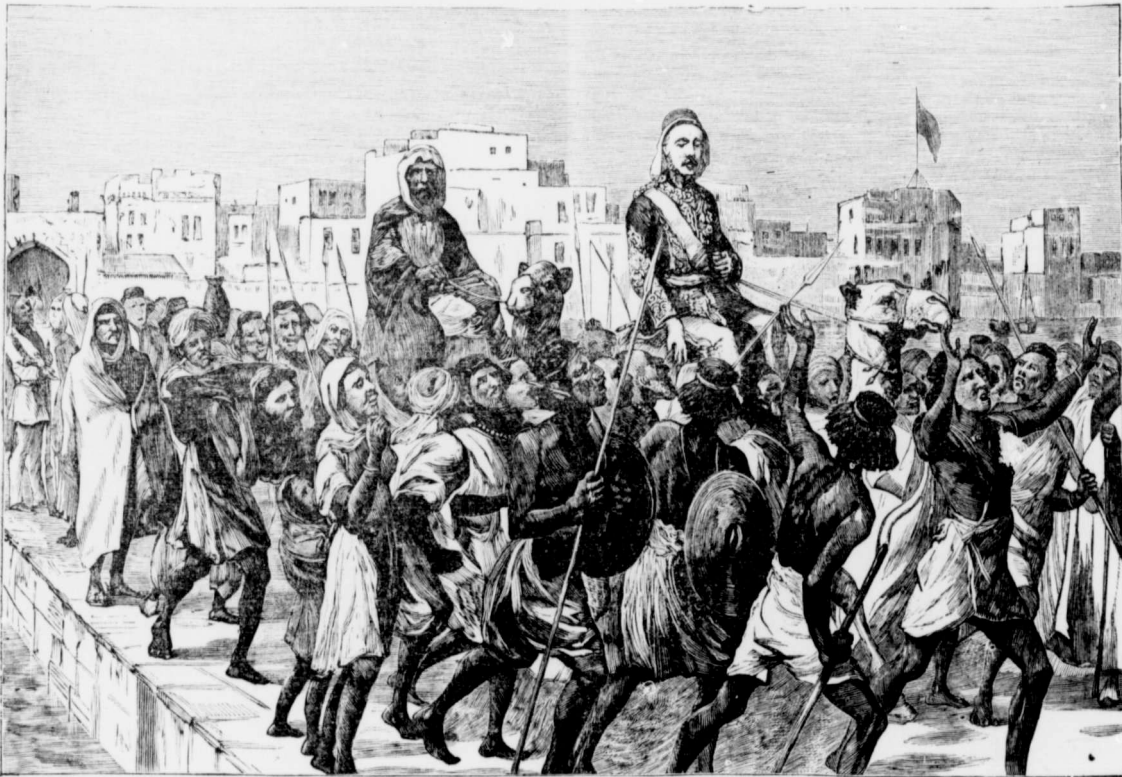
This country was divided up among a lot of petty chieftains but in 1819, Mohammed Ali then Khedive of Egypt sent his son Ismail to conquer the country, and it has been more or less under Egyptian rule

the same errand went Gordon in 1874. Gordon saw clearly the difficulty and peril of the undertaking but said "I will do it, for I value my life as naught, and should only leave much weariness for perfect peace."

His voyage up the Nile to Gondokoro was a strange one. Few Europeans had been there before him. Crocodiles slumbered on the mud and ponderous river-horses splashed and blew in the stream, whilst little mobs of monkeys came down from the gum-trees to the margin to drink, and wild birds sailed in flocks overhead. One bright moonlight night as the boat was sailing slowly along, he was alone on deck and thinking of the home he had left and the work before him, when he was suddenly startled by loud laughing from a clump of bushes on the bank. "I felt put out," he writes of it, "but the irony came from the birds that laughed at us.... for some time in a very rude way. They were a species of stork, and seemed in capital spirits, and highly amused at the idea of anybody thinking of going up to Gondokoro with the hope of doing anything." There were many amusing incidents on the voyage up. Once

deal to ameliorate the lot of the people."

