BRITISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SUDAN
1820-1896

by

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Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Edinburgh in the Faculty of Arts, 1966.
The trail of debt I have left in the preparation of this thesis is diverse. I have exploited the works of the many historians and scholars who made their contributions in the fields of Sudanese history, the history of the British Empire and the general theory of imperialism. To all of them I owe a debt of profound appreciation.

My debts to the officials of the archives and libraries in which I have worked will be obvious. The Edinburgh University Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the Library of the Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh, have been far more than ordinarily helpful. I thank the libraries of the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the National Register of Archives and the library of the Royal Geographical Society, all of London, together with that of Rhodes House, Oxford, for their unfeeling patience and courtesy.

The Marquess of Salisbury kindly allowed me to use his grandfather's papers deposited at Christ Church, Oxford. I am also indebted to the Director of the School of Oriental Studies, Durham University, for permitting me to use the Wingate, Slatin and Rundle papers.

But my greatest debt is due to my supervisor Professor George Shepperson who spared no effort or time to teach me whatever I have embodied in the thesis of the art of historical research and whose supervision and continued advice and encouragement have been my main guide and stimulus in the production of the thesis.
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### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS IN THE NOTES

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<td>Add. MSS.</td>
<td>Additional Manuscripts, British Museum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.S.S.</td>
<td>Papers of the Anti-Slavery Society, at Rhodes House, Oxford.</td>
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<td>CAB.</td>
<td>Cabinet, Memoranda printed for the use of the Cabinet, at the Public Record Office, London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F.O.</td>
<td>Foreign Office papers deposited at the Public Record Office, London.</td>
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<td>G. MSS.</td>
<td>Papers of General Gordon, deposited at the British Museum, London.</td>
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<td>P.P.</td>
<td>Parliamentary Papers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.R.O.</td>
<td>Public Record Office, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rundle MSS.</td>
<td>Papers of General Rundle, deposited at the School of Oriental Studies, Durham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.N.R.</td>
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<td>Slatin MSS.</td>
<td>Papers of Slatin Pasha, deposited at the School of Oriental Studies, Durham.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.O.</td>
<td>War Office papers, deposited at the Public Record Office, London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wingate MSS.</td>
<td>Papers of F.R. Wingate, deposited at the School of Oriental Studies, Durham.</td>
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By 1820 there were practically no physical, political or trading contacts between Britain and the regions which now comprise the modern Republic of the Sudan. Because there were no such contacts, it is often assumed that the British knew nothing about the Sudan in the period before 1820. This is not true, as a certain amount of information on some parts and peoples of the Sudan was available mainly through the medium of three distinct sources.

One important source was the narratives of Europeans who had visited various areas of the Sudan. Those travellers were; the French physician, Charles Jacques Poncet, the Scottish sportsman, James Bruce, the young English adventurer, William George Browne, and the Swiss scholar, John Lewis Burckhardt.

The first European ever to visit the Sudan was the Frenchman, Charles Jacques Poncet. He had already offered his medical services to the Emperor of Ethiopia when he decided to go to Ethiopia through the Funj Kingdom of Sinnăr. Accompanied by a Jesuit priest called Father De Brevedent, Poncet left Cairo at the end of May 1698. From Assuit they took a caravan route to the west of the Nile until they encountered the Nile at Mishu which at the time was a large town. From hence they made their way along the bank of the Nile to Dongola. Leaving the latter at the end of 1698 they stopped at Korti; and then after following a rather devious route they found themselves in
the city of Sinnār in February, 1699. After a residence of three months in that place, Charles Poncet left for Gondar alone as his companion had died in the city.

Charles Poncet's account was published in French in 1700. It was translated into English in 1709. Poncet's narrative told of many things and peoples: it included some observations on the political situation at Sinnār, the nature and climate of some of the parts he visited together with their climate; the products and commodities of the country and some remarks on the people and their manners. All in all, the observations and comments embodied in the account were rather superficial and general.

Between 1699 and 1710 a number of Catholic missionaries took Poncet's route from Egypt through the Sudan to Ethiopia but appeared to have left no records of their journeys. Only one of them seemed to have written an informative work on Nubia and Sinnār; a work which appeared to have escaped the notice of its age. The author was a German Catholic missionary named Theodore Krump and the work was entitled, The High and the Faithful Palm-tree of the Holy Gospel, planted in the Heart of the High Abyssinian Monarch. The book was printed in 1710 at Augsburg. It is a long work with over five hundred double columned pages containing much curious information.

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1. C.J. Poncet, A Voyage to Ethiopia made in the years 1698, 1699 and 1770. Describing particularly that Famous Empire, Likewise the Kingdoms of Dongola, Sennar, part of Egypt, (London, 1709); In 1949 the account was published by the Hakluyt Society, The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century as described by Joseph Pitts, William Daniel and Charles Jacques Poncet, edited by William Foster (London, 1949), pp. 93-115.
However, James Bruce was the first of modern European travellers to write a narrative of his journey through the Sudan to Egypt which helped to rouse the thinking of the reading public. After a residence of nearly two and a half years in Ethiopia he left Gondar, the Ethiopean capital, heading towards Sinnar. He took the Buttāna route to the modern town of al-Qaḍārif which he called Teawa. After a short stay there he embarked on his journey to Sinnar which he reached on 29th April, 1772. He stayed in the capital of the Funj Kingdom until 5th September, 1772. It was during his long residence in Sinnar that Bruce obtained much of his information about the "country, religion and government", mainly from a certain notable by the name of Ahmad Sid al-Kūm. On leaving Sinnar, Bruce kept closely to the Nile passing by Wād Medani, Abu Harāz, Halfāya, Shendi, al-Dāmar; and before reaching Berber he left the Nile and headed across the Nubian Desert to Aswān. It is clear from his itinerary that Bruce's journey was confined to the towns and villages on the banks of the Blue Nile and then the Nile. Thus he saw very little of the country and its peoples. He was, therefore, unlikely to make any discoveries. At Sinnar and other villages and towns on his routes he was a mere traveller anxious only to depart northwards as soon as possible and it was only a short time that he had employed in recording something of the country.

The account of Bruce's travels was not published until 1790,

1. O.G.S. Crawford, The Fung Kingdom of Sennar, with a Geographical Account of the Middle Nile Region (Gloucester, 1951), pp. 213-4
seventeen years after his return. In Bruce’s book there were various inaccuracies and exaggerations. It was not difficult to find in his account factual mistakes, mistranslations and misrepresentation of other writers. His method of composition was unlikely to promote accuracy, or even clarity. He was obviously casual about details and his prejudices were violent.

Some of his stories on Nubia, Sinnâr and the Sudanese can hardly be convincing as one reads them today. His long speeches with the characters he had met in the Sudan were the invention of his own fertile mind and some of his characters could not but be fictitious.

The very title of his work, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, was rather presumptuous. He maintained that he had discovered the source of the Nile. In fact he visited the source of the Blue Nile which had been visited a century and a half ago by the Portuguese Jesuit Father Paez. Moreover, Bruce said barely a word on the White Nile and he ignored its claim to be considered the major branch of the Nile.

But, when all this has been said, we owe Bruce a great debt, for he recorded a mass of information about the conditions prevailing in Sinnâr, some remarks on the history of the Funj Kingdom and in general the material he had gathered was more

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1. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773 (Edinburgh, 1790); a second edition of eight volumes appeared in 1804-5; a number of abridged editions were published in the first half of the nineteenth century and a new abridgement edited by C.F. Beckingham was published in 1964.

substantial than ever before acquired by any European traveller, comprising, as it did, documents for the historian, vocabularies for the philologist, drawings of animals and birds for the zoologist, plants for the botanist, cartographical and meteorological data for the geographer, together with much information about the manners and the mode of life of little-known peoples. This information, if used cautiously and critically, is not without use even today.

Long before his Travels were published, there were those who had doubted whether Bruce had been to Ethiopia and the Sudan at all; and when his book appeared it was attacked vigorously. Even after his death his book was believed by many people to be a work of fiction and some critics continued to attack it. Nevertheless, modern critics and scholars rehabilitated the character and narrative of Bruce and gave him what was due to him.  

But if Bruce was disbelieved and attacked by many, he was not ignored. His narrative stirred up the imagination of some individuals. Among the latter was an Oxford undergraduate, William George Browne. Reading Bruce's record of his travels stirred in Browne his interest in foreign lands. Browne was

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also critical of Bruce's conclusions on the sources of the Nile. He believed that the Blue Nile, the source of which Bruce had visited, was not the true Nile. He was, therefore, determined to prove Bruce wrong by exploring the White Nile. He thought of striking the White Nile from the direction of Dārfūr and then crossing it into Ethiopia.

He, therefore, attached himself to one of the caravans which left Egypt annually for Dārfūr along that ancient route, Darb-al Arbin (The Forty Days Road). That road cut diagonally southward from the Nile across the desert. At the end of May 1792 the caravan set out on its long journey to reach the confines of Darfur two months later. Because of the suspicions Browne had aroused, it was widely rumoured that Browne was sent to Dārfūr to inquire into the state of the Sultanate of Dārfūr for the purpose of handing this information to the "Sultan of the English" who was preparing to invade Dārfūr. Browne was, therefore, kept under constant supervision. For three years he was virtually a prisoner of the Sultan, was prevented from making excursions into the countryside or to the neighbouring kingdoms and was only allowed to move between Cobbe and al-Fāsher - the two largest towns in the Kingdom of Dārfūr. It was only after the appeal of the Turkish authorities in Egypt to the Sultan of Dārfūr that Browne was permitted to return to Egypt.

William George Browne's record of his travels was published in 1799.¹ His account ranged from the description of

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¹ W.G. Browne, Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria, (London, 1799); a slightly revised second edition was published in 1806; a summary of his travels was given in John Pinkerton's A General Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels in all parts of the world, many of which are now translated into English, Vols. XV, XVI (London, 1814).
the people to that of trade, caravan routes, animals, birds, plants, government, history of Darfur, buildings, manners and customs of the people, the geography of the land and some remarks on the adjacent countries of Darfur. His account was rather general and superficial. He lacked the art of illuminating people and things with details about them. He was aware of this shortcoming and apologised to his readers in the following terms: "A more creative imagination would have drawn more animated pictures; a mind more disposed to observation would have collected more facts and incidents; and a more vigorous intellect would have converted those facts and incidents into materials of more interesting and more striking investigation. The descriptions would have been more impressive, and the deductions more profound". However, since no European had ever visited Darfur, Browne's contribution to the European knowledge of that part of the Sudan was not insignificant.

Browne's narrative appeared at a time when travel literature was becoming increasingly popular. This popularity dated back to the beginning of the century. With the opening of the eighteenth century the vogue of travel literature (which was outrun in popularity among the reading public only by theology) became firmly established and was to be sustained throughout the century.

The Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa founded in June 1788 was one of the associations

1. W.G. Browne, op. cit., p. VII.
established for satisfying this growing demand for travel literature and the diffusion of knowledge on the little known lands and peoples of Africa. The objectives and motives of the Association have recently been the subject of controversy among modern historians. It is beyond the subject matter and scope of this survey to enter into details on the Association. But reference must be made to it, as one of the travellers who had been sponsored by the Association, wrote the most penetrating and scholarly travel book on the Sudan in the early nineteenth century.

In 1813, John Lewis Burckhardt, who had been employed by the Association, undertook a journey from Cairo along the bank of the Nile as far as a point to the south of Dongola. He then returned to Egypt to prepare himself for another trip. In February 1814, he joined a caravan which set out from Esne through the Nubian Desert to Berber and then Shendi. From Shendi Burckhardt embarked with another caravan to Suakin.

Burckhardt's journeys in the Northern and Eastern Sudan did not add much to what was already on the map. However, Burckhardt was no casual traveller or explorer. He was a scholar of great diligence and with a passion for detail. He was also a linguist and endowed with great powers of observation. He brought all those qualities to bear on his narrative, *Travels in Nubia*[^2], which was published after his death by the African


As his *Travels in Nubia* demonstrates, nothing had escaped Burckhardt's eye. His description of the antiquities were not only the first to be made but they are still among the best that have been written. None of the numerous temples nor of their inscriptions escaped Burckhardt's observation - all were described in detail and the comparative excellence of each characterized. His descriptions also included those of the manners and state of society, the modes and conditions of life of the people with whom he came into contact, their languages, their productions, their commerce, the geography of their country as well as commercial centres and centres of learning. All these inquiries were so ably conducted and the result of them so clearly and distinctly recorded as to leave - in the words of a contemporary journal - little to be gleaned by future travellers.¹

Contemporary as well as modern scholars have paid tribute to Burckhardt's penetrating mind and his great powers of observation.² It is a pity that he did not go as far as Sinnar, the seat of the Government, in which case he would have left a fund of information on the state of things in the Funj Kingdom as well as on the history of that Kingdom which would have been of use not only to contemporaries but also to modern

The scant knowledge about the Northern Sudan which had been available in the period before our study starts was not provided only through the works of recent European travellers, mainly Bruce, Browne and Burckhardt. It came also from two other sources.

One source was the surviving annals and traditions of ancient European historians and writers. The literary and geographical world of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was conscious of the world of Rome and Greece. It was evident to them that the intercourse of the "Ancients" with Africa was in many ways greater than that maintained by Europeans in their own time. Herodotus, the earliest European writer, to say anything about the interior of Africa, visited Egypt in the middle of the fifth century B.C. and collected a mass of information on the ancient Sudan. On the Northern Sudan the geographers and historians of the classical world still provided the foundations of knowledge for the eighteenth and early nineteenth century reading public.

On the course of the Nile Ptolemy was still the best authority. He stated on the authority of a Greek merchant who had visited East Africa, that the river had its source in two great lakes, whose waters came from the snow-covered Mountains of the Moon. This theory was contradicted by Pliny who thought that the Niger flowed eastward to join the Nile. Both theories had their supporters and critics among the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries geographers. The classical world had also learnt something about the Nile for the Emperor Nero had sent out two centurions to discover the source of the
river. These explorers travelled down the White Nile until they found their path blocked by marshes.

In the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, many of the speculations on the ancient history of the Sudan, its monuments as well as the course and sources of the Nile were based on the writings of the ancient historians and geographers.

The accounts of the ancient writers could be supplemented by the works of mediaeval Arab geographers and scholars. The body of knowledge on the Sudan written by Arab authors in the period between the tenth century and the beginning of our period of study was considerable. Some of the Arab works were translated into European languages. Idrisi's tenth century geography had been published in London in 1619; the voluminous book of Leo Africanus was translated into English in 1600 and so was Macrize's work which contained an even more detailed account of the Sudan. But there is every reason to believe that only a small quantity of the body of Arab literature on the Sudan in existence at that time was made available to the reading public; because the works of many Arab writers were not translated into European languages.

Thus, by 1820 although there was practically no contact between the Sudan and Britain, some information concerning the Sudan was available to the reading public in three distinct sources: the writings of the ancient Greek and Roman writers; the works of mediaeval Arab scholars and the records of recent European travellers. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the British reading public was not entirely ignorant of the Sudan and that maps drawn showing the Sudan did not represent it
as a complete blank. Some areas of the Sudan were comparatively well described. Information was available on the Funj Kingdom of Sinnār, the Sultanate of Dārfūr, the main cities of these two kingdoms, their products, peoples and on the course of the Nile up to Khartoum. The course of the Blue Nile as well as the Nubian and al-Bayūda deserts were traversed and comparatively well described. The antiquities of Nubia were partially known and described. On the other hand there were several tracts of territory in all regions of the Sudan where no Briton had set foot. The districts which now constitute the Southern Sudan were wholly unknown since they had never been visited by a European and they remained a "terra incognita". However, it did not take long to explore and penetrate these unknown regions of the Sudan. This process of exploration and penetration is the subject of the first chapter of the thesis.
PART ONE

THE FORMATIVE AGE

1820-1881
1. The Era of Exploration, 1820-1865

The advances in British knowledge of the Sudan in the years 1820-1865 were greater than those made in all the centuries before 1820. The period 1820-1865 saw a steady progress in the knowledge of the country and its peoples. An increasing number of British travellers were traversing and describing the various regions of the Sudan. The main geographical features of the country were known and by 1865 the map of the Sudan was much more accurate and detailed than it had been in 1820. The antiquities and monuments of the ancient Northern Sudan were examined, described and drawn. An attempt was made to explore the ancient history of the Northern Sudan as well as to draw a picture of the Sudanese peoples.

The year 1820 was generally considered to have ushered a new era in the history of the exploration of the Sudan because in that year Muḥammad ʿAli, the Viceroy of Egypt, launched his military expedition to conquer the Funj Kingdom. Muḥammad ʿAli, it was believed had already given Egypt a stable government which enabled Europeans to travel throughout Egypt, with safety; and that if his expedition to the Northern Sudan succeeded, it would be possible for European travellers to visit the Sudan in security. By 1822 it was already clear that the Pasha's expedition had made possible the journeys of a number of Europeans who accompanied or followed the track of the expedition. One of them, G.B. English, claimed that "the expedition he laid open to the researches of the
of the geographer and the antiquarian a river and a country
highly interesting, and hitherto imperfectly known to the
civilised world". 1 The two English antiquaries, George Waddington
and Barnard Hanbury, who followed the expedition, were convinced
that without the protection of Muhammad 'Ali's troops any attempt
to explore the Sudan would never have succeeded. 2

In the few years that followed the conquest, European
travellers in the Sudan were thankful to Muhammad 'Ali for the
protection and assistance given to them by his governors in
the Sudan which made it possible for them to travel inside the
Sudan in security. "The days of Burckhardt", wrote G.A. Hoskins,
"are past. The traveller throughout Muhammad Ali's dominions
has now no occasion to submit to any indignity, or even
incivility". 3 "In praise of Muhammad 'Ali", stated another
European traveller, "it must be stated that there is not at
present that danger for a European travelling through the country
(Kordofan) as was the case during the time it was under the
government of Darfur...... at present (1844) any person may
traverse the country from one end to the other without fear". 4

The new regime in the Sudan enabled European visitors
to penetrate into the interior regions of the Sudan. Every

1. G.B. English, A Narrative of the Expedition to Dongola and
2. George Waddington and Barnard Hanbury, Journal of a Visit to
3. G.A. Hoskins, Travels in Ethiopia, above the second cataract
of the Nile, exhibiting the state of that country and its
various inhabitants under the dominion of Muhammad Ali, and
illustrating the antiquities, arts and history of the ancient
distinguished and not so distinguished Western visitor was received by Muhammad 'Ali and provided with a firman which would introduce the former to all Muhammad 'Ali's agents in the Sudan. A European with a firman would be received by the governors with all due respect. The European travellers were provided with all kinds of help - transport, provisions, escorts and even presents.

"The conquest of Dar Sheygia", the Foreign Quarterly Review thought, "disclosed to the first gaze of European eyes the temples and pyramids of Mount Berkel and Nouri. Some vague rumours of their existence had indeed already reached the civilised world, but there seemed little chance of opening a path to them otherwise than by the sword". The same journal, therefore, welcomed Muhammad 'Ali's expedition and conquest of the Funj Kingdom as "a means of dispelling the mystery which had hitherto hung over the ruins of Meroe".

