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THE REPORTER

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BETHUEL LOVERIN,
Publisher and Proprietor.

THE EGYPTIAN WAR.

The question of the final ending of the Sudanese campaign becomes each day involved in greater obscurity, as fresh complications arise. The war may be said to have commenced on the 11th of July, 1882, when the British iron clads stormed Alexandria and defeated Arabi Pasha. For years prior to the rebellion of Arabi, dissatisfaction had been brewing among the Egyptians. The Sultan of Turkey—greedy, avaricious, licentious, cruel, and ever bankrupt, had each succeeding year called upon his representative in Egypt, the Khedive, to exact still greater tribute from the fellahin, in order that his lust might be gratified. The Khedive called upon the tax-gatherers, and they in turn gave the work to an irresponsible body of men of the bum-bailiff order, who exacted the last farthing that the fellahin were able to pay, and there was dire distress in all the land. The dissatisfaction was great, and Arabi, a soldier of fortune who had risen to a high position in the service of the Khedive, saw in the condition of the peasantry an opportunity for gaining for himself notoriety—possibly place and power. He accordingly enlisted the sympathies of the rebellious people, and placing himself at their head captured the Khedive and kept him a prisoner in his palace. The Sultan was asked to quell the rebellion and protect foreign interests in Egypt, which were seriously menaced by the increasing power and popularity of Arabi. But the Sultan was unable or unwilling to establish order in Egypt. Britain interfered to protect her subjects, and Italian, French, and American war vessels, anchored in the Mediterranean and watched the British storm and capture Alexandria. As all the world knows, England put down the rebellion, captured Arabi, and established order within one month from the firing of the first shot, and has ever since made her presence felt in the administration of the affairs of Egypt.

During this engagement, rumors of the rising in the Soudan occasionally appeared in print, but as yet the Mahdi, as a prophet, was a mythical personage, and the importance of his

movements was greatly underrated. His career may be briefly described as follows:—Early in July, 1881, the Mahdi gave the first signs of military revolt, and the authorities of Khartoum having ordered him to come to that city he treated the order with contempt. When a battalion of black troops were sent to enforce the order he rallied his forces and cut the black troops to pieces. The next year, 1882, a force of 6,000 Egyptians were sent against him and he either captured or annihilated them. In January, 1883, the Mahdi captured El Obeid, about 200 miles south of Khartoum, and has ever since made it his headquarters. In March, 1883, Col. Hicks, a British officer, arrived at Khartoum and undertook to organize a force for the recapture of El Obeid. In April he defeated a rebel force 6,000 strong and killed 500 of the enemy, including the Mahdi's grand vizier. In Sept. Hicks Pasha marched out of Khartoum with 7,000 fighting men, encountered the Mahdi's army near El Obeid, engaged in a three days fight, lost his own life, and he and his force has never since been heard from. Meanwhile, Osman Digna rose into prominence as the Mahdi's chief ally in the region of country about Suakim, on the coast of the Red Sea, where the English landed small forces and met with various successes and defeats. A little more than a year ago, when the situation at Khartoum looked hopeless for the garrison and European settlers there, General Gordon was selected as a forlorn hope and started alone for the fatal city. His mission was one of peace. He believed simply that the Mahdi was disaffected toward the Egyptian Government, and that liberal English proposals would satisfy him. He soon found that the Mahdi represented a larger rising than was supposed, and then was bent on smashing him. This plan the Gladstone Government never yielded to, and a plan to relieve Gordon was formed. And in August of last year, General Wolseley left England in charge of what has been known as the Nile relief expedition, consisting of 9,000 picked soldiers of the British army, and a detachment of Canadians. His instructions were to bring away from Khartoum General Gordon and Col. Stewart.

Nothing of any serious moment happened to this force until the 17th and 19th of this month, when Gen. Stewart with the advance army of the expedition fought two battles and thus turned the whole design of the force from a relief party to that of an invading army. The result was that the Mahdi seized upon the opportunity long delayed, and fell on Khartoum with such overwhelming numbers as lead to its overthrow.

England is now apparently bent on "smashing the Mahdi," and troops and supplies are departing every day for the seat of war, while orders at the

British arsenals provide for more arms and ammunition than were used in the whole Crimean war.

Scott Act Notes.