Gordon's personal staff of Europeans numbered only eleven and of these two had died and six were ill before they reached Gondokoro, on the 11th of September, 1874. Thus he had only two persons upon whom he could depend. "The blacks had been so cruelly treated that the whole country was up in revolt and even the Governor-General dared not go half a mile from the city for fear of his life. And now the work Gordon set himself to do was to win the confidence of these poor people and break the power of the slave traders. He first built a chain of fortified posts from Gondokoro up to Khartoum, and, while travelling rapidly from one place to another engaged in this work, he captured and punished a great many slave-traders. The work he did among the people was enormous. At first they hated and feared him and attacked him at every opportunity, but they could not see him long without knowing him to be their friend. For years back they had not dared to plant any crops for their enemies were sure to come down upon them and reap what they had sown. He went higher



GORDON IN THE SOUDAN, 1879—ENTERING MASSAWA.

over his mantelpiece, and these pins he "moved, from point to point as his youngsters advanced, and day by day prayed for them as they went. The lads loved him, and scribbled on the fences a touching legend of their own invention "God bless the Kernel!" During the cotton famine in Lancaster, he took a large gold medal given him by the Empress of China, scratched out the inscription, and sent it anonymously to Canon Miller to be used in the relief of his sufferers; and in writing afterwards to his brother, he said of it, "Never shall I forget what I got when I scored out the inscription on the gold medal. How I have been repaid a million fold!" The people all loved him intensely and great was the sorrow of all when he left. Of all Gordon's interesting life the most fascinating is that part of it spent in the Soudan. But before going on to tell about it, it will be necessary to go back a little and find out something about that country and the origin of the trouble there.

The name Soudan is a corruption of the

ever since. The slave trade was carried on here to large extent, and under the Egyptian Pashas it grew to frightful dimensions. "Slave hunters became slave-kings, with organized armies, regal courts and great riches, and by their raids and ravages turned a country that had once been a garden into a desert." Volumes might be filled with the horrors enacted there. All this received the sanction of the Khedive, for as the slave dealers became wealthy he received large revenues from them. But as they grew in wealth they also grew in power, and one of them Zobeir Pasha, otherwise called the Black Pasha, who commanded thirty stations, rose and demanded that he be made governor-general of the Soudan. The Khedive now saw things in a different light. The very traffic which had brought him such large revenues from his southern provinces was threatening his supremacy and he began to look upon it with a holy horror, and to cast about for means to put it down. To this end he sent Sir Samuel Baker in 1869 and on

as they stopped to cut some wood they came across some blacks and induced the chief to come on board. He came "in full dress, (a necktie)" and going up to General Gordon gently hooked the back of his hand and then holding his face near his own "made as if he were spitting." He and his men were entertained at dinner but he ate all his neighbor's portion as well as his own, and then showed his gratitude by making his men sing a hymn of thanksgiving and crawled to Gordon and tried to kiss his feet. He was not allowed to do this but received a splendid present of beads instead. Near Gondokoro, which is nearly two hundred miles north of the Albert Nyanza, he found the natives in a shockingly degraded condition and half starved. In writing of this he says "What a mystery, is it not, why they are created? A life of fear and misery night and day. One does not wonder at their not fearing death. No one can conceive the utter misery of these lands. Heat and mosquitos day and night all the year round. But I like the work, for I believe I can do a great

and thither through the land, to some he would give grain, to others pay for planting their own fields, and to all assurance of his protection from the slavers, until the poor, down-trodden people began to look upon him as a king with unlimited power, and they flocked about him begging him to buy their children whom they were too poor to feed themselves. To the slavers he showed no mercy but confiscated their stolen goods whether cattle or men and threw themselves into prison.

For a long time the greater portion of his European staff were sick with fever and ague and while he was governor of the Equatorial province he was also nurse to his men. And yet in the midst of all this work he found time to amuse and instruct the natives in many things, and to take care of specially needy individuals among them. Of one poor sick old woman, whom he nursed and fed for weeks before her death he writes "She had her tobacco up to the last. What a change from her misery! I suppose she filled her place in life as well as

amused them by yards off

But h difficult, merest ri his nativ triguing, his sight league w their me could no carelesm left with only ten would ha

For tw travelling all he po blacks ar cing his ce at the em holiday t Equatori pletely su sulation fr But that t porary ur Gordon t come of helped," removed f they are s

Early in slave trad torial pro Soudan it quarters a don told t permanen ty. So t Governor- also charg settle som; and Egypt details of t volved, as living life, writes his i country qu among a p flesh was li make an a material et trade and r archy in th he could do talk much stallation a ed to make help of Goc His first ed no new slav and then le their stor Zobeir Pas slave hunte fur standit news came t the govern besiging tl stant's delay ing his esc sible, but n off alone an miles away, robbers; an Their amaz nor General was," said G lief of Luck out with on to the robbe less he subn army to pi that Gordon he surrend Cairo. Wh man again t against him with some o to be shot.

This was t Soudan and with Abyssir Egypt he w Gordon's summed up have cut off holds and ha

Work acc went to Indi he went, on as the Mandaric means of f country and t to the Mauri