The British travellers who visited the Sudan during the first fifteen years of the Ottoman rule showed an interest in discovering and examining the antiquities and monuments of the ancient Kingdom of Meroe more than anything else. This interest was a by-product of the interest in Egyptian antiquities on the part of Europeans. From the fifteenth century onwards there were numerous accounts by European travellers of their visits to the Egyptian Pyramids. By 1820 interest in ancient

2. Ibid., p. 461.
Egypt became much more widespread. This antiquarian interest in Egypt was not without effect upon the Sudan. The British antiquaries had known about the existence of the monuments of ancient Meroe but these monuments remained nearly unknown because even "the most enterprising travellers were unwilling" to penetrate into a country which they considered to be "so rugged and occupied by tribes so lawless".1

However, Muḥammad ʿAli's expedition of 1820 provided many European admirers of antiquities with the chance of exploring the Sudanese antiquities. The first European to take advantage of this opportunity was the Frenchman, Linant De Bellefonds. Linant was employed by the English antiquarian, Mr. William Banks, to determine the site of the ancient city of Meroe and to make drawings of some of the antiquities of Meroe. Linant made a journey in the wake of Ismail's army in 1821-2 and was the first European to see the ancient monuments of Musawarat and Bānaga. The result of Linant's trip was a journal which he presented to his sponsor. The journal remained in the care of Mr. Banks and his family until 1958 when it was published with an introduction by Margaret Shinnie.2

Linant's journal included drawings and descriptions of the ancient monuments he had visited especially those of Musawarat and Bānaga. His theories and deductions about the ancient sites he had seen were remarkably sensible and astute, even

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though some had been proved wrong in the light of later knowledge.¹

One other French traveller who followed closely Linant and whose story of his exploits to discover the ancient monuments of the Northern Sudan was to be published soon after his return from his trip, was F. Caillaud.² In February 1821 Caillaud overtook Ismā'īl's army near Jabal al-Barkal and travelled with the army as far as Fāzūgīlī. Caillaud was the first European traveller to describe and explain the ruins of the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Meroe to the European reading public. From his narrative of his exploits his contemporaries knew a good deal of information on the antiquities of the Northern Sudan.

In 1822 two narratives of travel in the Sudan appeared. One of them was written by the American, G.B. English,³ who had been the chief of the artillery of Ismā'īl's army and who went with that army as far as Sinnār. Although English's book dealt mainly with Ismā'īl's expedition and especially the military side of it, he made some references and observations on the antiquities. He did not fail to point out the remains of the cities and the ruined temples and pyramids he passed by and to make some comments on them.

The other journal published in 1822 was that of Mr. George Waddington and the Rev. B. Hanbury.⁴ In the years 1820-1, the

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1. Ibid., Introduction by Margaret Shinnie, p. xi.
2. F. Caillaud, Voyage à Meroe, (Paris 1823-7).
two English graduates of Cambridge University followed the invading army as far as Merowe. The two English travellers were interested mainly in the antiquities. They, therefore, examined nearly all the remains of the antiquities they met with. They visited, examined and described the pyramids and temples of Jabal al-Barkal as well as those of al-Ballal, Argo and Soleb.

In 1829 Lord Prudhoe and Major Felix were travelling in the Sudan. They visited the ruins of Jabal al-Barkal, the pyramids of Nūri, Argo, Musawarat and Bānaga. They described what they had examined and drew plans of some of the temples and pyramids.

By the end of the 1820's there were few travel books whose literature dealt largely with the monuments and antiquities of the Northern Sudan. None of the authors of these books, with the exception of Cailliaud, had a claim to be an archaeologist or a historian. They were amateur antiquaries and so produced amateurish narratives. However, through their works the reading public in Britain had the chance to know something about the pyramids, temples and ruins of the Northern Sudan. The zealous travellers did not content themselves with discovering the sites of the monuments and then describing them, but they also illustrated their descriptions with elaborate plans and drawings.

Until the end of the 1820's, no question had puzzled those interested in the antiquities of the Northern Sudan than that of discovering the site of the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Cush. James Bruce observed a range of temples and pyramids near Shendi.

1. Add. MSS.25651The James Burton Collection
and threw out a conjecture that they marked the site of the city of Meroe. Cailliaud and G.B. English who examined the ruins near Shendi as well as those at Merowe showed some disposition to agree with Bruce's view. George Waddington would have preferred the site of the modern city of Merowe as the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Meroe but on looking into ancient authorities, he conceived it untenable and acceded to Bruce's site. Notwithstanding so great a concurrence of authorities, the Edinburgh Review thought it pretty clear that the city of Meroe, the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Cush, might not be near Shendi but at the site of the modern city of Merowe.¹ It did not occur to early nineteenth century writers that a kingdom might have two capitals, and the whole debate reflected the ignorance of the writers of the history of the Kingdom of Meroe, a kingdom which was "well known to the world of Greece and Rome".²

None of the travellers of the 1820's was as enthusiastic for discovering and describing the antiquities of the Northern Sudan as G. Hoskins. Hoskins visited the Sudan in 1833-4. He took the Nubian desert route to Abū Ḥamad and then by the Nile to Shendi and al-Matamma. On his return journey he followed the Nile. The result of Hoskins' trip was the publication of a voluminous work with a voluminous title.

G.A. Hoskins travelled with the purpose of exploring and studying the remains of the ancient Kingdom of Meroe.³ At the

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end of his journey he was overwhelmed to notice that "Nubia abounds with monuments rivalling those of Egypt in gradeur and beauty and possessing in some respects a superior interest". 1 Hoskins was anxious not to leave any of the antiquities of the Northern Sudan unexplored. He visited the pyramids, temples and ruins at or near Shendi, Jabal al-Barkal, Nūrī, Argo and Soleh. He described all those antiquities, and the Italian artist, who accompanied him, made several drawings and plans for many of the monuments.

The first impression one would get from reading the works of those early amateur antiquaries was that they seemed to be overwhelmed by the extent, excellence and magnitude of the monuments of the Kingdom of Cush. The stupendous monuments of Meroe and Napata were admired in the same way as the monuments at Luxor and Karriac. G.A. Hoskins was astonished to see that some of the monuments were wonderful works of architecture. "The pyramids of Geesah", he commented, "are magnificent - wonderful for their stupendous magnitude, but for picturesque effect and elegance of architectural design, I infinitely prefer those of Meroe. I expected to find few such remains here, and certainly nothing so surprising, so interesting, as these sepulchers, doubtless of the Kings of Ethiopia. I stood for some time lost in admiration. From every point of view I saw magnificent groups, pyramid rising behind pyramid, while the dilapidated state of many did not render them less interesting though less beautiful as works of arts". 2

1. Ibid., p. v.
2. G.A. Hoskins, op. cit., p. 68.
These monuments were not viewed and examined as works of art only. They were also considered as historical records of conquerors whose conquests were represented in the various inscriptions. The sculptures of the tombs and the temples were found to portray wars, victories and triumphal processions and to mark the regions and nations over which these conquerors triumphed; and the processions bearing tributes were considered a proof of how numerous and varied were the riches of the subjects of those rulers. The monuments of sculpture and hierographics threw some light upon the mythology and arts of the ancient Northern Sudanese.

Through examining the paintings and the sculpture of the tombs, the travellers maintained that they had discovered the private as well as the public life of the ancient Northern Sudanese. The paintings and inscriptions were thought to represent the modes of life of the ancient Northern Sudanese, their trade, their amusement, their social life, their industrial tools and their agricultural equipment.

In spite of the various examinations, descriptions, drawings, plans and the different views concerning the monuments of Cush the Edinburgh Review commented, in October 1835, that "it is long before the curiosity of the enquiring portion of mankind is satisfied respecting the monumental antiquities of Egypt and Nubia". Even in the second half of the twentieth century this curiosity has not yet been completely satisfied.

If this is the case could we expect those amateur antiquaries who visited the Sudan a century and a quarter ago to have made any significant contribution to British knowledge of these ancient

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monuments? They certainly added much to the knowledge of their contemporaries as far as the antiquities and ancient history of the Northern Sudan were concerned. Even today some of their works are not without value to those interested in the archaeology and ancient history of the Northern Sudan. Some of their drawings of certain buildings and monuments are still of value since the latter had become ruined to a great extent in the intervening years that the drawings are sometimes the only remains of those monuments. On the other hand there is evidence to show that some of the monuments were mutilated and carried away by some of the travellers. A modern archaeologist, Glyn Daniel, described those early antiquarians as "no more than tomb robbers". One such tomb-robber was George Waddington who confessed that he had brought with him to England a "little granite statue". In 1851 a Sudanese notable complained to the American traveller, Bayard Taylor, that the European travellers who had come to the Sudan before Taylor's visit broke off the monuments and carried them away.

However, those pioneer travellers must be given the credit for directing the attention of antiquarians to the monuments and for initiating a process of thinking and speculation on the history of the antiquities as well as that of the ancient Northern Sudan.

As the travellers had noticed that the "arts and the monuments of Egypt and Ethiopia exhibited that strict similarity

2. George Waddington and Barnard Hanbury, op. cit., p. 156.
which marks a common origin", a controversy arose over whether
the Cushite civilisation was anterior to the Egyptian civilisation
or that the latter was prior to the former. The question was
debated at length in the narratives of the travellers as well as
by the "reviews". There were two schools of thought.

One school took the view that the ancient Egyptians derived
all their knowledge, religion, language, art and civilisation from
the ancient Northern Sudanese. Hence the Cushite civilisation was
more ancient and mature than that of the Egyptian. George Waddington
concluded his study of the antiquities of the Kingdom of Meroe
with the remark that "from the concurrence of these observations
on the antiquities of the Ethiopians with the conclusions derived
from historical evidence that the origin of the Egyptian divinities,
as well as that of their temples and their tombs, and of the
sculptures, figures and symbols that cover them may be traced to
Ethiopia". G.A. Hoskins exalted the greatness, the wealth and
commerce of the ancient Kingdom of Meroe. He described Meroe
as "the cradle of civilisation" and the richest under the sun.

The idea of the superiority and the prior civilisation of
Meroe seemed to be suggested to Hoskins by what he considered to be
the greater antiquity of its monuments, but he felt that the
monuments did not provide complete historical evidence to support
his speculations. He, therefore, tried to find written evidence
to support his theory. He quoted Diodorus who stated that the
ancient Egyptians had derived their sculpture, their laws, their
customs, their system of writing and their religion from the
ancient Northern Sudanese. ¹

¹ George Waddington and Barnard Hanbury, op. cit., p. 184.
² G.A. Hoskins, op. cit., p. 320.
³ Ibid., p. 76.
The other school of thought took the opposite view. One traveller, Major Felix, who had also examined the monuments of Meroe, judged that the ancient Egyptian civilisation was superior and prior to that of Cush. Major Felix's view was strongly supported by the *Edinburgh Review*. The *Edinburgh Review* supported its theory by citing the classical writers as well as recent authorities mainly F. Cailliard who was quoted to have written "that the pyramids (of Cush) and their porticoes are but the miniature copies of the pyramids of Memphis and the fine porticoes of Edfi". The *Edinburgh Review* thought that neither the Greeks nor the Romans had believed in the greatness of Meroe and that there was no positive testimony that Meroe was a great kingdom.

The controversy was interesting at the time because it touched on the old controversy of whether the Greek civilisation was indigenous or that it was derived from the Egyptian civilisation. There was one school of history, founded by Niebuhr in Germany which had laboured hard to prove that the Greek civilisation was indigenous and that the candid confession of Herodotus attributing to the Egyptian colonies the first introduction of the arts of life into Greece, was an idle tale, based on groundless tradition. On the other hand there was the other school of history which argued that the examination of the Egyptian monuments had shown that the Greek art originated in Egypt. If, therefore, the hypothesis of Hoskins and others of the prior and superiority of the civilisation of Cush happened

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1. Add. MSS. 25651, Major Felix's conclusions on the antiquities of Meroe.
to have any gain of truth, it followed that the Greeks derived their arts and civilisation from Cush through the medium of Egypt.

So during the years 1820-1835 the first attempt by British travellers and writers to discover something of the history of the Sudan was launched. The ancient monuments of the Kingdom of Meroe together with written records from the ancient Greek and Roman scholars, Herodotus, Diodorus, Siculus, Pliny the elder and others, were used to support one theory or the other on the ancient history of the Northern Sudan. This attempt to explore the origin, the extent and the influence of the ancient Northern Sudanese civilisation was praiseworthy and remarkable as it was as late as 1964 that the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford ridiculed the idea that there was any pre-colonial African history worth studying.

However, it was too difficult for the travellers and writers of the years 1820-1835 to make a real contribution to the discovery and study of the history of the Northern Sudan. The evidence whether extracted from the monuments or from the ancient authorities was too scanty and unscientific. The information from ancient authorities was second-hand information. Moreover, the antiquaries of the 1820's and 1830's were not equipped nor trained for historical research. They were not archaeologists. The decipherment of the hieroglyphics was only beginning. The instruments used by the antiquaries to measure the monuments were primitive.

In 1830, with the founding of the Royal Geographical Society and the discovery of the Niger as an accessible highway into the
into the interior, there was a shift in the quest for knowledge about the Sudan. The quest for antiquarian knowledge receded and it was superceded by a growing movement for advancing geographical knowledge more than any other branch of knowledge.

II

When our period of study opened even the most informed geographical quarters in Britain knew very little geographical information about the Sudan. However, the process of laying bare the geographical secrets of the Sudan to the world outside its borders had begun before 1820. The pace of this process grew steadily in the years 1820-1865. By 1865 nearly every notable feature of the geography of the Sudan was known to the British reading public. Thanks to the efforts of European travellers and explorers and geographical theorists speculation about the geographical features of the Sudan, gradually, gave place to knowledge. The sources of the White Nile, which had been debated for centuries, were known and described; its course was followed from its sources to its mouth. The upper course of the Blue Nile was similarly traced. The major tribal regions and towns were visited and described by European travellers. Maps, on which the tribal areas, the towns, the chains of mountains, the deserts and the political units were plotted, were constructed. In the years 1820-1865 the work of geographical theorists and scholars went hand in hand with that of the travellers on the spot. Yet much remained to be done and there were few regions and minor geographical features of which the British knew next to nothing.
In 1820 the geographical knowledge possessed by the British about the Sudan was meagre. Moreover, most of this information was not first hand information but derived from hearsay evidence. The Classical writers, the mediaeval Arab geographers and the recent European travellers gathered hearsay information about some parts of the Sudan which they had never visited. Before the constant movement of persons between Britain and the Sudan it was inevitable that the knowledge available should come through hearsay information. This source of information continued to be used to the end of our period.

Hearsay information had its defects. It was often communicated to the European travellers by illiterate persons. So the information was often unsupported and vague. It lacked accuracy and details. Moreover the enlightened of the inhabitants had strong reasons to conceal what they knew from their European enquirers, or to give the latter wrong and misleading information because the former suspected the intentions of the European travellers and the use to which this information might be used. In July 1863, the Edinburgh Review complained that the White Nile traders "had strong pecuniary interest in withholding what they knew". 1

But in spite of the defects of hearsay information and the difficulty in obtaining it, it was used, and continued to be used, to fill the gaps in the existing body of geographical knowledge. In the 1840's and 1850's hearsay information about the interior of the Sudan and the sources of the White Nile was collected by European

travellers from the chiefs of the tribes, the White Nile traders and the Government officials. However, after 1830 the constant flow of new data from the European travellers, who were now visiting the Sudan in growing numbers, minimised the importance of hearsay information.

Ever since the days of Herodotus, but more particularly after the foundation of the African Association in 1788, European geographers had puzzled their brains about the course and the origin of the White Nile. In 1820 the wildest theories abounded. There were three hypotheses concerning the origin or the origins of the White Nile.

Some geographers argued that the White Nile flowed from the west, that it sprang from the middle of Western Africa and so the Nile and the Niger were the same river. Others held the idea that the White Nile rose in the south-western part of Ethiopia — in the country of the Galla. Some thought that the White Nile had its sources in the Mountains of the Moon, under or beyond the Equator. This was as far as the location of the sources of the White Nile was concerned. But still another point divided the geographers sharply. This was whether the White Nile sprang from mountains or from a system of lakes.

The first hypothesis, that the Nile joined the Niger somewhere in the middle of Western Africa, originated with Mela and both Herodotus and Pliny supported it. This view had its supporters as late as 1830. The two travellers who contributed to this view were Frederick Horneman and James Grey Jackson. Mr. Hornemann reported to the African Association that he "was
informed by persons who had travelled to Darfoor, that the Niger (Foliba) passed by the south of Darfoor, into the White River".  
In a letter from Tripoli dated 18 August 1799, Hornemann informed the African Association that "the river you call Niger ......... comes from Tombuctoo, as I am told, runs to the south of Haussa (or Soudan), in the empire of Burnu; here it takes a more southern direction, and falls (at least I could not find a single man who said to the contrary), south of Darfoor; into the Nile".  

J.G. Jackson, who was a resident in Morocco for several years, supported Hornemann's idea in 1820 when he reported that a certain person had told him that he had performed a voyage by water from Timbuctoo to Cairo.  

In the 1820's the Quarterly Review continued to support this theory. In October 1822, the Quarterly Review commented that "the Nile of Bruce, must therefore, after the expedition of Ismail Pasha, be considered as a branch of a great unexplored river, which may possibly be found to be connected with the Niger".  

In 1826 the Quarterly Review welcomed the reports of Denham and Clapperton as a further proof in support of its thesis. But Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine replied with a strong article opposing this thesis.

4. Ibid., Vol. XXVIII (October 1822), p. 147.  
As late as March 1830, the idea still survived. On 23 March 1830 Sir John Barrow, Secretary to the Admiralty, wrote to Mr. Blackhouse of the Foreign Office: "Mr. Henry P. Welford is engaged by the African Association to proceed to Egypt, from thence to Sinnar, and from thence along the southern bank of the Bahr El Abaid as far, if he can, as Bornu which there is every reason to believe he will be able to do with the aid of Mohamet Ali's officers stationed in that neighbourhood ....".  

Nevertheless, in the same year Richard and John Lander had finally settled the problem of the Niger. The theory that the Nile was a tributary of the Niger was, at last, proved to be wrong. This was the end of an idea which clearly demonstrated the ignorance of the British of the geography of Africa. Even the Ptolemies were not as ignorant as some British quarters.

The second theory, that the White Nile flowed out of south-western Ethiopia, was neither current nor popular as the first and third theories. As late as 5 May 1838, the German traveller J. Russegger, who was travelling at the time in Fāzūghli, reported to the Athenaeum that "with respect to the White river, I think I have already reason to be convinced that it flows in a direction precisely contrary to that assigned to it on the maps, for it rises in the country of the Galla and the Shangalla and flows parallel to the Blue Nile".  

However, Russegger found no evidence to support a theory which had already been dead.

2. The Athenaeum, 5 May 1838.
The third hypothesis, that the origins of the White Nile lay in the Mountains of the Moon, was the most popular and the one adhered to by some of the most distinguished geographers and scholars of the day. The idea originated with Claudius Ptolemy in the second century. Ptolemy indicated that in 150 A.D. seafarers from the Mediterranean had heard reports of snow-covered mountains and lakes in the interior of East Africa. In the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century Ptolemy's idea attracted much attention. Late in the eighteenth century the theory was developed by James Rennell. James Rennell, the eminent authority in the cartography of Africa and the most distinguished English geographer of his age, collated the information inherited from Herodotus, Ptolemy, al-Idrisi and the more recent information received from Bruce, Browne, Horneman, and in the end sided with Ptolemy's theory.¹

In 1820 Ptolemy's hypothesis was the one which prevailed in the geographical world. But Ptolemy's idea could be easily challenged because his account contained no data on, or description of, the intervening lands between the confluence of the White Nile with the Blue Nile and the origins of the White. To fill this gap in the knowledge of Europe, European travellers began to ascend the White Nile from Khartoum, to observe geographically and to describe what they had seen, hoping ultimately to reach Ptolemy's lakes.