Well, the great Anti-Scott pow-wow delegation have been to Ottawa and interviewed Sir John. According to the published reports they met with a very cool reception. It has been customary when any important delegation went to the seat of Government to lay their grievances before our august legislators to accord to them the use of one of the many committee rooms at the disposal of the Government. Was any such courtesy extended to the liquor dealers? Decidedly not. Or, as our Nick of the Woods would put it, Naw sah! But the delegation had to rent the opera house, instead Sir John, Langevin, Bowell, Carling and Coetigan assembled to receive the delegation and give them the decided answer, yes or no, which answer the delegation boasted they were going to wring from the Government. Did they get that decided answer? Again Nick would say, naw sah! Report says that Wm. Kyle, whose letters to the Globe in opposition to the Scott Act gained for him considerable notoriety, presented the memorial of grievances. They asked for a commission of enquiry and a suspension of the Act while the commission was sitting; that the signing of the petitions for the Act should be before a properly constituted officer; that a clear majority of the electors in the county should be necessary to the carrying of the act, that a longer time should be given after the passage of the Act to enable dealers to dispose of their business, and that compensation should be given for all loss to dealers incurred by the passage of the Scott Act.

Sir John replied in a characteristic fashion. He spoke in a manner that apparently tickled the whole delegation, and yet he told them absolutely nothing. He said the Government fully recognized the importance of the matters referred to in the memorial, but as with one exception they were all matters for parliamentary legislation, the Government could not speak finally. He could not, of course, say what action parliament would take, but said that their representations would be fully discussed during the present session. As to appointment of a commission, which comes within the power of the Executive, he said he thought it would be well to consult parliament before making any move in the matter. Regarding compensation, he said "For myself I voted for the Scott Act, though in opposition, and it was carried by the Liberal Government of Mr. Mackenzie. But as to the question of compensation, if total prohibition were introduced, I certainly as one would vote for compensation."

Sir John evidently tried to say nothing, and he succeeded admirably.

The High School Law.

The amendments proposed by the Minister of Education in connection with the consolidation of the High School law, though not of pressing importance, are yet calculated to redress existing grievances, and to render the working of high schools and collegiate institutes more thorough and effective. As in the consolidation of the laws relating to the public schools, any legislation that has for its ob-

ject condensation and simplification, if at all wisely ordered, must prove beneficial.

The amendment of note gives a statutory standing to collegiate institutes, and defines their standing, fixing the average rate of attendance for each half year.

At present the chairman of the high school board possesses the power of voting twice on any question, once as a member of the board, and again if a casting vote is necessary. It is now proposed, and with good reason, to limit his voting power to the casting vote, in short, prescribing his prerogative the same as that of a reeve or any other presiding officer.

The proposal to give the high school trustees power to suspend or expel a pupil for cause, and also, as in the case of the proposed change in the public school act, the appointing of the township treasurer to be treasurer of the high school boards, are measures whose utility cannot be questioned. It is also intended to have the legislative grant paid directly to the treasurer of the school board, and not to the county treasurer as heretofore.

Hon. Mr. Ross frankly admits that he has been unable to devise a scheme, whereby aid can be given to those high schools situated in towns that do not receive a county grant. He believes they should have some additional assistance, but fails to hit upon an equitable scheme whereby this aid can be rendered.

Hereafter the examiners for the entrance examinations will be remunerated alike. The inspector is now paid, but the head master of the high school is not. It is also intended to have the high schools close for holidays on the same date as the public schools, thus removing a fruitful source of annoyance.

Finally, it is the intention to have the distribution of the high school grant made on a wider basis. At present the money is distributed on the basis of average attendance. But it is found that some schools are very liberal in the salaries they allow their teachers, thus securing the very best teachers, while other schools expend large amounts in the equipment of the buildings and grounds, and in the purchase of appendages for facilitating instruction. It is thought desirable to encourage both of these classes of expenditures, and, therefore it is proposed to take them into consideration in apportioning the legislative grant. In England, even in the public schools, payment on the basis of results prevails, and the adoption of a similar system in connection with our high schools, it is hoped will be found to work beneficially. The only apparent objection is that greater power over the schools will be placed in the hands of the education department, but as the legislation seems judicious, the objection will have to be borne with.