

task single-handed when every power, France among the rest, had declined to share in it. England remained in Egypt with the intention of restoring the native system of government to tolerable efficiency; but, before she had completed the work of reorganization, the new and formidable problem of the Sudan was thrust upon her; and though the solution of this problem was brought nearer by the capture of Khartoum (1898), the evacuation of Egypt has been indefinitely postponed.

It was long before France could bring herself to accept the English occupation as something more than a temporary expedient. As late as 1898 a singularly bold attempt was made by a French explorer, Major Marchand, to occupy the basin of the White Nile. The French flag was hoisted at Fashoda just when the English forces were entering Khartoum, three hundred miles lower down the river. The English refused to recognize the legitimacy of the French occupation, and the dispute was at length settled in England's favour; but not before it had threatened to produce a war in Europe. Happily this episode, which both countries have agreed to forget, was the last rumble of a storm-cloud which for sixteen years had overhung every frontier, from Western Africa to Eastern Asia, where French and English interests came into close contact. As Italy had become reconciled to France, so France entered by degrees upon friendlier relations with England.

The causes of the Anglo-French reconciliation were manifold. Undoubtedly one cause was the respect which each nation felt for the characteristic virtues of the other. One is tempted to say that the English and the French were predestined to be allies. No nations could be more unlike; but the very unlikeness made for mutual