Many British geographers appeared to have entertained hopes that Muhammad Ali's expedition to the Sudan might throw light on the long standing question of the origins and course of the White Nile. Such optimists were disappointed. The two European travellers, G.B. English, who had penetrated with the invading army as far as Sinnar, and F. Cailliard, who had accompanied the army to Fāzūghli, brought no new information on the course of the White Nile. F. Cailliard complained that "there was not sufficient temptation to induce the Pasha to trace the line of the Abaid".¹

In spite of this disappointment, the hope that the new régime in the Sudan might ultimately solve or help in solving the problem of the origins of the White Nile, was not given up. "If however", wrote the Foreign Quarterly Review, "the Egyptians shall be enabled to retain the Kingdom of Sennar many years longer and to establish there as firm a government as Mohammad Ali has established in some of his nearer conquests, there are still hopes that progress may be made towards the solution of this grand geographical problem even in our generation".²

The African Association devoted its resources in the last ten years of its existence to solving the problem of the sources of the White Nile. In these ten years the Association sent "the first modern explorers to be given the specific task of reaching the Nile sources".³

The first emissary of the African Association who hoped to unveil the secrets of the White Nile was Captain Robert James Gordon, R.N. Captain Gordon undertook the object of exploring the White Nile upon the condition that he would receive two hundred pounds from the Association. Gordon left England in 1821 and was in Aswan on 13 June 1822. He was furnished with a firman to the authorities in the Sudan to give him all possible help.

Some quarters in Britain appeared to be sanguine that Gordon's journey would prove fruitful. The Quarterly Review commented that: "Captain Robert James Gordon of the Royal Navy left Cairo in May last (i.e. May 1822) for the purpose of ascertaining the source of the Bahr el Abaid. He is alone and sets out with a full determination never to return without making some important discoveries. 'If', says he, 'I should find it advisable for my purpose to travel as a slave of some black merchant, I will most gladly do so, for I feel there is no retreating from what I have undertaken to perform - en evant is my motto, and trust to fortune'.

Captain Gordon travelled from Aswan to Berber. After Berber all authentic traces of his movements were lost. He was said to have visited the mountain regions of Kordofan where he fell ill of a tertian fever. George Hoskins wrote eleven years later that Gordon had gone via Dongola to Kordofan, then travelled across country to Wad Medani where he died. Lord Prudhoe, who made a journey to Sinnār in 1829 and passed by

Wad Medani, reported that Gordon had arrived there ill about June 1821 and had died out of a tertain fever.¹

The second emissary of the African Association, Linant De Bellefords, was more successful than his predecessor. After his first trip to the Northern Sudan in the years 1821-22, Linant was back in England where the African Association suggested that he should make a journey at their expense to discover the sources of the White Nile, but he was also to give his attention to the river south of Dārfūr which W.G. Browne had called the "Bahr Misselad".²

At the meeting of the Association on 6 June 1827 the Chairman notified the meeting that he had received several letters from Linant. He had succeeded in passing all cataracts with a boat belonging to the Association and he intended after making drawings of the antiquities of several of the cities of ancient Meroe to follow up the Bahr al-Abaid or the White Nile in the boat. The state of the country, the Chairman believed, rendered it very doubtful whether Linant would be able for the present to prosecute his navigation up the River at least to any

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great distance. In that case he had been directed by the Committee to return to Egypt and there await the departure of an expedition which the Viceroy of Egypt had signified to Mr. Salt, the British Consul, his intention of sending to the White Nile.¹

However, Linant was the first European to ascend the White Nile after its confluence with the Blue Nile. He reached the confluence of the two rivers in April 1827. He then followed the course of the White Nile until he reached al-ʿAis—a distance of 152 miles south of Khartoum. But he turned back after being warned by a trader of the danger of proceeding without a messenger or proper presents into the country of the Shilluk.² In his Journal, Linant complained that the Shilluk were hostile and that he was unable to extract any information from them as their Chief was "an absolute brute and his people no less stupid and ignorant".³ This appeared to be the reason that forced him to abandon his attempt to go further to the south.

Linant's journey was not futile. His Journal, which was not published until 1832, was of some interest to geographers. It was clear from his Journal, that he did his best to extract information from the inhabitants of the places he had visited.

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¹ Minute Book for the General Meetings of the African Association, 16 June 1827, quoted in Robin Hallett, Records of the African Association, p.236.
² Robin Hallett, op. cit., p.237.
concerning the course and the sources of the White Nile. He was, thus, able to add much new data and to put forward an accurate hypothesis as to the river's source:

"The Sheikh Hassan of Fasuolo also told me that south of the Shikoukhs the Bahr-Abaid is lost in some extensive lakes, which stretch away to the westward, and communicate with each other during the inundations, the intervening country being flat and marshy. And the remarks which I made on the stream agree well with this statement, neither gravel nor sand indicative of its being fed by torrents being found in it, and its shoals being all clay, proving that it does not come from mountains, but from a country of the same nature; or, at least, that if it does originate in mountains, it has a long subsequent course over a country of an opposite kind, whence its source cannot possibly be in the Mountains of the Moon, or, at least, in the place where they are marked in our maps. Besides all which, another remarkable fact seems to me to prove indubitably that it comes from a system of lakes; namely, the prodigious quantity of fish which arrive with the freshes at their first appearance, for these fish can only come from lakes where they remain imprisoned when the waters are low, and escape when the inundation takes place."¹

The mission of the third emissary of the African Association, Henry Welford, to trace the course of the White Nile ended as tragically as that of Captain Gordon. At the meeting of the

¹. Ibid., p.187.
Association on 19 June 1830 the Chairman told the meeting that Mr. Welford had communicated to the Committee his intention of travelling in the interior of Africa and requested the assistance of the Association for that object and the Committee, having found him a person qualified for the undertaking, had thought themselves justified in granting him a limited pecuniary credit while engaged in the single object of exploring the course of the White Nile but for no other purpose.  

An article in the Gentleman's Magazine for January, 1830, described Welford's intentions in the following terms:

"He ... is about to sail for Egypt, and proceed thence to Sennaar, the Bahr el-Abaid, and Mountains of the Moon, from which point he will penetrate through the unexplored countries westward to lake Tzad, returning either by way of the Gold Coast, Timbuctoo, or the Desert. The Bahr el-Abaid is now supposed to be the real and most abundant source of the Nile, and some celebrated geographers imagine that the Tzad is the reservoir from which this vast river is supplied. The Mountains of the Moon have never yet been visited by any European; and Mr. Henry Welford's journey promises to be one of greater novelty and interest than anyone since the first expeditions of Mungo Park and Denham".  

Mr. Welford left England in the beginning of April 1830. He was furnished with a letter of recommendation from the British

Government to the Sultan of Bornu "to which city he will endeavour to penetrate after having quitted the Abaid".\textsuperscript{1} As in the case of Captain Gordon, nothing was heard of Welford the moment the young explorer left Alexandria. He seemed to have travelled as far as Kordofan where he fell a victim to the climate of that province.

Thus, by 1831 when the African Association decided to merge itself with the newly founded Royal Geographical Society, all the attempts of the Association to trace the course and discover the sources of the White Nile had proved fruitless. The Association chose the route of ascending the Nile from the north to the south and thought the discovery could be done by one person. But later experience was to show that it was impossible for a single person, travelling as the Association required its employees, to have forced a way through the formidable barrier of the Sudd and the great distance between the confluence of the two rivers and the sources of the White Nile.

However, by 1831, the rapidly growing intercourse between Egypt and the Sudan promised to make the British more and more informed of the geographical features of the Sudan. And since the late 1820's new data about the geographical features of the Sudan, especially the regions to the south of Khartoum, was constantly coming from various sources. A number of European

\textsuperscript{1} Minute Book for General Meetings of the African Association, 19 June 1830; quoted in Robin Hallett, Records of the African Association, p.242.
travellers were travelling in the various regions of the Sudan and then communicating the new information they could obtain to the geographical world of the West. Information was also sought from the officers of the new régime who would soon penetrate westwards as far as El Obeid, eastwards to the Red Sea and southwards as far as Gondokoro.

Reference has already been made to Linant's journey up the White Nile as far as al-Áis. Linant also travelled in 1827 from Wad Medani through the Butána to Atbara and then Shendi. He was able to make a few geographical observations on the nature of the country which he had traversed; and to give a few remarks on the River Rahad.¹

Dr. Edward Ruppell of Frankfurt-on-the-Mein took the caravan route from El-Deba to El-Obeid in 1824. Besides the great mass of statistical and geological information, the result of Dr. Ruppell's trip was a number of astronomical observations by which he had fixed the latitudes and longitudes of the spots he had visited.²

Dr. Ruppell's geographical observations in Kordofan were followed up by the English traveller, A. Holroyd, who in 1837 travelled from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum and then to Sinnár. Returning from the latter place to Wad Medani he then proceeded westwards until he struck the White Nile at Manjara where he crossed the river and advanced to the west as far as El-Obeid.

¹ Adolphe Linant, op.cit., pp.188-190.
While on his travels in the Sudan, Arthur Holroyd observed the places and the geographical features he met with. His observations and notes were valuable for the geographers as it enabled the Royal Geographical Society to construct a detailed map of the Northern, Central and part of the Western Sudan. His "Notes on a Journey to Kordofan, in 1836-7," 1 fed the geographers' interest by the detailed account of his route and his acute observations.

Holroyd had also conceived of an interesting plan to explore the sources of the White Nile with a steam vessel. He thought that a steamer might reach the sources of the White Nile in six or seven months from Berber, and twelve or fourteen months from Cairo; and that it was more likely to succeed than a sailing expedition with a large number of troops in discovering the sources of the White Nile. 2

While Holroyd was at El Obeid, a certain Mr. Russegger, a German mineralogist employed by Muhammad 'Ali, arrived on his way to the mountains of Shaibūn. He was able to communicate few remarks on the nature of the country he visited. 3

Before 1820 geographical details and accuracy dropped off sharply south of Shendi. After this date it fell sharply south of the limit of Ottoman rule. No European could venture to go far beyond this limit. Exploration followed the flag and when

2. Ibid., p. 191.
at last the first voyage of serious exploration set out it was an Egyptian Government expedition. But before we consider the contribution of these expeditions of the Egyptian Government in 1839-41 to the geographical knowledge of the British, let us pause for a while to brood over the share to the general stock of geographical knowledge contributed by the officers of the new régime in the Sudan before 1839.

The increasingly growing intercourse between Egypt and the Sudan after 1820 promised to make the British much more informed of the geography of the Sudan. The gradual penetration of the Government troops into the interior promised the flow of a new information to the geographical circles in Britain collected by these troops during their march. Although most of the itineraries of the troops were recorded by the European travellers who often accompanied these troops, it might happen that on one occasion or the other a slaving party or "ghazwa" would embark without being accompanied by a European. W. Martin Leake, the last Secretary of the African Association, wrote of such a slaving party and of the most recent and valuable information which had been obtained by its head Ibrahim Khāshif. But Mr. Leake complained that the party stopped short where it ought to have penetrated further to the south: "As a want of success alone caused the return of the Turkish slaving party, - the natives constantly eluding their pursuit, - it seems evident, that if geographical discovery instead of man-stealing had been

1. W. Martin Leake, "Is the Quorra, which has lately been traced to its Discharge into the Sea, the same river as the Niger of the Ancients?" J.R.G.S., Vol. II, (1832), pp.25-25.
their object, they might have explored the river much farther; and that it might consequently be in the power of the Viceroy of Egypt to arrive at the mysterious sources, or to escort an European mission thither, if a motive sufficiently powerful should ever prompt him to assist in the attempt".¹

It was a common complaint among British geographers and explorers that Muhammad 'Ali and his officers in the Sudan did not show great enthusiasm for geographical exploration. The fact was that after 1830 the British interest in discovering the source of the White Nile was constantly growing while they imagined that Muhammad 'Ali was unenthusiastic for the discovery of the sources of the White Nile. The interest in such discovery was not confined to Britain, but was wide-spread among all the geographers in Europe. The European Consuls in Egypt, therefore, began to approach Muhammad 'Ali about this great geographical problem. Why, asked the Viceroy, were the European Powers interested? There must be money in it. So he listened intently to what the Consuls had to say and, as he told Khurshid, I said to them: "The sources of the Nile should be on the same latitude as America. Now, as metals are found in abundance in America, no doubt they will also be found at the sources of the Nile. But you need a capable man to go there with troops at his command to search for the gold deposits".² Muhammad 'Ali appeared to be influenced by what the Consuls had told him as he later told Khurshid, the Governor, that "... the

1. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
great are those who leave lasting traces of their sojourn upon this earth .... Humanity charges us with the duty of following the example of the great. If you and your troops attain your goal, (the discovery of the sources of the White Nile) you will perpetuate among men the memory of your deeds till the end of time. You will add a glorious page to the history of our Egypt ... and render a signal service to mankind".¹

Before the Egyptian Government's expeditions were launched, some British quarters had their own plans for discovering the sources of the White Nile. On May 21, 1838, the President of the Royal Geographical Society told the annual meeting of the Society that "an expedition is in progress and fitting out by private subscription of individuals interested in African discovery for penetrating up the Bahr El Abaid or the Western and main confluent of the Nile. It is intended to entrust this task to a native of Dongola ... as he is less exposed to the evils of the climate and the hostility of the inhabitants".²

In March 1838 a committee for the discovery of the White Nile sources was formed by some of the British travellers in the Nile Valley as well as some geographers. The Committee proposed to achieve such discovery by organizing an expedition. In its manifesto issued in March 1838 the Committee declared that "the great sacrifice of life in African discovery, where white men have been employed, and the facility enjoyed by the blacks in traversing the country, point out the great advantage

¹. Ibid.
of employing natives ...". The Committee was convinced that a person, well calculated to be employed for the purpose of discovering the sources of the White Nile, had been found. That individual was a certain Muhammad, the son of a chief of Dongola, who had spent seven years in Europe and who, in 1838, was in London. Several individuals, in whose service he had been employed, subscribed highly satisfactory testimonials of his good conduct; and from all that the Committee had been able to learn and observe they were of the opinion that he was a person who might be expected to succeed in discovering the sources of the White Nile.

The Committee was also set up for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for the purposes of giving proper instruction to the said Muhammad, for defraying the expenses of his journey as well as for the formation of a fund for his remuneration upon his return. The Committee invited all those interested in solving the geographical question of the course and sources of the White Nile to subscribe for this expedition. The Royal Geographical Society gave the project its blessing by donating fifty pounds.²

The plan of the Committee was to send Muhammad in secret and to pass him through Egypt and the Sudan incognito because the Committee believed that "the consequences of his being

1. Add. MSS. 25652. The James Burton Collection, Letters and papers relating to the expedition up the Bahr-el-Abaid or the White Nile, 1838-39.
2. Ibid.
discovered would be that innumerable difficulties would be thrown in his way. The Pasha instigated by jealousy and intrigues would delay and most probably prevent his departure.¹ However, the Committee obtained a letter of recommendation from Lord Palmerston to Colonel Campbell, the British Consul in Cairo, in which the former asked the latter to request Muhammad 'Ali to give the emissary of the Committee every help in order to achieve his mission. The letter was to be presented to Colonel Campbell only in case the emissary had been discovered.

It appears that Muhammad travelled as far as Khartoum. In his report of the first voyage Salim wrote that he received an order from Muhammad 'Ali to take with him Abd al-Karim Efendi, "agent of the English Government", but this man told Salim two days before the departure of the flotilla, that he would make the journey by land. A Frenchman, who was in Khartoum when Salim's first expedition left for the south, came across a Dongolawi whom he called "Kerim Efendi", who gave out that he would reach the sources of the Nile by way of Kordofan and Darfur.²

It seems that the London Committee did not hear from Muhammad the moment he was safely in his homeland and when the first expedition of the Egyptian Government to discover the sources of the White Nile sailed from Khartoum in November 1839 he was not among its members. In the period between November 1839 and March 1842 three expeditions were launched by the Sudan

¹. Ibid., James Burton to Sir John Campbell (undated but probably middle of March 1838).
². R. Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, pp.69-70.
Government for the purpose of discovering the sources of the White Nile. They followed the White Nile as far as its junction with the Sobat, left the Sobat and sailed to Lake No whence they turned south and entered the channel of Bahr el-Jebel. The furthest point they could reach was the site of the future trading station, Gondokoro. The shallowness of the river, the series of rapids and the hostility of the southern tribes prevented the expeditions from proceeding further to the south.

The progress of the expeditions was followed with keen interest in the geographical world of the West; and the hope was entertained that the expeditions would rob the White Nile of its secrets. But to the geographer's disappointment they failed to do so. However, the expeditions had traversed a considerable part of Bahr el-Jebel, a track which had not been trodden by any European before. The three European travellers, two French, a certain Thibaut and a certain d'Arnaud and a German, a certain Werne, who had accompanied the expeditions, obtained much new data on the course of the river, its depth, its width, its current and its capability for navigation. The distance which was run in miles and the state of the barometer were also recorded. The change in vegetation was marked. Observations on the Sobat and the fact that a large river from the West (Bahr al-Ghazal) joins the White Nile at Lake No were made known to the geographers for the first time.

In Europe the narratives and maps of the three European travellers aroused great interest. In France the Journal of
the Captain of the Expeditions, Salim, was translated into French. In Berlin, Professor Carl Ritter, published in 1844 "A glance at the source-territory of the Nile", with a map which incorporated d'Arnaud's and Werne's results. In Britain Werne's book was translated into English in 1849.1

The three expeditions did not discover the sources of the White Nile, but they were not total failures. For the first time Bahr el-Jebel was known to be navigable and hence the whole course of the Nile from Gondokoro to Wadi Halfa had become, through the efforts of the three expeditions, navigable by large boats. Moreover, the expeditions made it clear to western geographers that the sources of the White Nile lay further to the south than was assigned to it in western maps. The failure of these expeditions to discover the sources of the White Nile reinforced the idea of those who believed that the best way to discover the sources of the White Nile was to attack it from the coast of East Africa. If this idea, which had been suggested as early as 1838 by a certain Captain W. Turner and then elaborated on by the two German missionaries Krapf and Rebmann and Dr. Beke in 1848, was taken up by the Royal Geographical Society, there was a great possibility that the lakes might have been explored earlier.2 When this line of discovery was adopted, it led first to the exploration of Lake

1. Ferdinand Werne, Expedition to discover the sources of the White Nile, in the years 1840, 1841, 2 Vols. (London, 1849).
Tanganyika and then Lake Victoria N’Yanza.

Thus by 1841, the main stream of the Nile from Gondokoro to Wadi Halfa was followed and described. But a few feeders of this great river were not yet traced and observed geographically. The most important of these were the Bahr al-Ghazal and Sobat.

In 1861 John Petherick, who had been in the Sudan since 1845, claimed that he had made three journeys through the eastern bank of Bahr al-Ghazal in the years 1853-58. In his first journey he traced the Bahr al-Ghazal as far as Meshra er Req, and in his second journey he penetrated as far as the territory of the Luo. In his third journey he reached the Equator. It appears that at the time of the publication of his account there were some who queried his extravagant claim to have reached the Equator but his account was accepted on the whole. However, it has recently been thought that these early expeditions of John Petherick were only a product of his imagination. Whether they were fictitious journeys or genuine ones, the account of these travels, as published in his book, contained practically no useful geographical information on the Bahr al-Ghazal area.

However, it was due to the labours of John Petherick and his wife that the geographers in London had at last secured some information on the region between the Bahr el-Jebel and the Bahr al-Ghazal. In March 1862 John Petherick and his wife left

Khartoum to the interior of the Southern Sudan. This expedition was financed with funds raised by public subscription. John Petherick and his expedition ascended the White Nile as far as Lake No, then took Bahr al-Ghazal to Abu Kuka, proceeded to the south passing through the Jur lands, the Moru and then to Neangara. Lastly, they took an eastward route to Gondokoro.¹

Mr. Petherick was not a trained geographer and he did not possess good instruments for observation. So his astronomical observations and subsequently his longitudes and latitudes and other remarks were not exactly correct. But they were enough for John Arrowsmith to construct a crude map of the region between Barh al-Ghazal and Bahr al-Jebel.² This map showed the extent of Petherick's discoveries. It was an attempt to delineate the courses of the streams which fed the western affluents of the White Nile. Other features of the region, swamps, lagoons, rapids and vegetation were also shown. Petherick also measured the volumes of water discharged by the White Nile, the Bahr al-Ghazal and Sobat.

In 1865 the Sobat was the least known of the important tributaries of the White Nile. It had been very much neglected. It had not been traced by any European for more than two hundred miles from its confluence with the White Nile and its sources were not known. The Royal Geographical Society was

aware of this fact. In 1861 a Committee formed of three members of the Royal Geographical Society, in accordance with the resolution of the Committee of the Society, considered the proposal of Mr. Samuel White Baker to accompany Mr. Petherick in his journey up the White Nile. The former Committee, however, considered that the Sobat had not yet been ascended and proposed that Mr. Baker might make the exploration of that river the first object of his expedition. "If Mr. Baker succeeds in tracing any branch of the Sobat to its sources, he will have conferred a great benefit upon the cause of geographical discovery".\(^1\) - so judged the Sub-Committee. Nevertheless, Samuel Baker refused to abide with the suggestion of the Society.

In 1861 John Petherick claimed to have ascended the Sobat for a small distance after its confluence with the White Nile. He extracted a few remarks on the course, the width, the depth, the drainage, the tributaries of this river and the vegetation on its banks from the inhabitants.\(^2\) In August 1862 three Dutch ladies went up the Sobat "as far as it was navigable" and described it as a river of importance only during the period of high water.\(^3\)

Throughout the 1860's few European traders and adventurers

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1. MSS. relating to the Nyanza Expedition, the Library of the Royal Geographical Society.
continued to penetrate into the Southern Sudan through the different routes. A party of three Dutch ladies penetrated as far as a few miles south of Gondokoro but they added no new geographical information. A Venetian traveller, Mieni, penetrated further into the country south of Gondokoro. But none of these travellers was able to reach the southern latitudes of Speke and Grant or that of Baker. The discovery by Speke and Grant of the lake which they called Lake Victoria N'Yanza in 1862 and by Samuel Baker of the lake he named Albert N'Yanza in 1864 solved the mystery of the sources of the Nile which had puzzled the Western World for centuries. But these two discoveries did not finally close the centuries old debate on the sources of the Nile, as there were still some who doubted that the problem had at last been solved by the discoveries of Speke, Grant and Baker. However, the year 1865 saw the end of the classical age of European discovery of the sources of the Nile.

During this period of classical discovery, few reports dealing with the Blue Nile, its tributaries and River Rahad and its tributaries reached the geographers in Britain. These geographers seemed to be satisfied with the information provided by Bruce and the Portuguese missionaries on the Blue Nile in spite of its thinness and inaccuracy. It is true that by 1820 the source of the Abai, the largest tributary of the Blue Nile, was known

1. Ibid., pp. 107-146.
through these sources. Yet there was a considerable part of the upper course of the Blue Nile which had not yet been explored. There was a tendency among geographers to undermine the importance of the Blue Nile. Even now this attitude survives with the result that the hydrology of the Blue Nile and its tributaries is less well recorded than that of the White Nile.¹

In 1820 there was practically no information on the upper course of the Blue Nile from Sinnar to its source. Similarly there was also lack of information on the two tributaries of the river, the Rahad and the Dinder rivers. But before 1830 some data on the upper course of the Blue Nile came from the Ottoman troops who ascended the river as far as Fazughli. More information came from Mr. Russegger. In 1838 he ascended the Blue Nile from Sinnar to Roseires and then proceeded with the troops as far as the present boundaries between Ethiopia and the Sudan. This traveller was in correspondence with the London newspaper, the Athenaeum. He sent his remarks and observations on the upper course of the Blue Nile to this paper.² He was also able to announce to the geographers that the Blue Nile was navigable in the rainy season by large boats from Khartoum to Roseires.

Few facts on the river Rahad came from Adolphe Linant. But substantial and interesting information on the Rahad, the Dinder and the Atbara and their tributaries came from Samuel Baker who had explored these rivers and their tributaries in 1861-2. He was the first European to provide some data on these rivers. Of special interest to the geographers was his defining the position and hydrographical conditions of the affluents of the river Atbara.

Thus in the period 1820-1865 steady efforts were being made by European travellers, explorers and traders to extend the geographical knowledge possessed by the West on the Sudan. In their journeys and intercourse with the inhabitants the European travellers were anxious to lay hold on all they could see and hear. Moreover, they were anxious to make this known to those interested in new data through their correspondence with the geographical societies in the West or with certain journals and newspapers and finally through the publication of the accounts of their travels.

The practical geographers found in the observations and the sketch maps of the routes of the European travellers some material for the construction of maps of some parts of the Sudan.


One would not expect such maps to be perfect. Most of the European travellers were without geographical training and they lacked the habit of mental accuracy. Moreover, they observed with, or without, primitive instruments. So their longitudes of the various places they had visited were apt to be inexact. This want of exact geographical data made it difficult to construct exact maps.

Those early maps had also other weaknesses. They followed the routes of the travellers. And since most of the travellers had travelled by the Nile or followed its course, or they had taken the centuries-old caravan routes, the details were satisfying only along the Nile and the routes of the caravans. The further one went from the banks of the Nile and its tributaries, the more one realised that the land became just a landscape. Also the more one penetrated into the interior of the Southern and the Western Sudan, the more one would lose sight of any geographical features on the maps.

However, those early maps give an idea of what the British knew of the different regions of the Sudan during the period 1820-65. Almost every available data was put into the maps - the relief, the hydrology, the natural vegetation, the soil, the caravan and trade routes, and towns and villages, were all pinned into the maps.

If in cartography the work of the geographers in Britain was closely connected with that of the travellers on the spot, the work of critical geographers was more advanced than that of both explorers and cartographers. This work of synthesis was
was initiated by James Rennell at the end of the eighteenth century.

In 1832 W. Martin Leake surveyed the knowledge inherited from Pliny, Ptolemy, Erastosthenes and Herodotus, together with the more recent information on the geography of the Sudan conveyed by modern travellers mainly Browne, Linant and the slaving parties of the Ottoman troops. He arrived at the conclusion that the origins of the White Nile lay in lakes which might be supplied by streams flowing from a distant range of mountains.¹

After 1832 more information on the geography of the Sudan was constantly conveyed by the increasing number of European travellers to the geographers. In Britain strenuous efforts were made by scholars and "arm-chair" geographers to collate, analyse and criticise this new data. The Presidents of the Royal Geographical Society used to put before the members in their annual meetings the new data received in the preceding year. In most of the thirty four volumes of the Geographical Journals of the Society from 1832 to 1865 there was some sort of commentary on the geography of some region of the Sudan.

British geographical thinking on Africa in this period was dominated by the synthesis of W.D. Cooley, James MacQueen, Dr. Beke and Sir Roderick Murchison - all of them fed the public interest by their researches into the problem of the sources of the White Nile.

¹ W. Martin Leake, "Is the Quorra, which has lately been traced to its Discharge into the Sea, the same River as the Niger of the Ancients?", J.R.G.S., Vol. II (1832), pp. 35-8.
James MacQueen thought that the sources of the White Nile lay in the "Mountains of the Moon" which might have snow on them. South of these were several large fresh water lakes. Cooley's article on Lake Nyanza in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1845 clearly showed that he was convinced that there was one large lake in the interior of East Africa. He had failed to realise that Lake Nyanza and Lake Tanganyika were distinct.

Dr. C.T. Beke, the Ethiopian traveller, was also a prominent "arm-chair" geographer. After his active exploration in Ethiopia, Beke became involved in a debate with a rival traveller D'Abadie, who claimed to have reached the sources of the White Nile. Beke rejected the assertion of D'Abadie and others that the "Mountains of the Moon" were in Ethiopia. Beke wrote a series of papers developing his view that the true sources would be found in Unyamwezi. He, therefore, thought that the ideal way to reach these sources was from the East African Coast.

By 1852 Sir Roderick Murchison was able to announce the results of his own researches. He saw the interior of Africa as a plateau

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with a string of lakes in the centre. He argued that the White Nile sources would be found in lofty mountains which formed the upward edge of the plateau near the east coast. His views, thus, resembled Beke's but he seems to have been cautious about identifying such mountains as the "Mountains of the Moon" or assuming that they would be snow-covered.¹

In 1860 James MacQueen collected all the data concerning the ascents of the White Nile from the expeditions of the Egyptian Government in the years 1839-41 to that of Don Angelis in 1851 adding to this new data the old information received from ancient authorities and the Arabs and he contended that a lofty mountain to the south-east of the cataracts of Garbo, the last station reached by Brun-Rollet in 1851, was the chief feeder of the White Nile.²

One sometimes thinks that "exploration" was a "Euro-Centric" expression. Those early European travellers were moving along caravan routes that Sudanese traders had trodden for centuries and were visiting cities and states that were well known to the traders in the Northern and Western Sudan. Similarly in the Southern Sudan the European travellers were in no sense entering regions untouched by the outside world. The Northern Sudanese traders, the "Arabs" and the "Turks" had penetrated far into the interior of the Southern Sudan by the time that European explorers arrived.

Exploration had seldom been inspired by pure scientific curiosity. After all most of the explorers, if not all, were neither geographers nor scientists nor scholars. Some of the travellers went for the sake of adventure. Others were men seeking fame by way of exploration. Few of them sought pecuniary advantage as they hoped to profit by the sale of the accounts of their travels. This pecuniary advantage was also in the minds of those who went for the sake of hunting; as hunting involved the hunting of elephants and the ivory got out of elephants could sometimes be very profitable. And lastly trading enterprise was a motive with some of the explorers.

There was no doubt that most of the travellers were individuals seeking fame by discovery. In 1876 Charles George Gordon gave it as his opinion that: "It is all the fault of the notoriety and praise and absurd adulation that is paid to men who came to these parts (the Southern Sudan) that men are tempted to start in their explorations for which so many are unfit. They think they will go to Africa to make a great name".¹

Most explorers had known before they set out on their journeys for exploration that fame would almost inevitably result from any outstanding, or sometimes any, discovery that one of them would make. Entering for a Royal Geographical Society Gold Medal for discoveries, in Murchison's time at least, was likely to give a man entry not only into London's scientific society but its

¹ G. MSS. Add. MSS. 40665 Charles Gordon to R.S. Standen, 25 October 1876.
fashionable society as well. 1 This could be useful for arranging future work as in the case of Samuel White Baker.

Trading enterprise was a motive with at least one explorer, John Petherick. However, most travellers did bear in mind the possibility of future commerce. John Petherick tried to convince the Royal Geographical Society of the advantages that might be derived by Britain from an extension of trade between the Sudan and Britain. "It would be superfluous of me to make any general remarks upon the advantages to this great country", Petherick told Sir R. Murchison, "of any extension of its trade with Central Africa by increased facilities for obtaining additional supplies of cotton, gums, ivory, India-rubber, oils and a variety of articles of minor importance; but perhaps you are not to the same extent aware of the benefits that an additional export trade, that I trust at no distant period is likely to present itself to us in the shape of a market for cotton manufactured goods in those regions. 2

The growing interest in the commercial possibilities of the Sudan was due to the fact that most travellers thought highly of the economic potential of the Sudan. As early as 1839 Arthur T. Holroyd was convinced that the land between the Blue and the White Niles was of high quality and that "if a canal were cut from Wad Medinah to Monkarah, with branches north and south, almost all the land might be used for the production of cotton, indigo, tobacco, sugar, grain, etc." 3 In 1863 Samuel White

2. Petherick MSS., the library of the Royal Geographical Society, John Petherick to Sir Roderick Murchison, 19 June 1860.
Baker believed that "the great prairies of flat land" that extended "from the Atbara to the River Rahad and to the Blue Nile", might be cultivated with cotton.¹

Thus the motives behind exploration were much more complicated than the word "exploration" with its hint of pure scientific curiosity implies. The consideration of these motives leads one to the belief that in dealing with this era of exploration one is touching the roots of imperialism. Those pioneer explorers did not themselves do much to set the partition of Africa in motion but they were nonetheless the precursors of imperialism.

2. British Images of the Peoples of the Sudan, 1820-1881

Early British images of the peoples of the Sudan can, almost entirely, be explored and analysed from British literature relating to the Sudan from 1820 to 1881. Most of this literature is travel literature, written by people who visited the Sudan with clearly stated objectives: they were discoverers, antiquaries, administrators, hunters and traders. The remaining part of British literature on the Sudan was produced by "arm-chair" commentators, reviewers and "humanitarians" who, many of them, digested the newer narratives of the travellers; few absorbed both the new and old travel literature, and very few digested this dual travel literature together with some of the writings of ancient European writers and medieval Arab geographers.

The travel literature is a most valuable criterion from which we can discover, interpret and criticise the most significant and prevailing British attitudes. It was a literature written by men who for one reason or another had shown an interest in the country and its peoples, set out to find out what they had anticipated, described it and communicated it to a less informed reading public. Their reports explained and reflected their own attitudes. These attitudes did not speak the sense of the whole British nation. But their writings contributed considerably to the instruction and education of the attitudes of the stay-at-home reading public. The readers, lacking other information and opinions, had no choice but to take on the opinions and images of the visitors whom they considered as the principal witnesses. Many of the judgments of the visitors on the peoples of the Sudan were accepted, and rarely, if at all, questioned. These judgments had passed into common currency at the time although each of them is now bitterly contested.

The limitations and disadvantages of British literature on the Sudan in this period were out of all proportion to its significance. The critical eye of the second half of the twentieth century finds many of the views and judgments of these early travellers naive, immature, uninformed, ignorant and prejudicial. If all those shortcomings are obvious to us now we should not be harsh and ungenerous to those early writers and judge them by our modern standards of historical scholarship and objectivity. In other words we must avoid the mistake they...
fell into; judging a certain people with the values of other peoples and another age to the extent as to reduce the former to nonentity. We must remember that most of the writers were too much a part of their own days and community and whatever faults we discover with their writings were, for the most part, the faults of their generation and people. The "scientific" attitude to reporting was unknown to this generation of travellers. So we cannot expect from them unbiased accounts.

Still some of the obvious prejudices of the writers could have been avoided had the travellers been of a different calibre. The most obvious limitation arose from the fact that most of this literature was written by travellers who lacked any intellectual training. Most of them had an all-round education that needed to fashion an 'English gentleman'; but none of them was very well-educated. None of them could claim to be a Barthe or even a Park or a Clapperton.

Most of them came from families of substance; for travel was still a privilege of the well-to-do. Their family upbringings enabled them to be accustomed to the highly cultivated features of society in the upper walks of life in England. They were also brought up in a society which had already been in the midst of industrial and social revolutions. Their age was an age of an ever-increasing growing British nationalism. This nationalism fostered British patriotism; an admiration for everything that was British and an undisguised contempt for all things that were deviant from the British way of life. Since the time of Elizabeth, the English had always
worshipped themselves or some special qualities in themselves.

This travellers' partiality for their own culture and values provided them with a list of prejudices which they could not surmount in the background of their minds. Accordingly we almost see everything through British eyes and judged by the moral, material and cultural standards of their age and society. "The English insist upon their own weights and measures as the scales of human excellence",¹ we were told by Sir Samuel White Baker. This partiality armed them with the artist's eye for oddities and a pre-occupation with the exotic which commanded both the attentions and feelings of their readers, and which, judged from the standpoint of both writers and readers, were especially absurd or foolish. And so many of their aversions towards Sudanese peoples and customs had arisen from the travellers' partiality for their own culture and values rather than anything inherently bad in these peoples and their customs.

This was a time in Britain, when, if a traveller or a writer mentioned any fact that was contrary to the pre-conceived ideas, held by their generation, about what used to be called "primitive races"; he was certain to incur unpleasant response from his readers and to be accused of exaggeration and misrepresentation by his reviewers. Speke was aware of this and so he warned his readers at the beginning of his book that, "if my account should not entirely harmonise with pre-conceived notions of primitive races I cannot help it".² But there

was little danger that many of the writers and travellers would follow Speke's example. They arrived in the Sudan with these pre-conceived views. Some of them, namely Baker, Gordon and Petherick, had enough experience and residence in the Sudan to weigh their own impressions and to check the information given to them. But they still tended to fit the facts of the country to a pre-conceived pattern of their own.

Most of the travellers and their readers were interested in the character of the country, i.e. its geography, game, antiquities and natural history, more than its peoples. But there was always a relationship between man and his environment which the travellers could not ignore. Moreover, without the help of the Sudanese porters, guides, servants, interpreters and chiefs, none of these travellers could have achieved any discovery or obtained any success. The contact with such Sudanese figures resulted in varying character studies which filled the accounts of the travellers.

The Sudan was too big a place for generalities. The Bohemian traveller, I. Pallme, noticed the diversity of peoples even within one province of the Sudan: "There exists, perhaps, no country in which the inhabitants are so various and diametrically opposed to each in character as in Kordofan, for, after half a day's journey from one district to the other the traveller is almost entirely tempted to believe that he has arrived in a different country". 1 If this was the case, how much sense did it make to talk about the "Sudanese character"? The study of the "Sudanese character" was essentially an inquiry into the characters of the various peoples who had inhabited the

Sudan. In spite of the fact that the Sudan possessed a great degree of internal diversity, it was possible to find some common characteristics running through the diverse Sudanese peoples. It did not require the uncommon talent or insight of a visitor to notice the common characteristics shared by the Arab communities of the north. It was also true that even a casual visitor could not miss the common qualities running through the Negro societies of the Southern Sudan. In the reports of these early travellers, one often met with sweeping statements on the Arab or Bedouin, or on the Negro of the South. Sometimes one would find an image of a whole tribe, like the Dinka, or a town, like Berber, or a class of people in a town like the merchants of Sinnar.

The general picture of the Sudanese societies communicated by the travellers to their readers was not favourable and one would find it less and less sympathetic as the travellers advanced to the deep south. Something of the nature of the Arabs of the north was known to both travellers and readers through the writings of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century European travellers. Many of the travellers quoted Bruce and Burckhardt. But as the travellers moved from that part of the Northern Sudan relatively familiar to them, at second-hand, to the southern part which was entirely unknown to them, the general estimate of the peoples of that part would enter into the realm of fantasy.

Any traveller describing a Sudanese people had always something to say about their physical appearance. Then the
picture was completed with a list of vices, virtues and some of their customs. There was little disagreement among the reporters as to the list of vices and virtues attributed to the Bedouin or the Negro. An individual writer might emphasise this or that vice or virtue; but still he could not change drastically the list of natural goodness and sins.

The main vices attributed to the Arab of the north were held to be indolence, superstition, fatalism, ferocity, treachery, avidity, debauchery, bigotry, polygamy, poverty, ignorance, lawlessness and lying. The positive features of the character of an Arab were: hospitality, generosity, courage, self-respect, pride, endurance, love of independence, honesty, mild manners, civility, politeness, charity, simplicity, respect for the age and sometimes gratitude and nobility of character.

In portraying any of the Arab communities different views merely shifted the balance of these traits, adding here and subtracting there. "There is a considerable resemblance, in the domestic customs among all the people who inhabit the borders of the Nile from Assuan to Sennar. They differ, however, somewhat in complexion and character. The people of the province of Sukkot are generally not so black as the Nubian or the Dongolese. They are also frank and prepossessing in their deportment. The character of the Shaygian is the same, except that he is not idle, being either an industrious peasant or daring freebooter. The people of the third cataract are not very industrious, but have the character of being honest. The people of Berber are by far the most civilised of all peoples of the Upper Nile. The inhabitants of the provinces of Shendi and Halfya are a sullen,
scowling, crafty and ferocious people; while the peasants of Sennar are a respectable people in comparison with those of the capital. Throughout the whole of these countries there is some general characteristic in which they resemble the Indians of America, namely courage and self-respect.\(^1\)

The writer of this passage tried to strike a balance between the badness and goodness of the peoples. The balance might be struck in the negative or positive side. Most of the writers on the Shāğiya seemed to be impressed by their positive qualities rather than repelled by their vices. On the other hand, the same writers' portraits of the Bishāriyin were that of a people if not "barbaric" and "savage", they were close to "barbarism" and "savagery". But never would the good characteristics of any Arab tribe drop out altogether. In general the attitude of most of the travellers towards the Arabs was summed up by G.A. Hoskins: "The Arab tribes, even the most remote cannot be called savages, since they speak one of the richest and most beautiful languages in the world and many of them are versed in the Koran".\(^2\)

There was almost an unanimous reporting among the writers that the virtues of hospitality and generosity existed in excess everywhere among the Arabs of the Sudan. The travellers had always admired and were amazed at the hospitable and courteous manners in which the Arabs were accustomed to receive the travellers. Before experiencing Arab hospitality, the accepted notion was that the Arabs, like other "primitive" races, were far

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away from the civilities of "civilised" nations. How could such rough and "primitive" people possess such refined qualities as hospitality and civility?

None of the writers nor their reviewers asked himself this question. The travellers often observed but they rarely asked questions. A modern European scholar has amply provided us with an answer to this question. "The following will normally appear as the more positive features of their (the Bedouins) character: endurance, bravery, love of independence, hospitality and generosity, honesty. These are not accepted by Europeans only, but also form a living ideal which the urbanised inhabitant of modern Arab speaking countries has unshakeably in his mind".¹

G.A. Hoskins had given an interpretation which was not far away from the above interpretation. To him the Arab, "hospitality and civility are merely the effort of their benevolence and the performance of a duty".² "To the Arabs generosity is the noblest of virtues".³ A quite contrary interpretation was given by Arthur T. Holroyd: "They (the Shaiqiya) are hospitable by compulsion or from motives of gain, and in some instances from fear".⁴

Predestinarianism and indolence were the two vices most frequently reported. It was commonly believed by writers that the doctrine of Predestinarianism exercised a great influence

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3. Ibid., p. 193.
upon the character of the Arab and his life. Indolence was closely associated with fatalism. It was difficult for any writer to talk about the latter without touching on the former.

It was a common belief among writers that the Arab simply accepted all that had passed in his way. "Endowed with an imperturbable stock of apathy more comfortable perhaps, although not so intellectual as European philosophy, they submit to a distressing accident, which would throw one of our countrymen almost into fever, without allowing their equanimity to be in the least disturbed. 'Mactub min Allah,' 'it is written, it is the will of God,' they explain with placid resignation, and, instead of brooding over their misfortune, became immediately reconciled to it, and with amazing facility banish it from their thoughts". ¹ "The name of God is coupled with every trifling incident in life and they believe in the continual action of Divine special interference. Should a famine afflict the country, it is expressed in the stern language of the Bible 'The Lord has sent a grievous famine upon the land'; or, 'The Lord called for a famine and it came upon the land'. Should their cattle fall sick, it is considered to be an affliction by Divine command; or should the flocks prosper and multiply particularly during one season, the prosperity is attributed to special interference. Nothing can happen in the usual routine of daily life without a direct connection with the Hand of God, according to the Arab's belief. The sudden and desolating arrival of a flight of locusts, the plague, or any other unforeseen calamity, is attributed to the anger of God, and is believed

¹ G.A. Hoskins, op. cit., p. 67.
to be an infliction of punishment upon the people thus visited".  

Laziness was similarly reported. "The Arabs in general, but especially the Berbers are averse to active exertion. I have often seen several of them sitting together for many hours in the shade, with their eyes closed, in a listless and sapine state, neither talking nor engaged in any occupation. Perfect repose of body and mind, is the highest felicity they are able to conceive". "Indolence the characteristic quality of the Arab, he is fertile in excuses for doing nothing. On the Nile if the wind blows, the Arab sailor will excuse himself for work by say 'why should I work? Is there not wind?'. If it blows not, he will answer, 'Why should I work? There is no wind'. He does not embarrass himself if he can find no ready apology but has a word 'Kidi', 'so it is' which serves him, on all occasions, as a reason, or excuse or a belief from any embarrassing interrogatory".

Some of the travellers went on to investigate the effects of the habits of resignation and indolence upon the life of the people. The general impression was that these two habits stood terribly in the way of improvement. The Arabs were contented under any circumstances and so had no desire to improve themselves. So long as an Arab had enough to procure any kind of food, he would seldom exert himself to procure more: "They prefer to live miserably and scarcely better than their

fellow labourers the camels, rather than to better their condition, secure an independence and a provision against a day of distress. To increase their possessions and elevate themselves to a higher rank of their activity and frugality, are ideas which never enter into the minds of these children of destiny. Other writers saw in these habits impediments to any change to the better, any progress, or reform in the ideas and institutions of the Arabs.

The belief that the Arab was indolent and content was reinforced by many mistaken observations. The picture of idleness was reinforced by the existence of the institutions of slavery and polygamy, and the habit of employing young boys. It was thought that slaves performed every menial service, real labour in the farm and the houses done by the women and the tending of the herds and flocks was the job of the younger members of the community. This "leaves the middle-aged and older men in constant state of idleness." It was moreover reinforced by the belief that little of the land that was available for agriculture was cultivated by the Arabs.

The exaggerated description of the idleness of the Arabs would certainly convince any reader who was not well acquainted with the nature of the Arab and the life in the desert. The Arab was not as idle as they thought. The Arab men gave themselves wholly to war and military exercises. The desert life needed a "feudal militia" and the men provided this militia.

The desert Arabs were in constant movement. They depended on their flocks and herds and the existence of their animals depended upon pasturage. So they wandered and during this process of movement the men were always ready should the whole group be attacked in the wilderness. It was hard for the travellers to appreciate this fact because they came to the Sudan at a time when the new régime restrained the Arabs from their military exercises. And so the Arab men looked to the travellers like idle men. The writers had also exaggerated the abundance of land available for cultivation. In fact very little land was available for cultivation to engage all men and so change their pattern of life from warriors to Fellahs.

Convinced that their observation and description of the resignation and laziness of the Arabs were true, the travellers tried to find some explanation of how it came about that these two habits existed among the Arabs. This attempt at explanation was an attempt on behalf of the writers to represent themselves as not entirely devoid of some sort of scholarship.

The common interpretation, which was widely held, was that it was Islam which taught those Arabs of the desert the habit of resignation to alien circumstances. It was believed that all the actions and ideas of the Arabs were based on the religious principle that as God's Will was over all and on all that will must be done. And so as "Allah Wills it", recurred and recurred whether the Arab was met with fortune or misfortune. This providentialism in its turn created and perpetuated idleness. Moreover, "There is in the Mohamedan religion itself a great want of encouragement to art, science or industry. It does not give
honour to labour. The book and the sword are the only two objects which it presents as worthy of the ambition or the reference of its votaries. .................................. Agriculture has no praise in the Koran, nor has manufacture nor commerce; it is the book of the desert, addressed to the inhabitants of the wilderness". ¹

One wonders how far this judgment would stand up to impartial scrutiny today. Modern British scholars of Islam would not completely agree with this nineteenth century judgment.

Professor Gibb stated that: "Muslim 'fatalism' .......... does not go very much beyond that found in any community (Muslim, Christian or Hindu) in which poverty and ignorance breed resignation in the face of bodily ills, physical disasters and the violence of tyrants. The ordinary Muslim takes thought for the morrow, like any other man; he assumes, like other civilised persons, that given actions will produce given results; and even in the matter of his future in the next life he takes predestination much more lightly than the Calvinist, since he believes that, whoever they may be whom God has predestined to hell fire, they are certainly not be found in the Orthodox Muslim community". ²

A dominating view of the Bedouin among literary circles was that the Bedouin had not undergone any change from immemorial times neither in habits nor costumes. "The Arabs generally adhere strictly to their ancient customs, independently of the comparatively recent laws established by Mohamet. Thus concubinage is not considered a breach of morality; neither is it regarded

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¹ John Bowring, op. cit., p. 2.
by the legitimate wives with jealousy. They attach great
importance to the laws of Moses, and to the customs of their fore-
 fathers; neither can they understand the reason for a change of
habit in any respect where necessity has not suggested the
reform. In the absence of
fixed home, without a city, or even a village that is permanent,
there can be no change of custom. There is no stimulus to
competition in the style of architecture that is to endure only
for a few months. No desires for strange and fresh objects
excite his mind to improvement, or alter his original habits;
he must limit his impediments not increase them. Thus with a
few necessary articles he is contented. Mats for his tent,
ropes manufactured with the hair of his goats, and camels,
pots for carrying fats; water-jars and earthenware pots or
gourd-shells for containing milk; leather water-spins for the
desert, and sheep-skin bags for his clothes. These are the
requirements of the Arabs. Their patterns have never changed,
but the water-jar of today is of the same form that was carried
to the well by the women of thousands of years ago." Many
of the writers on the Bedouin of the Sudan contributed to this
thesis in their narratives.

Neither Baker nor the other writers were original in
advancing the idea that the changing centuries had brought little,
if any, change in the Bedouins' way of life. The idea was as old
as the Old Testament. Baker and the other writers had drawn
from the Bible some of the visions of the Bedouin.

1867), pp. 127-129.
had nothing to add to the Bible's descriptions of the Bedouin and his reading of the Bible seemed to convince him that the Arabs of the desert had undergone no change. "This striking similarity to the descriptions of the Old Testament is exceedingly interesting to a traveller when residing among these curious and original people. With the Bible in one hand and these unchanged tribes before the eyes, there is a thrilling illustration of the sacred record; the past becomes the present; the veil of these thousand years is raised, and the living picture is a witness of the exactness of the historical description. At the same time, there is a light thrown upon many obscure passages in the Old Testament by the experience of the present customs and figures of speech of the Arabs; which are precisely those that were practised at the periods described".¹

Writers realised that the picture of the Arab would not be complete unless the descriptions of his character were supplemented by conveying to their readers those peculiarities in the Arab's way of life. So the travellers jumped into these strange customs which seemed to them foolish ways. They were made to contribute to their image of the inferiority of the Arab.

Many of the customs looked to the travellers disgusting and distressing. The Arab custom of eating the tripe, the intestines, kidneys, liver, lungs and heart of sheep or calf raw and bloody seemed to all travellers bestial. The circumcision of boys and girls appeared to most reporters barbaric. The local habit of "sh'ilūkh" - two, three or four gashes on each cheek of a man or a woman, which was considered by the Arabs as a sign of

¹. Ibid., pp. 129-30.
beauty, was denounced by the travellers as a disfigurement. The manner in which the people console each other on the death of one of them, by weeping, tearing their shirts and throwing dust and ashes over their heads was ridiculous to the eye of the Briton. The "dilka" or in the words of Petherick, the "Turkish bath" was considered dirty.

The authors described, and sometimes vividly, such strange customs. Some of them went as far as uttering moral judgments on these customs. But none of them had some scholarship or deep imagination to view these customs in the social and cultural context of the society in which those customs were dominant. Had they done so they would have spared their moral judgments to themselves. John Petherick once tried the "dilka" and arrived at a conclusion which was quite different from that of other travellers who saw in the whole process of "dilka" a repugnant and dirty operation. "After a little consideration, although not much liking the idea of being smeared with oil, I submitted to the operation, and found its effects much less unpleasant than I anticipated. The following morning I awoke quite revived; the feverishness had entirely subsided and with a calm and refreshing sensation through my limbs and body". This is a clear evidence that distressing or foolish a Sudanese custom might seem to the ignorant Briton; there was a valid explanation for it, as soon as its effects were experienced on the spot. After experiencing the "dilka" Petherick went on to provide a rational explanation for it. "............ to its use (the dilka) is to be ascribed the entire absence of cutaneous diseases, and also their being able to resist the cold and cutting winds of
winter with no other protection than a slight calico scarf or shirt. It is also "used by women instead of water and it makes their skin appear clean and fresh".¹

If nearly all the writers failed to paint a favourable picture of the character of the Arab and his habits, some of them were fascinated with the desert and the desert life. Desert life seemed to some travellers as a free life with its many charms. It was a life free from the restraints and passions of the world. "The desert life has its charms which are only enhanced by these dangers. We are there independent, perfectly free from the restraints of the world and those passions which agitate man in society".² "A mere gallop across the desert produces a certain excitation and levity of spirits, a gay and rapturous feeling of liberty, that cannot be experienced elsewhere. The naked inhabitant of the desert is subject to no master and acknowledges no superior; his very view is unbounded, and all that he views is his own; he can direct his steps whether he wills; and trace his path where no man has trodden before him, the shrubs on which he feeds his horse, and the spring of which he drinks, like the stars that light and guide him are common to himself with the whole world; he can change then when he chooses, and again travel the waste which he fancies to be infinite".³

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This love for the desert and the admiration for the desert life did produce a humane and romantic approach to the Bedouin. This humane attitude jumped at those qualities which the Arab acquired through living in the desert and which seemed to the British traveller admirable. The two distinct ones were bravery and affection. "In all wars in Asia as well as in Africa - the desert irregular soldiers are the Bedouin Arabs; nor is it any wonder that they are the bravest people in the world, since they are naturally the most free". "The desert life has also another charm, it is gratifying to see how, when treated as men the Arabs become attached to you". One could smell in this the tone of the "good savage". And in recognising in the Bedouin the "noble savage"; Waddington and Hoskins were not original. As far back as the late seventeenth century Abbe Carré saw in the Bedouins of the desert the "good savage". This approach was taken up and expanded upon by Burckhardt in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

But this romantic approach towards the Bedouin and desert life must not be taken as an attitude of mind which favoured the Bedouin and his way of life. It was a reaction against the restraints, inadequacies, injustices and troubles of a competitive and industrial society. It was also a result of the dominant tendency among writers to compare British things with Sudanese things.

If some British travellers and writers could conceive a few bright sides in the character and life of the Arab of the North, they could discover none in the Negro of the south.

Their picture of the Negro was all dark—as dark as a cloud without a silver lining. If some of the Arab tribes of the north looked to the prejudiced eyes of the British travellers "semi barbarics" and "semi-primitives"; to all British travellers the Negro tribes were "barbarics" and "savages".

The very few virtues of the Arabs of the north were entirely absent from the character of the Negro—so reported the travellers. But the Negro had all the vices of the Arab. More and more vices were added till the reader would be convinced that there was no vice which could not be found in the character of the Negro. The most unforgivable vices attributed to the Negro were: cannibalism, "paganism", treachery, cruelty, debauchery, drunkenness, ferocity, idleness, obtuseness, sorcery, and promiscuity. There was little disagreement among the reporters when portraying the character of the Negro. In the north there was a controversy among the travellers concerning the character of the Bishāriyin Arab tribe. Some thought them to be entirely bad, while others argued that they were not as bad as they were sometimes pictured. "There are no good negroes: they are all bad". This was the verdict of Baker's men. But Baker and almost all British travellers made no secret that this statement was in conformity with their ideas of the Negroes.  

At a meeting of the British Association at Nottingham in

1866 Baker was asked his real view of the Negro race. His reply was short and condemnatory: "They are black". This reply infuriated a reader of the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, a certain W. Allen, who accused Baker of inconsistency as Baker had previously given several incidents which demonstrated that he had high opinions of certain Negroes. Baker, for example, stated that he had left his wife for weeks under the care of one of these "black" individuals, whilst he was away upon a hunting expedition; and that in taking leave of his black servant, Baker seemed to have had a high opinion of his character; as in his description the words "faithful" and "devoted" appeared to express his feelings very inadequately.¹

The *Edinburgh Review* judged, rightly, that, "We Anglo-Saxons stand too far from the Negroes, socially, morally, intellectually, to be able to influence them like the Arabs, the Tawareks or the Wahumas".² But the generation of British people who visited the Sudan at this period failed to understand the Negro of the south let alone to influence him. They saw themselves far too superior to the Negrophysically, intellectually, morally and socially, that they felt nothing for the Negro except pity, contempt and disdain.

And so with the general impression that the Negro was inferior, sub-human and bestial, they had little degree of modesty and tolerance to accept and try to explain away the dissimilarities

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between them and the Negro in their social and environmental context. And these dissimilarities accounted for much of the aversion the British visitors felt for the Negro of the Southern Sudan.

The dissimilarities started with the physical ones. The naked body and coal black face was unattractive to the eye of the British. The British travellers had always praised the noble physical looks of the Arabs of the north. "The regularity of their features (the Shāiqīya) the softness of their skin, the lustre of their eye remind us of the most specimens of the Arab race and might even rank them as Europeans". ¹ If the fair complexion of the Shāiqīya, seemed to induce British writers to rank them with themselves, the dark colour of the Negro was taken by many Britons as a mark of the bestiality of the Negro. The thick lips, the flat noses and the extraction of some of the lower front teeth was made to contribute to this picture of bestiality. "......... their (the people of Roseires, in the Blue Nile) contenances have not the stupidity of the southern Negroes and have no resemblance whatever to their western neighbours, the Dinkas who really look like monkeys than men, except the deep black colour of their skin". ²

The records published during this period were written to supply information to the British reading public who had already formed very definite ideas about the Negro. The bestiality of

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² Athenaeum, 5 May 1838
the Negro was not a new idea in English literature.\footnote{For the British image of the Negro between 1700-1800 see: Katherine George, "The Civilised West looks at Primitive Africa", \textit{Isis}, Vol. 49, Part 1, No. 155, (March 1958), pp. 62-72.} But certain writers found it useful to develop. For example, Petherick narrated an account which must have been the child of his own imagination: "An old negro stated to have been a great traveller was sent for and told me that with a great deal of address he had as a trader, penetrated territories of a great number of tribes lying south, (of the Luo Jur) the first of these at the distance of some months travel, he found to be men like themselves, but exceedingly savage in their dispositions .......

Further on, the people were possessed of four eyes - two in the front and two behind and subsequently they could walk backwards as well as forwards. The tribe adjoining them frightened him out of his wits; their eyes instead of being in their heads, were placed under their armpits so that when they wished to see it was necessary to raise the arm ....... he proceeded still further south. He found the people with faces similar to monkeys and had tails a yard long. At the last tribe he visited after years of travel, were dwarfs, whose ears reached to the ground and were so wide, that when they lay down one served as a mattress, and the other for a covering".\footnote{John Petherick, \textit{Egypt, the Soudan and Central Africa} (London, 1861), pp. 280-1.} Petherick cited these statements given to him by an old Luo. He seemed to be convinced by his informant's tale, and so he made no attempt to check the accuracy of these fantastic statements. Probably they were quite in harmony with his, and his readers', image of the Negro.
The image of the bestiality of the Negro was further developed by the charges of cannibalism. In a private letter to Colonel Gordon, Gessi told his former master that he was an eye-witness to scenes of cannibalism. "During all this time what revolting scene have I not witnessed? For months soldiers fed upon the bodies of their comrades. I have seen a parent eat his own offspring - a husband devour his own wife. It was impossible to prevent such cannibalism. As soon as any one died, his body was torn to pieces and carried off in shreds by the survivors". John Petherick was not an eye-witness to any scene of cannibalism, but he assured his readers that the information he got from reliable sources pointed to the fact that the Zande were cannibals: "they glory in their reputation of cannibalism", and "are much dreaded by their neighbours, both for their courage in warfare and their habit of cannibalism".

The tribal societies of the Southern Sudan were bestial societies - so reported the travellers; because they lacked any form of religion, were lawless, without any regulations to guide their sexual conduct. "Historic man believes in a divinity; the tribes of Central Africa know no God; Are they of our Adamite race?" Baker claimed that he endeavoured to persuade the most intelligent of the Negroes of the existence of a Deity who could reward and punish; but beyond that he dared not venture as they would have asked him practical questions which he "could not have

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explained to their material understanding". 1

Gordon was later quite of Baker's thinking and was even less inclined to make allowances for the Negro understanding any form of religion. Gordon believed that it was impossible that the Negro could "ever be got to understand the love of God in Christ". This was so because he looked upon Negro races as he would look on children of four or three years of age, incapable of understanding the truths of religion till they were more matured in knowledge. He concluded that the Negro races must pass the "period of their youth" before they could be taught Christianity. 2

"Whilst the people of Europe and Asia were blessed by communion with God through the medium of his Prophets and obtained divine laws to regulate their ways and keep them in mind of Him who made them, the Africans were excluded from this dispensation and consequently have no idea of an overwhelming Providence or a future state; they therefore trust to luck and to charms, and think only of self-preservation in this world". 3 This lack of any sort of faith made the Negroes demoralised beings. "A black women is seldom faithful to her husband than a few months". 4 The Negroes "live a most indecent life". 5

The image of the Negro as a beast rather than a human being was completed by citing those habits of the Negro which seemed to the British travellers repulsive. The uncleanly habits of the

1. Dorothy Middleton, op. cit., p. 236
4. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, 29 Jan. 1874
5. G. MSS. Add. MSS 40665 Gordon to F.S. Standen, 16 April 1874.
Negro, his practices of sorcery and polygamy were considered to be unworthy of a decent human being.

This dark picture of the Negro and his way of life was in line with the general British thinking about the Negro as a whole. But the travellers' works were burdened with unimportant material to support their opinions about the Negro. A more extended investigation and a small amount of impartiality and scholarship would have proved that some of their views and judgments had been erroneous and prejudiced.

They were so because nearly all of them could see absolutely nothing but the outside. None of them penetrated in an unusual degree into the personalities and the ways of life of the peoples. None of them peered into all corners of a certain Sudanese society with sharp eyes. They darted from the physical shapes of the peoples, to their morals, their qualities and customs but in this process of observation they missed very much because they did not look at their peoples very closely. None of them showed a rare capacity to see below the surface, demonstrated the power of reason over prejudice and achieved perfect impartiality and justice. They were too strident and too eager to find fault with the peoples.

This inclination to look at the bad sides of the peoples was enhanced by the physical and mental discomforts that the Sudan had inflicted upon the travellers. The strains put on the travellers by the heat and dust of the Sudan, the horrors of the desert and its burning climate; malaria and fever, and the difficulties they had found in adjusting themselves to the ideas and habits of the people; all this tended to alienate them from the Sudan and its
peoples and to colour their views. Most of them saw their friends or other fellow-travellers fall a prey to diseases.

Moreover, they were not free from restraint. They had a patron, their reading public, which they were obliged to entertain and please. They tried to out-do each other in this task. In trying to achieve this, they did their best to fit their facts and opinions to the already formed line of thinking of their readers on the Arab and the Negro. The Victorian reader was inflicted with consciousness and a constant assumption of superiority. And to a great extent the popularity of a traveller's narrative was due to the fact that he had succeeded in exalting the sense of pride and superiority in his readers by providing them with the material which took for granted their claim to superiority over "primitive" peoples.

It is commonly assumed that it was the traveller's aversion to the "savagery" and "brutality" of the Negroes and the startling habits of the Arabs that forced the British travellers to show a distaste to both races, to adopt harsh, contemptuous and arrogant attitudes towards them. And this contempt was held as a justification for their ill-treatment of the inhabitants, their unscrupulous conduct and their resort to means not always quite justifiable, if judged from the point of view of what they considered to be their own values by which they tried to judge those peoples.

So it is not surprising that Samuel White Baker should feel a deep contempt for the Negro; deeper than Charles Gordon's dislike for the Arab. Baker kept close contact with the Negroes while Gordon was even in closer acquaintance with the Arabs. Both Baker and Gordon started their Sudanese careers as adventurers.
They were both very ambitious persons. They wanted to make names for themselves. "It is all the fault of the notoriety and praise and absurd adulation that is paid to men who come to these parts, that men are tempted to start in these explorations for which so many are unfit. They think they will go to Africa and make a great name". It was this love for making great names that induced both Baker and Gordon to embark on their Sudanese adventures and missions. But to make a name one had to accomplish some sort of a success. They would not achieve or fulfil their ambitions without the help of the Arabs and the Negroes.

They started from a wrong assumption. They thought the Arabs and the Negroes would be docile, passive and attentively obedient to them. They expected the Arab and the Negro to accept their strong views on the superiority and prestige of the white man, and in particular, the Englishman. They found neither the Arabs nor the Negroes were subservient. Neither of them held them to be great enough to be worthy of their admiration. Neither of them were apt to give them what they had considered to be their due respect. They found the Arab and the Negro as proud as they were. It was exactly this Arab and Negro pride and their unwillingness to assist Baker and Gordon in tasks, which they had no interest in, that frustrated both Baker and Gordon. But Baker and Gordon were very ambitious and were determined to accomplish their missions and make names for themselves. It was their ambitions which guided every act of theirs. Baker felt that the Negro was ungrateful: "However severely we may condemn the horrible system of slavery,

the results of emancipation have proved that the negro does not appreciate the blessings of freedom, nor does he show the slightest feeling of gratitude to the hand that broke the rivets of his fetters. His narrow mind cannot embrace that feeling of pure philanthropy that first prompted England to declare herself against slavery, and he only regards the anti-slavery movement as a proof of his own importance. In his limited horizon he is himself the important object, and as a sequence to his self-conceit, he imagines that the whole world is at issue concerning the black man. The negro, therefore, being the important question, must be an important person, and he conducts himself accordingly - he is far too great a man to work. Upon this point his natural character exhibits itself most determinedly. Accordingly, he resists any attempt at coercion, being free, his first impulse is to claim an equality with those whom he lately served, and to usurp a dignity with absurd pretensions; that must inevitably insure the disgust of the white community".  

Julien Baker was of the same views of his uncle, Samuel Baker. "The treachery of these brutes of niggers is beyond belief", he wrote in his Journal. "They have not", he continued, "the slightest feelings of gratitude, honour, fair dealing, but will always try to gain their point by the basest treachery".  

Samuel Baker's hatred of the Negroes could be attributed to the fact that they refused to accept the strong views he had held on the superiority of the British. They were not as submissive as he had imagined, and when he told the Bari that he was

going to annex their territory to Egypt, they "ridiculed" the idea of annexation and coolly informed Baker that "no government would ever be established in their country". It was the failure of Baker to obtain the submission of the Negroes that forced him to hate them; and because the Negroes showed insubordination to Sir Samuel Baker and frustrated his ambitions they appeared to him ungrateful and must be treated "like a horse without harness, he runs wild, but, if harnessed, no animal is more useful". And so Baker began to harness the Negroes: He robbed them of their cattle and their crops, forced them to leave their homes and families in order to carry his luggage for him. And when criticised for this he replied that they were black, so unequal to the white man and they, therefore, must not be judged by human rules and values.

Gordon hated the "natives" as much as Baker. Gordon's view was that both the Arabs and the Negroes were cowards and effeminate brutes "without any good point about them". But Gordon's hatred for the Arabs was much more than his dislike for the Negroes. This was due to the fact that he came into clashes with them as much as Baker had clashed with the Negroes. He found them insubordinate to him when he had expected them to be subservient to his will. When he could not exercise that influence he wanted to exercise over the Arabs, he consoled himself with attributing to them all the qualities he thought them to be bad.

3. Gordon to his sister, 7 April 1875, quoted in George Birkbeck Hill, Colonel Gordon in Central Africa (London, 1881), p. 77; also Ibid., p. 269
CHAPTER II
SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY: BRITISH IDEAS AND ACTIONS, 1820-1881

1. Reports and Protests against the Slave Trade, 1820-1862

Before the return of Speke and Grant from their historic journey in 1863 British public and official opinions showed very little interest in the questions of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. Before 1863 there was practically no correspondence relating to the slave trade in the Sudan among the papers of the Anti-Slavery Society. As late as 1861 Missionary opinion seemed unaware of the slave trade in the Sudan. In that year the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* published an article surveying the slave trade in Africa and the efforts of European powers to abolish it. The article contained no reference to the slave trade in the Nile Valley. However, there were few British reports on the trade and a few protests based on the information derived from these reports. The aim of this section is to point out the contents of these reports and to indicate the sources of the protests.

The narratives of British visitors to the Sudan in the period 1820-1862 did not turn blind eyes to the two institutions. There were passing references to the slave trade and slavery, but these references indicated that they did not consider the two questions significant enough to merit their full consideration. Even a casual observer could not have

1. They are now deposited in the Library of Rhodes House, Oxford.
2. *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, No.149 (1861).
missed the sight of slaves in almost all important markets. Moreover, almost all travellers met slave caravans while they were travelling through the Sudan. So most of the British travellers had something to say about slave markets and slave caravans; how the slaves were procured; how they were led into slavery, the prices of slaves and the number of slaves carried into slavery every year.

G.A. Hoskins, who visited the Sudan in 1834, was the first British traveller in the nineteenth century who tried to collect some information on the slave trade in the Sudan. He stated that the Governor of Sinnār, Khūrshid Pasha "sends every year never less than 500 and often as many as 3000 slaves" to Cairo. He referred to the ghazwa or razzia led by the Governor of Kordofan against the blacks of the white Nile; the misery and hardships the slaves would endure after they had been captured; their sufferings from the scanty allowance of water in the desert; the numbers who would perish from fatigue, heat and thirst; their painful journey on foot, their wretched food; their ignominious exposure for sale in Cairo market and the cruelty of their masters.¹

Captain W. Peel, who travelled in 1851 as far as El Obeid, the hotbed of the slave trade at that time, stated his conviction that the number of slaves captured in the "neighbourhood" of El Obeid and sent to Egypt was "very great". He was an eye-witness to a scene in the "government courtyard"

where some slaves were exposed for sale.¹

The slave markets seemed to attract British visitors to Egypt and the Sudan. "One of the first of the public places of Cairo that I visited", wrote George Melly, "was the slave-market, which by its very name excites in an Englishman such curiosity and such horror ...". The Mellys encountered a large party of female slaves near Aswan on their way. "They were nearly all young girls, varying in age from twelve to sixteen".²

Such were samples of how the British travellers in the period 1820-1862 reported the extent and the horrors of the slave trade. But what they had seen seemed hardly to have influenced their attitude towards the slave trade and slavery. Mentioning the "horrors" "miseries" and "hardships" of the slave trade, one would have expected them to come out strongly and clearly against the slave trade and slavery. But their narratives did not express any strong views on both issues. Most of them seemed to have accepted the existence of slavery as an indigenous institution in the Sudan.

Hoskins, Peel and Melly did not protest against the slave trade. Although Hoskins mentioned that the chief trade between Egypt and the Sudan was in slaves, he did not feel inclined to denounce the trade. The most that Hoskins felt obliged to do was to tell "one of the owners of slaves that he ought, as a good Mohamedan, to adopt a more humane method of securing" the

slaves. He seemed to have thought that his remarks to the slave owner would gain him the gratitude of the slaves; but he was amazed to notice that "the slaves appeared in a dreadful state of apathy and torpor, quite indifferent to the interest they saw me take in their situation". What worried Hoskins was not the extent or the horrors of the slave-trade, but rather the effects the slave trade might have on the attitude of the Negroes to the whites. Since most of the traders were Turks, who were considered by the Negroes as whites, the Negroes "would rejoice to avenge their loss on the first white man who should imprudently venture into their territory".

Captain Peel did not sympathize with the slaves. He thought they behaved "like beasts"; had no pride, self-reliance or moral strength. To him they were inferior in heart and feeling even to their masters, although they (the slaves) appeared to be superior physically to their captors.

George Melly showed signs of complacency with slavery. The slaves appeared to him to be merry, well-fed and contented. Melly was surprised to find from a female slave that "she did not consider captivity irksome, preferring Cairo to her own country". He was satisfied with the "good understanding that seemed to subsist between the slaves and their masters, and the care with which the poor wretches were treated". With such impressions about the slaves it was no wonder that George Melly

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Captain W. Peel, R.N. (Sir William) op.cit., pp.80-81.
showed no repugnance to the slave trade. When the Mellys were fascinated with a baby, "a most beautiful child, almost a Murillo in colour," who was in the company of his captured mother, they "offered to purchase it". But they were persuaded to give up the idea because "the mother's heart clung to her child".¹

As late as 1861 John Petherick's reactions and remarks on the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan should have given the impression that the two institutions were not as bad as one would have thought. By 1861 when he published his book, Egypt, the Soudan and Central Africa, Petherick had been residing in the Sudan for sixteen years. During these years he was trading in both Kordofan and Bahr al-Ghazal; two of the main centres of the slave trade in the Sudan. Since May 1850 Petherick was British Vice-Consul. His position, therefore, in the trading community and his official capacity ought to have afforded him the unique position of being well informed about the slave trade in the Sudan. In spite of that, his remarks about the slave trade in his mentioned book were few and conservative. All that he could say about the actual conditions of the slave trade was that "Slavery, at the time of my narrative, was in full force" and that the Viceroy, Sayf Pasha, had done much to check it by preventing the public sale of slaves, and liberating all those who complained of ill-treatment by their masters.²

¹ George Melly, op.cit., p.207.
At this stage John Petherick expressed no disapproval of the slave trade and wrote rather favourably on the brighter spots of the slaves' fortunes. He reported that in Kordofan "a great number of slaves are reared in the families of the Kordofanese, by whom they are looked upon in nearly the same light as members";¹ and that in Bahr al-Ghazal "as everywhere else in the interior ... they (slaves) are treated affectionately, and, generally speaking both master and slave were proud of each other; in negro families I have often observed more attention paid to the slaves than to their children".²

Taken as a group, the British visitors to the Sudan before 1863 did not denounce the slave trade and slavery as they saw them operating in the Sudan. They were not abolitionists. Most of them seemed to have travelled through the Sudan with open minds on the questions of the slave trade and slavery, free from pre-conceived ideas. For this reason their accounts of the slave trade were free from the exaggerations and prejudices of later observers as well as from any strong views or clear-cut suggestions as to what should be done to end the slave trade.

One British traveller was, however, an exception. Dr. Arthur T. Holroyd made a journey through the Sudan in 1836-7. He travelled as far westward as El Obeid. At that time El Obeid was one of the main centres, if not the main

¹. Ibid., p.270.
². Ibid., p.468.
centre, of the slave trade. Holroyd witnessed the
distribution of a group of slaves who had just been captured
in a ghazwa. During his journey he acquired vital information
on the ghazwa especially and the slave trade generally. When
he returned home he tried to diffuse this information through
an article published in the Journal of the Royal Geographical
Society\textsuperscript{1} and through his report to Dr. John Bowring.\textsuperscript{2}

Dr. Bowring was in Egypt in 1837 to fulfil the special
fact-finding mission entrusted to him by Lord Palmerston, the
Foreign Secretary. Dr. John Bowring was a good friend of
Bentham and later on an M.P. and a Governor of Hong Kong.
But, perhaps, what is most important for our purpose, he was a
confirmed abolitionist and in 1840 he played an important part
in the first Anti-Slavery Convention held in London. His anti-
slavery sentiment motivated Bowring to show a great interest
and concern with the slave-trade in Egypt and the Sudan. The
first item of the Doctor was to search for reliable and concrete
information on the subject. In his search he looked to
Dr. Holroyd, who had just returned from the Sudan, to furnish
him with whatever data he had collected in the Sudan.

Armed with an anti-slavery sentiment and endowed with
acute abilities of a liberally-minded intellectual and an
investigator, Dr. Bowring produced a remarkable, if not a
classic, report on the issues of the slave trade and slavery

\textsuperscript{1} Arthur T. Holroyd, "Notes on a Journey to Kordofan in
\textsuperscript{2} John Bowring, Report on Egypt and Candia, P.P., 1840, XXI.
in Egypt and the Sudan. In spite of his anti-slavery zeal the Doctor tried to be as objective as possible in his attempt to describe "the nature and extent of the commerce in African slaves". His collation and weighing of the evidence before him were remarkable. He also came out with proposals for solving the problem of the slave trade.

Bowring's report on the slave trade and slavery consisted of three parts: first, he conveyed the information he had received as to the manner of capture and conveyance of the slaves to the Egyptian markets from the Sudan; secondly, he gave his own observations and opinions on the conditions of the Sudanese slaves in Egypt; and thirdly, he stated what had been done and what appeared to him to be desirable for the purpose of the "mitigation, diminution, and final extinction of the slave trade in North-eastern Africa".

Under the first heading he treated the ghazwa or razzia which "have been one of the principal sources of supply on the frontiers of Mohemet Ali's dominions". He stated that the "wages of the Pasha's troops were frequently paid in slaves", and as "the pay of the troops was often in arrear they generally showed no little avidity in capturing the negroes on whose sale they were to depend for the settlement of their claims; and there is sufficient evidence that horrible atrocities are frequently committed in the capture of slaves".  

Bowring was greatly shocked by the manner in which slaves were procured by the Government troops and remarked that "there is no crime which

is not committed on the spots where the slave-trade has its birth.¹

On this point Bowring quoted at length Holroyd's report. Holroyd described the way slaves were captured from the Nuba mountains; their hard march from the hills to El Obeid and then from El Obeid to Khartoum.²

As a result of the sufferings and hardships of the march, so stated Holroyd, the mortality among the slaves was very great: "Of the fifty slaves who had left Kordofan some days before, only 35 were living on the arrival of the caravan at Khartoum".³ Holroyd thought that the principal causes of the high rate of mortality were nostalgia, change of diet, fatigue in crossing the desert from Kordofan to Khartoum, scarcity of water and food on the journey and the prolonged stake which they were compelled to wear for a month or six weeks without being removed.⁴

John Bowring went round the slave market in Cairo to ascertain the truth of Holroyd's remarks on the mortality of slaves from the mouths of slaves. He also had conversations with some domestic slaves in the towns of Egypt. "They", he reported, "talked with the greatest horror of the sufferings connected with their first experience of the bitterness of slavery, ... and these are but the beginnings of sorrow. In the progress across the desert many perish from thirst and

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p.84.
fatigue. I have often heard their miseries described in their way to the Nile: from the poverty of the Jellabs, and the insufficiency of the caravans, which are frequently charged with an excessive number of slaves - an estimate being made of the greatest number which is possible to preserve with the supply of water that remains, all the rest are abandoned and die of starvation in sandy wilderness.¹

From his own enquiries in Cairo Bowring concluded that: "The mortality among the black slaves in Egypt is frightful ... I have heard it estimated that five or six years are sufficient to destroy a generation of slaves, at the end of which time the whole have to be replenished ... When they marry their descendants seldom live, in fact the laws of nature seem to repel the establishment of hereditary slavery; death comes to break the chains of inherited bondage ...".²

On this point, however, Dr. Bowring was not original. It was a prevalent idea long before the Doctor set out on his mission. Commenting on the news that Muhammad 'Ali's black troops died "like sheep", the Quarterly Review had this to say: "The medical men ascribed the mortality to moral rather than physical causes: it appeared in numerous instances that, having been snatched away from their homes and families they were even anxious to get rid of life; and such was the dreadful mortality that ensued, that out of 20,000 of these unfortunate men, three thousand did not remain alive at the end of two years".³

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p.92.
Bowring stated that the average term of existence of a Negro slave in Egypt was "deplorably short - not so much from ill usage, for, on the whole they are treated with tolerable kindness by the Mohemetans - but from change of climate, altered modes of life, seclusion and pestilential visitations".¹

However, very different estimates were found of the rate of mortality. Holroyd believed that 30 per cent of the slaves perish in the first ten days of their seizure. Bowring gave it as his opinion that, taking all the causes of destruction into account "it may be estimated that for every hundred slaves which reach the markets of Cairo and Alexandria, another hundred at least perish". T.F. Buxton estimated the rate of mortality at 42 per cent. These figures were most probably exaggerated.

A second feature of the slave trade which drew the attention of both Holroyd and Bowring was that they had realised that the slaves "were mostly children and young girls". Bowring thought that "the importation of adults (from the Sudan to Egypt) had nearly ceased; as they are not wanted for field labour; or have been little used for that purpose, they will not bring a proportionate price". Also "because when slaves are brought for family service the purchasers prefer training them from early youth ...".²

But the most "distressing" feature and the one which calculated to "excite the sympathy" of both Holroyd and Bowring

² Ibid.
was the system of emasculation carried on young slaves.

"At Kordofan ... the emasculation of boys is carried on to a frightful extent, for the service of the Turkish harems, ... No doubt the demand is considerable as there is scarcely a harem of any man of rank which is unfurnished with these degraded beings; and there is a perpetual influx from the upper country to meet the demand".¹ According to Holroyd "the subjects selected for emasculation are boys from 7 to 11 years old ... the operation rarely proves fatal not more than 5 per cent".² And according to Bowring "the value of a eunuch slave is nearly double that of another slave of the same age and condition".³

However this hideous branch of the slave trade - the traffic in eunuchs - which seemed to Holroyd and Bowring to be the most repulsive feature of the trade and the one that "adds greatly to the miseries of the slave-trade"; was not a unique feature of the slave trade in the Sudan and Egypt. "We should remember that it was long practised in Christian Europe. During the Middle Ages large establishments, mostly under the direction of Jews, were maintained in France, notably at Verdun, for the supply of eunuchs to Muslim Spain. The soprami of the Sistine Chapel, the musical glory and moral shame of the papal choir, were not abolished until late in the nineteenth century, but the gelding of boys continued in Italy

1. Ibid, p.87.
for some time after that". ¹

Bowring recorded that once the slave had settled in a family he would be treated with every leniency and humanity. He noticed two young slaves he had previously seen in the slave market and later in the house of their master. In their new abode they were "handsomely dressed and seemingly highly pleased with their good fortune". He gave it as his opinion that: "To the honour of the Mussulmens it must be allowed that their treatment of slaves is generally humane; in fact, they often obtain a marked ascendency in the dwellings of their masters. The eunuchs especially are gaily clad, and are much honoured, both by the men and women, in the harems. When the females go to the public baths, or ride out for their amusement, they are generally preceded by a eunuch, dressed in bright coloured garments, wearing a scimitar, and displaying no small quantity of vanity and pride". ²

This point, the humane treatment of the slaves in Egypt and the Sudan, was well-established before Bowring's report. The Edinburgh Review recalled to its readers "that these slaves retained in Sudan are tolerably treated, and it is said, appear gayer than their masters - an observation not unfrequented ...". ³ Dr. R.R. Madden recorded the same observation in 1841. "It is the custom", he wrote, "to attribute the mildness of slavery in Mohamedan countries, to the influence of their religion.

That religion teaches its followers to be humane and considerate to their slaves, to look upon the latter as their proper brethren, committed to their charge.¹

One could clearly see that at this stage there was great concern, especially in anti-slavery circles, with the extent and miseries of the slave trade. For this reason the starting point and the most important one to any writer on the question of the slave trade was to investigate how an individual might become a slave in the first instance. Such an investigation required data from persons who were witnesses to the slave hunts or who had acquired such an information from others with that capacity. Therefore, the reports of Holroyd and Bowring were welcomed by the anti-slavery group in general and by Thomas Fowell Buxton in particular.

When Bowring returned home, Buxton was in need of more recent data to support his efforts in agitating the question of the slave trade in Africa. He appealed to both Bowring and Holroyd for evidence and he received what he had asked for. Buxton succeeded Wilberforce as leader of the "humanitarian" faction in Parliament. In the years 1835-37 he became chairman of a select Committee of the House of Commons during a number of sessions.²

At the end of 1837 Buxton turned his attention to the foreign slave trade. Inevitably this led him to a concern

with the slave trade in the Nile Valley. By August 1838, he had finished a detailed account and plan, which he submitted to the Government. He then elaborated his plan and published it in two volumes. Buxton collated the existing data about the slave trade and slavery in the Nile Valley gathered by European travellers. He quoted at length Browne, Burckhardt, Professor Ritter, Colonel Leake, Dr. Ruppell, Count de Laborde, Drs. Holroyd and Bowring and others. He seemed to have been helped in the examination of that material by James MacQueen, whose knowledge of that literature was second to none. However, there was nothing novel in Buxton's final narrative and proposals. "Buxton's real contribution was to draw up a coherent plan, based on many sources in fact and theory, and to present it to the public with the organized weight of Exter Hall behind it".

Buxton's starting point was that the African slave trade in spite of its abolition in the British dominions in 1833 had not ceased. Indeed, in his view, it appeared to have increased both in volume and atrocities. He went into great pains to prove this point. Arthur T. Holroyd had told him that Muhammad 'Ali's troops brought into Kordofan captives from his northern frontiers to the amount of 7,000 or 8,000 annually; and Dr. Bowring had informed him that he estimated the annual importation of slaves to Egypt at from 10,000 to 12,000; that the arrivals in Kordofan amount to about the same number; and


that such was the facility of introducing slaves of the Sudan to Egypt that "they now filtrate into Egypt by almost daily arrival". After citing the most recent authorities Buxton concluded that we "may fairly estimate the northern or Desert portion of the Mohamedan slave trade at 20,000 per annum".

That was the amount obtained for foreign trade but still there remained the slaves kept for domestic and agricultural purposes inside the Sudan. On this point Buxton quoted Burckhardt who had "reason to believe ... that the numbers exported from Sudan to Egypt and Arabia bear only a small proportion to those kept by the Mussulman of the southern countries themselves, or, in other words to the whole number yearly derived by purchase or by force from the nations of the interior of Africa". Buxton acquiesced in Burckhardt's statement and concluded that the bulk of the population of the kingdom of Darfür was composed of slaves. However, Burckhardt's observation was before the Ottoman occupation of the Sudan when trade between the Sudan and Egypt was insignificant and when the practice of ghazwa was not as organized nor government conducted as later came to be.

Buxton's comment on the ghazwa system was so remarkable as to merit citation: "There has been revealed to us a new feature in the mode of procuring negroes for slaves; and we find that troops regularly disciplined are at stated seasons

2. T.F. Buxton, op.cit., p.68.
led forth to hunt down and harry the defenceless inhabitants of eastern Ngerita".¹ The ghazwa practice gave Buxton good material for expressing his views on the cruelties and devastations caused by the slave-hunts. And through this he came to an important point: "that the mortality consequent of the cruelties of the system has increased in proportion to the increase of the traffic, which, it appears, has doubled in amount, as compared with the period antecedent to 1790".²

Buxton went on to compare the horrors and the mortality consequent to the slave trade in the Sudan with that of the Transatlantic trade: "It may be objected that the loss arising from detention at the Mohamedan slave markets is not so great as that which takes place in the barracoons in the Transatlantic trade, but, on the other hand, the march is much more destructive to human life; we may therefore fairly calculate that in the three items of seizure, march and detention, the average mortality is equal to that in the former case (Transatlantic trade) which we estimated at 'one life sacrificed for every slave embarked'".³

The estimation of Buxton as to the number enslaved inside the Sudan and those imported as well as his tale of the miseries caused by the slave trade was rather exaggerated. He had a good reason for this. His book was meant for local consumption and as such he needed to present his picture in a moving way so as to awaken the conscience of his readers and

¹. T.F. Buxton, op.cit., p.90.
². Ibid., p.97.
³. Ibid., p.201.
to arouse them into doing something, at least into giving moral support to the anti-slavery movement in Britain. With such a paramount object in mind he tried to bring the horrors of the slave trade in the Sudan and Egypt into the minds of the public by comparing it to that of the often-described horrors of the Transatlantic trade and the Middle Passage. The latter was well-known to his readers; and his sketch gave the idea that the former, if not worse, was as horrible as the latter. In Buxton's estimation, if the Transatlantic trade had excited the conscience of the previous generation, the conscience of his own generation ought to be aroused against the slave trade in the Sudan and nothing could do this more than by diffusing in a vivid and exaggerated way the information received about that trade.

Thus, the years 1837-1840, through the labours of Holroyd, Bowring and Buxton, saw the first attempt in the nineteenth century to raise the question of the slave trade in the Sudan. It was during these years that the first British protests against the trade were raised and the first stage in the British diplomatic attack on the traffic took place.

The first man to protest against the trade was John Bowring. During his stay in Egypt in 1837-8, he let no favourable opportunity slip without taking up the question with Muhammad 'Ali. As a believer in the anti-slavery cause, he was convinced that something had to be done about the slave trade in Muhammad 'Ali's dominions. Moreover, during his stay in Egypt he had developed a personal admiration for Muhammad 'Ali and he
was anxious that such an affection for the Grand Pasha should be shared by other British men and women. But he was well aware that the existence of such practices as the payment of Muhammad 'Ali's troops in the Sudan in slaves and their participation in the slave-hunts would tend to discredit Muhammad 'Ali in the eyes of the British. He, therefore, lost no time in assuring Muhammad 'Ali "that nothing would be more likely to interest the Government and the people of England than any steps he might take towards advancing the great end" — the abolition of the slave trade.

In spite of his anti-slavery sentiment and of the fact that he had obtained "sufficient evidence to authorize" his interference "with the pasha on the subject of the slave-hunts carried on by his highness's troops in Senaar and other frontiers of his dominions"; Bowring was conscious that the slave trade issue should be played softly and slowly; he was rather worried about the reactions of the Viceroy to any representations he might make. One must make allowance for the fact that Bowring's mission was not mainly a "humanitarian" one. Its main objects were commercial and political. It was for these commercial and political motives that there had developed something of a scramble by France and Britain to appease Muhammad 'Ali. If an approach to Muhammad 'Ali over the question of the slave trade might antagonize him and hinder the commercial and strategic interests of Britain in Egypt, it ought to be avoided. Muhammad 'Ali had never been approached on the subject by any European before and he might consider
any such approach as an interference in the domestic affairs of his dominions. He was known to be very sensitive to such an interference. Moreover, it was more probable that Muhammad 'Ali as "a Muhammedan governor who finds slavery interwoven with every part of the social organization around him, would undoubtedly resist, and be encouraged by every prejudice and passion of his subjects to resist a formal interference with usages of immortal date, and sanctioned by the special authority of his prophet".¹

It appears that for these reasons, Bowring and the British Consul-General in Cairo thought twice before they communicated Muhammad 'Ali on the issue. They also thought that "if the representations (to Muhammad 'Ali on the slave trade) took the shape rather of amicable counsel than of formal diplomatic intervention, we were more likely to succeed".²

On the evening of 30 November, 1837, Bowring accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, the British Consul-General in Cairo, waited on the Viceroy. From the start they emphasized that they did not come to see him in their "official capacities". They would take the opportunity of "this friendly and unofficial" meeting to introduce the subject of the slave trade.

The Consul and the Doctor were gratified with the Pasha's response to their representation. Muhammad 'Ali declared his ignorance of the practice of ghazwa or that his troops were employed in slave-hunts. He was very willing to have the whole

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¹ John Bowring, op.cit., p.95.
² Ibid.
matter investigated.\textsuperscript{1} He was, he declared, unfavourable to slavery itself, and desired its abolition, little by little, but the usages and prejudices of his subjects were great obstacles in his way. But he was "glad on this, as on every occasion, to do anything that would be satisfactory to the British Government, whose good opinion he valued. To prove that there was no discrepancy between his words and deeds, Muḥammad ʿAlī sent in the next morning a copy of a letter which had already been dispatched to his Governor at Sinnār informing him that it was contrary to his wishes that the troops should receive slaves in lieu of their pay, and commending him to abstain in the future from such a practice; and lastly: "I do not wish to derive profit from a traffic which does me no honour, and that even if its abolition shall require some sacrifice on my part I am ready to make them".\textsuperscript{2} This sentence in particular struck the attention of Consul Campbell as a further manifestation of the "kind and benevolent" view which his Highness had taken of the question. But this view was not entertained by the Foreign Secretary who noticed that Muḥammad ʿAlī's order to the Governor of Sinnār did not go as far as it should, as it still permitted the officers of the Pasha's army to buy or seize slaves and then send them to Cairo for sale. Palmerston, therefore, instructed the Consul to take the first opportunity to inform the Viceroy that it would tend to raise the character of the Viceroy's army in the estimation of other

\textsuperscript{1} F.O. 84/258 Campbell to Palmerston, Dec. 1, 1837.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
countries and to render the presence of his troops less oppressive to his subjects if he was absolutely to forbid any officer in his service from dealing in any way whatever in the trade in slaves.¹

Bowring's interview with Muhammad 'Ali seemed to have reinforced his optimism in putting an end to the slave trade in the Sudan and Egypt. His own observations and deductions on the trade had led him to cherish such an optimism. To him the task of abolishing the two institutions was not an impossible one:

"It appears to me there never was a period so propitious as the present for advancing in the east the great question of the abolition of slavery. The oriental powers feel more and more that their existence depends upon the support of the courts of Europe. Now, if the overthrow of slavery were made a condition of that support there could be no doubt they would as they must, submit to it, and allow such measures to be adopted as would lead to its gradual extirpation".²

So what was needed was to put pressure on Muhammad 'Ali; and this pressure, in Bowring's opinion, would yield fruits since "the financial interest of the oriental governments is, happily, not a strong one, for the amount received on the importation and transit of slaves is unimportant".³

But what convinced him most of the possibility of over-

1. F.O. 84/258 Palmerston to Colonel Campbell, Jan. 17, 1838.
3. Ibid.
throwing the slave trade was his conviction that there was no economic need for slaves in Egypt. "In Egypt proper", he reported, "the cultivation of the land by slaves has not succeeded. A large proprietor at Es Siont informed me that they had failed in the attempts made to introduce the field labour of the blacks. A full-grown slave costs from 800 to 900 piastres (£8 to £9); and in order to encourage them to labour, it was found necessary to marry and establish them: so that it was seen a black family cost the proprietor nearly 2,000 piastres (£20) per annum, which is far more than the value of fellah labour". 1 It was the view of Dr. Bowring that if the slave markets abolished and slave-hunts put an end to there would be no vacuum in the labour force in Egypt, because the vacuum created by the check upon the importation from the Sudan "would be filled by the Egyptian Arab ...".2

Lastly, Bowring thought that the slave trade was not a very profitable trade at the time he was reporting. The large supply of slaves caused by engaging the troops in slave-hunts had increased the supply of slaves at markets; and this led to a diminished value of them. He was assured by a gentleman, who had been living more than ten years at Kordofan, that "at the present moment the difference in the value of slaves at Kordofan and in Cairo would leave no profits whatever to the slave dealer. He asserted that the trade could not continue at present but for the gain on the return articles brought from

1. Ibid., p.89.
2. Ibid., p.99.
Cairo for consumption in the interior". ¹

The frightful mortality of the black slaves in Egypt was also "one of the causes of their low market value". That the traffic in slaves was unprofitable could also be proved by the fact that "several jellabs expressed a willingness to abandon the slave trade if they were allowed to carry a traffic in gums and other African produce without being subjected to the Pasha's monopolies". ²

Bowring's views could be challenged even in his own time. He certainly belittled the use of black slaves in agriculture. His point might have been true in Egypt where the land available for cultivation was small and where the fellah labour was cheap. But in the Sudan the slaves were and continued to be used in agricultural purposes because of an abundance of cultivable land and a shortage in the labour force. Also it was questionable whether the unprofitability of the trade would have acted as a complete deterrent to slave traders. There would continue to be a certain amount of demand for slaves and as long as there was this demand it had to be satisfied.

Nevertheless, it was to Bowring's credit that his approach to the solution of the problem of the slave trade was not wholly negative. He had also proposed positive solutions. It was his opinion that the best means of ending the traffic was "by encouraging other articles of importation from Nubia, and other regions to the south of Egypt. I am much disposed to

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1. Ibid., p.100.
2. Ibid.
to think that, if any commercial stations, or factories were introduced at Kordofan, Kartoum, and other central points on the Nile, and the natives were encouraged to bring instead of slaves, the gums and the other articles of produce, the slave trade would decay itself, and be superceded by a peaceful legitimate commerce.'

In advocating this idea of promoting legitimate commerce, Bowring was not original. Clarkson, Wilberforce and the African Institution had propagated the idea but they did not see in it the only means of ending the slave trade. It is commonly believed that the first person who appeared to have seen the development of legitimate commerce as the only means of overthrowing the slave trade and slavery was James MacQueen. The idea loomed very large in Buxton's programme for ending the slave trade as we shall see later on.

Although nobody was certain at the time that a rise in lawful trade must inevitably lead to the end of slaving, Bowring was right in insisting that the idea should be applied in the Sudan. The economic policy pursued by the Viceroy in the Sudan had largely contributed to the increase in the volume of the slave trade. To increase his revenue Muhammad 'Ali monopolized the trade in all articles with the exception of slaves. This policy of monopoly was vigorously applied. Merchants were left with no alternative but to trade in slaves.

1. Ibid.
Holroyd related the story of a Frenchman by the name of Viziere who was formerly engaged very largely in the Ethiopian coffee trade and was reported to have made a fortune out of this: but when MuḥammadʿAlī realized this, he imposed a government monopoly on the coffee trade. The Frenchman had no alternative but to trade in human beings.¹

If the Government abolished monopolies and established a free trade in all articles at least some of the merchants would have turned to articles other than slaves. This would not have meant that the slave trade would die a natural death; it could have meant a drop in the volume of the slave trade. But that Bowring did not appreciate the necessity of establishing free trade for the encouragement of legitimate commerce was clear from the fact that he did not press MuḥammadʿAlī to abandon his policy of monopoly. In other words, he did not try to persuade the Viceroy to use the power of his government to encourage legitimate trade. The sincerity of MuḥammadʿAlī on the question of the slave trade in the Sudan could have been tested by a demand for the abolition of government monopolies. It is surprising that Bowring missed this point. Most probably Bowring acknowledged this point but he was not anxious to apply full pressure on the Pasha.

However, Bowring seemed to have thought that the main responsibility for promoting lawful trade ought to be that of the British. He, therefore, advocated the establishment of

"English agents, and, if possible, of commercial factories at Kartoum, Kordofan, and other places in eastern Africa connected with the Nile. By facilitating trade in African commodities - by discouraging the traffic in slaves, by obtaining the assistance of the pasha of Egypt for carrying out the plan of the abolition, to which he has expressed his willingness to lend his co-operation - the slave-trade might be struck at, at its very origin - the stream of sin and misery stopped at its source".¹ Legitimate commerce should be carried right into the areas of the interior from which slaves were first captured; and that those who carried it "should be content with a small instead of a great interest".²

Bowring had the greatest confidence that it would be possible by direct negotiation with Muḥammad ʿAlī to obtain the Pasha's support for his plan of encouraging lawful commerce in particular and for any measure which might tend to the gradual abolition of the slave trade in general. And indeed he went as far as to declare that "the views I have been referring to exist already in the mind of Mahomet Ai".³

Bowring's proposals did not arouse any official or public interest. They remained on paper. However, Bowring's good faith in Muḥammad ʿAlī appeared to many to be well-founded. In October 1838 Muḥammad ʿAlī set out on his memorable journey to the Sudan. From the outset Muḥammad ʿAlī appeared bent on giving the widest possible publicity to his deeds and words on

¹. John Bowring, op.cit., p.100.
². Ibid.
³. Ibid., p.101.
this journey. So he included in his retinue a number of Europeans. Those Europeans did much to publicize Muḥammad ‘Alī's conduct on the journey. Moreover, the Viceroy's official account of the tour was embodied in the Official Journal which was widely distributed to Europeans.

News came that on December 4th, 1838, and at Khartoum Muḥammad ‘Alī had declared the abolition of slavery; the pay of officials and soldiers was no longer allowed to be made in slaves; and the ghazwas were absolutely forbidden. Circulars were sent to governors to stop the practice of slave-hunting. In January 1839 the Viceroy liberated 500 prisoners who had been captured by the governor of Sinnār a few days before the Pasha's arrival. Muḥammad ‘Alī sent the captives to their homes with sufficient provisions. Orders were again issued that the ghazwas should abstain from enslaving, since they were "only intended for the punishment of rebels and of securing their submission".¹

The British Consul at Cairo appeared to be satisfied with the results of Muḥammad ‘Alī's trip to the Sudan. He reported to Lord Palmerston that the Pasha seemed to have carefully examined and inquired into the different circumstances connected with the slave trade and that effective measures would be taken by him to diminish this traffic as far as possible and to ameliorate the evils of it.²

¹. F.O. 195/151 Campbell to Palmerston, Cairo, 11 March, 1839.
². F.O. 84/290 Colonel Campbell to Palmerston, Jan. 10, 1839.
On June 16, 1840, at the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Dr. Bowring communicated to the assembly his belief that Muhammad Ali's trip to the Sudan would promote the cause of anti-slavery.¹

Whether Muhammad Ali was sincere in professing his desire to abolish the slave trade or not, he obtained from Europe what he had desired - a favourable publicity. Dr. R.R. Madden had, rightly, stated that Muhammad Ali was "courting public opinion everywhere but at home". And it seems that the main object of the Pasha's deeds and words during his tour in the Sudan was to court European opinion and to gain its sympathy.

Thomas Fowell Buxton was foremost among those who applauded the Pasha. It was his considered view that Muhammad Ali was advocating and even carrying out the "New African Policy" which Buxton was trying to recommend to the British people and Government:²

"If I may judge by his actions, as represented in the narrative which is forth under his authority, there is no more through-going advocate of the policy which I am labouring to recommend to the British nation than the personage, whom, but a few months ago, I had to point out to public indignation as the patron of the horrible gazwa".³

Buxton went on to count what Muhammad Ali had done. "He has entered upon a system of hiring labour and paying wages (in itself I am afraid an innovation), he has laboured to convince the

native chiefs that it is better to sell their productions than their subjects: he has made some provision for the education of their children; he has relinquished taxes, and established free trade in articles which have hitherto been subject to monopoly ...".¹

II

On April 17 and 18th, 1839, a meeting at Exter Hall issued in the establishment of "the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society". The fundamental principles of the society were set out as follows:

"That, so long as slavery exists, there is no reasonable prospect of the annihilation of the slave-trade, and of extinguishing the sale and barter of human beings; that the extinction of slavery and the slave trade will be attained most effectually by the employment of those means which are of a moral, religious, and pacific character; and that no measures be resorted to by this society in the prosecution of these objects, but such as are in entire accordance with these principles".²

Early in 1840 the committee of the newly formed society issued an invitation to anti-slavery elements in all countries of Christendom "to a general conference in London", the object of which was to deliberate on the best means of promoting the interests of the slave; of obtaining his immediate and

¹. Ibid.
unconditional freedom, and by every pacific measure to hasten the utter extinction of the slave-trade. To this conference they earnestly invited the friends of the slave of every nation and every clime.¹

The General Anti-Slavery Convention took place in London in the period between June 12th and June 23rd, 1840. At this Convention the question of the slave trade in Muḥammad ʿAlī's dominions was raised by Dr. Bowring and a certain Mr. Sams. Dr. Bowring praised the Viceroy and his efforts to suppress the slave trade, and assured the Convention that they would obtain Muḥammad ʿAlī's aid and co-operation in the abolition of slavery in his dominions. Mr. Sams, who had travelled in the Sudan, spoke in the same terms.²

A resolution was passed by the Convention declaring that "the meeting has learnt with deep interest the measures adopted by the Viceroy of Egypt for the suppression of the abominable slave-hunts by His Highness's troops, and especially the declaration of his wish to aid in bringing about the extinction of slavery. That the thanks of this meeting be communicated to him, with the assurance that the friends of civilization throughout the world, will hail with delight every step taken by the Viceroy ...".³ The Address was drawn up and a special envoy, Dr. R.R. Madden, was entrusted with the task of presenting the Address to the Pasha.

The Address extolled the Pasha for his good intentions and

3. Ibid., p.263.
the measures he had taken to end the slave trade. "I am instructed", the President informed the Pasha, "by this Convention, to convey to your Highness the expression of their gratitude for the steps you have already taken, and their most earnest hope that you will deign to give complete effect to your just and generous intentions ... They have witnessed with much satisfaction all that has been done to encourage and protect the blacks in their painful pursuits of agriculture".¹

Finally, they requested the Pasha to abolish the slave markets in Egypt; and they urged this on him because "they have been encouraged by past evidence of your humane purposes to appeal to you, for giving them their full development".²

On September 4th, 1840, Dr. R.R. Madden and Colonel Hodges, the British Consul-General, waited on the Viceroy to present him with the Address. Madden reported that: "His Highness received the address with apparent feelings of the greatest satisfaction, and the deepest interest, in the object of its prayer ... And I have seldom seen him, apparently so pleased with any communication made to him ...".³

This was the first time that a British anti-slavery group ever addressed a Viceroy on the question of the slave trade. In the years to come a series of addresses, memorials and representations would pour on the Viceroy's and Khedives of Egypt on this issue. The language of the Address was soft;

2. Ibid., p.123.
3. Ibid., p.111.
and unlike later memorials it was optimistic. It was couched in general terms. Its prayer was modest: the abolition of slave markets in Egypt. It was significant that the Address recommended pacific measures: "they will hail with delight every pacific measure which your Highness may adopt, in order to impede the importation of, and the trade, in slaves".¹

The Address shrank from demanding extreme measures. It did not call for total and immediate emancipation and the abolition of the institution of slavery in the Sudan and Egypt. As mentioned a few pages earlier, the fundamental objective of the newly founded anti-slavery society was the extinction of both slavery and the slave trade. The representation to Muhammad 'Ali did not express fully this objective. It was limited in nature. It was most probable that the convention felt that to ask the Viceroy to abolish both institutions immediately would be asking too much; it would be an extreme and impracticable demand. One could deduce this from the views of Bowring and Buxton, who were prominent members of the Convention; and they must have played the major role in drafting the Address, as they were the two most informed individuals on the subject as far as Egypt and the Sudan were concerned.

In spite of his optimism in putting an end to the slave trade, Bowring did not undermine the difficulties facing a sovereign in Egypt and the Sudan even if he was sincerely anxious to achieve such an end. He gave it as his opinion that "even the

¹. Ibid., p.122.
prohibition of slave-dealing by means of a firman of the pasha or any other African authority would not put an end to the traffic ...".¹ This was because "long habits, general insecurity, perpetual war, have made the negro nations unwilling to look to their soil and honest industry as the means of obtaining what they import from other countries ...".²

It was even more difficult to put an end to slavery as an institution as "slavery interwoven with every part of the social organization around him (Muhammad‘Ali) ...".³ And that when it would come to the abolition of the institution the Viceroy would "be encouraged by every prejudice and passion of his subjects to resist a formal interference with the usages of immorial date, and sanctioned by the special authority of his prophet".⁴

Buxton expressed also his appreciation of the difficulties facing Muhammad‘Ali. "It must be confessed", he wrote, "there were great impediments in his way: it was not likely that he, a follower of Mohemet, whose religion justifies the enslavement of the infidel, should have shared our abhorence of all that pertains to the trade in man: he must have had to surmount many strong and deep-seated prejudices in his own bosom, and must have expressed himself to public reproach, if not danger, before he resolved to set his face against a system so long established and so lucrative".⁵

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.95.
4. Ibid.
The 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention was aware of the fact that some European powers still carried on the trade in slaves. Muḥammad ʿAlī took advantage of this fact to protest to the emissary of the Convention "that you have not yet been able to put down the trade yourselves ... I have read lately that a European vessel had been seized with slaves carrying them to the west".¹ In other words, the Pasha was saying that the Europeans should put their own house in order before they would go on asking others to do so. Dr. Madden had no option but to concede this point to Muḥammad ʿAlī.

However, the Convention in particular and the anti-slavery sentiment in general could only put pressure on Muḥammad ʿAlī to a certain extent. The anti-slavery group had always worked in co-operation with British governments. This laid certain limits to what the anti-slavery movement could or could not do. Every British government looked to the question of the slave trade in the territories of Muḥammad ʿAlī in the context of the relations between the Viceroy and the British government. For this reason the question of the slave trade must not be viewed in isolation; it must be looked into against the background of the political relations between Britain and Egypt.

III

It was the aim of British policy at this time to gain the goodwill and friendship of Muḥammad ʿAlī. The necessity of

¹ R.R. Madden, op.cit., p.113.
keeping on good terms with him was enhanced by the progress of steam navigation which made a land route to India via Egypt a practical possibility. The zeal and labour of the deputy agent of the East India Company in Egypt, Thomas Waghorn, for such a route had already led to the organization of a caravan service between Cairo and Suez which had greatly speeded up postal despatches between Great Britain and India. A group of British merchants came to appreciate the benefits that might accrue to British commerce from being on good relations with the Viceroy's government. The agitation of this group of businessmen forced the government to appoint a parliamentary committee to examine the scheme of a route across Egypt to Suez. The findings of the Committee and its recommendations were in line with the merchants' views. The Committee urged continued and zealous attention to the project of the Suez route to India.

The fact-finding mission of Bowring was both a sign and a consequence of the increasing British commercial and strategic interests in Egypt. With the growth of such interests, the need to humour Muḥammad 'Alī increased also. But at this time the British competed with the French who were also anxious to please Muḥammad 'Alī. The French had already gone a long way in this path. And by this they succeeded in gaining a strong influence in Egypt. It was the judgement of R.R. Madden "that the people of France, at home and abroad, its periodical press, its officers in the Levant, its subordinate functionaries in Egypt, breathe but one language in respect to the right and interest of France to have its influence dominant in Egypt."¹

British official and mercantile opinions could not afford to see British influence completely excluded from Egypt. The predominance of French influence would seriously prejudice British commercial and strategic interests in Egypt. Therefore, British official and mercantile opinion was anxious to appease Muhammad 'Ali. If this was the official policy, the anti-slavery movement must have realized that official quarters could not go with them all the way on the question of the slave trade in Egypt and the Sudan; and that according to official policy the question should not be given priority over British commercial, strategic and political interests in Egypt. The anti-slavery party at this time depended mainly on its influence in Parliament and on men in office. Those sources could see no means beyond persuasion in dealing with the question of the slave trade. They were not solicitous to break with or even use the maximum pressure on the Viceroy in order to end the slave trade.

However, the British Government was keen to give approval to the anti-slavery movement's approaches to Muhammad 'Ali. The representation of anti-slavery movement came at a time when the Parliamentary position of the government was very weak in 1838 and continued to be so until its fall in 1841. In fact Lord Melbourne was forced to resign for a short time in May 1839, when a group of Radicals deserted. In such a position the government could not afford to antagonize the "humanitarians". A revolt of both Radicals and "humanitarians" would have brought down the government.
The Government was, therefore, willing to permit her Consuls in Cairo to lend support to the anti-slavery demonstrations against the slave trade with Muḥammad ʿAlī. When Drs. Bowring and Madden made their representations to the Viceroy in 1837 and 1840 respectively, they were accompanied by the British Consul-Generals in Cairo. Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, fully endorsed the initiatives of the Consuls. But this was the most the Foreign Office could do.

Moreover, the attitude of the Foreign Office towards the slave trade and slavery in Muḥammad ʿAlī's dominions was an integral part of the official attitude towards the two institutions in the Ottoman Empire. "And it was very widely believed in British official circles that slavery was such an important prop to the political, social, and economic institutions of the Empire that its sudden abolition would precipitate a collapse".¹ British policy had been committed to preventing such a collapse and to maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

That Muḥammad ʿAlī knew of the reluctance and caution of the British official circles, as far as the slave trade and slavery in the Ottoman Empire, was evident from his remarks to R.R. Madden. The former stated to the latter that the question of slavery was "a question of law, and as such it must be decided on, in Constantinople", "and added with a very significant smile" that "if you (the British) would succeed in

¹ A. Adu Boahen, op.cit., p.146.
putting down slavery, you must go to Constantinople".  

It was probably for these reasons that the Foreign Office was reluctant to take up Buxton's suggestion that the Foreign Office might take up the opportunity which the Eastern crisis of 1840-41 afforded for extracting a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.  

The unwillingness of the Foreign Office to adopt Buxton's proposal brought to an unsuccessful conclusion the first British diplomatic attack on the slave trade in Muḥammad ʿAlī's domains. That no tangible results had been achieved by British official as well as anti-slavery communications with the Viceroy was evident by the beginning of 1841. Dr. Madden who was deputised by the Anti-Slavery Society to deliver the address of the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention brought back news that the slave trade in the Sudan was as flourishing as ever; that the number of Negroes captured by government troops in the Sudan "during the year ending 31st of August, 1840, exceeded ten thousand". His informant was a German naturalist by the name of Ignatius Pallme who was at that period in the service of Muḥammad ʿAlī and had accompanied the troops in their slavery expeditions. As to the authenticity of Pallme's report, "Madden thought that "there cannot be the slightest doubt, corroborated as they are by the evidence of other Europeans still in your (Muḥammad ʿAlī's) employment".  

2. F.O. 84/305 Buxton to Palmerston, 20 October, 1840.  
In 1837-8 Ignatius Pallme was on a tour in Kordofan. During his stay in the province he was able to collect information on the slave trade. He later furnished Dr. Madden and "several other gentlemen who were totally at loss for correct information on the slave-hunts annually taking place in the provinces of the Pasha of Egypt", with that information.

Pallme's account of the slave-hunts, as conducted by the Government troops, was the most detailed and moving one yet written by a European. But, in spite of his claim that his report was composed of "correct information" this was not the case. To explain this one has to look into his motives behind releasing his information. He claimed that the object of his "sketch is simply to give a correct description of the slave-hunts as conducted by Muhammad Ali", and that he provided the Anti-Slavery Society with information because "it was the intention of the Society to make representations to Muhammad Ali on this subject, and thus to endeavour to save thousands of unfortunate natives". Such statements might give the impression that his motives were purely "humanitarian". But this was not the case. Dr. Madden pointed that the German traveller was employed by the Viceroy at the time of his tour in Kordofan. It seems that Pallme released his information after he left the service of the Viceroy. We do not know why he left his Highness's service. That he still continued to live in Egypt must give us an idea that he did not leave the

2. Ibid., p.306.
3. Ibid., p.305.
Viceroy's employment out of his own accord; and that he had some sort of grudge against Muhammad 'Ali. It was probably because of this that his descriptions were exaggerated, his narrative was dramatic and there were obvious contradictions in his account. One clear contradiction was that his twelfth chapter was entitled "Description of a Slave-hunt in the years 1838 and 1839", ¹ but a few pages later he would state that "according to reports from Kordofan no expedition for kidnapping slaves was ordered in the year 1839 and the troops were paid in cash ...". ²

However, in spite of his exaggerations and contradictions, his account of the modes and manner of making slave wars by the Pasha's troops and the extent of them found people ready to believe and publicize them. Dr. R.R. Madden was the man behind all the efforts to give publicity to Pallme's reports on the slave trade. Madden had a very high regard for Pallme and considered him to be "a steady, sober minded man, and worthy of every credit"; ³ Pallme's narrative of the slave-hunts in Kordofan was published at the end of Madden's book, Egypt, and Mohamad Ali, ⁴ appeared again in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, ⁵ and lastly in his own travel book, Travels in Kordofan. ⁶

Pallme's point of departure was clear enough. In spite of what "several European journals have stated that these marauding

1. Ibid., p.326.
2. Ibid., p.344.
4. Ibid., pp.156-198.
expeditions were put an end to by command of the Viceroy on the occasion of his visit to Sennaar ... I can assure the reader that the order was "Vox et praeterea nihil", and that these robberies take place as before even at the present day".  

Pallme claimed to have accompanied a slave-hunting expedition conducted by Muhammad 'Ali's troops. His starting point was a familiar one: how the Negroes were led into captivity. His introductory comment to this point was the often stated fact that the slaves were treated with every humanity in the Sudan but, in his view, "few persons are probably acquainted with the inhuman manner in which these miserable beings are led into captivity. The treatment they meet with among the Turks, Arabs and other eastern nations, is an indemnification, although a very frail one for the loss of their liberty; but unfortunately only a small number of these poor wretches live to enjoy even this light benefit, for more than one half of them fall victims to barbarous and cruel treatment before they reach the place of their destination".  

The traveller noticed the arrangements made by the troops and then marched with them from hill to hill. If a hill voluntarily contributed slaves, that hill was spared. Some hills defended themselves most sturdily, and fought "for their liberty with a courage, perseverance and resolution equalled by few instances we find recorded in history".  

In spite of the most resolute defence the village was at last captured:

1. Ibid., p.306.
2. Ibid., pp.305-6.
3. Ibid., p.313.
"But now, indeed is vengeance terrific: neither aged men nor the infirm, neither helpless women and children, nor, indeed the babe unborn are spared ... When the negroes see that resistance is no longer of avail, they frequently prefer suicide, unless prevented, to slavery; and thus it often occurs that a father rips the abdomen of his wife, then of his children, and lastly murders himself, to avoid falling alive into the hands of the enemy".¹

But the greatest sufferings were not yet surmounted, and it was Pallme's view that "many of these unhappy men would prefer death inflicted by their own hands to the dreadful fate which awaits them, if they were acquainted with their lot beforehand". They had now to suffer every kind of ill-treatment from their captors, blows with the end of the musket, bayonet wounds and strips with the whip were the ordinary modes of encouraging them to proceed. As the slaves walked barefoot they often developed blisters and sores. In case any slave tried to delay the progress of the convoy he was urged by the whip and butt-end of the musket, which were in constant use. Old men and women who were too weak to proceed were heartlessly abandoned to perish on the sand. Cries for water and food were never answered.

Pallme had succeeded in describing the scenes of slave hunting and marching in very moving terms. His narrative attracted the attention of anti-slavery sentiment because of this quality but especially because it revealed to them that

¹. Ibid., p.315.
they were mistaken in taking Muḥammad ʿAlī's promises and actions at their face value.

Ignatius Pallme asserted that Muḥammad ʿAlī had not been sincere in his professed wish to put an end to the slave trade. That he had liberated a convoy of slaves when he visited the Sudan was due to the fact that "several Europeans were in his suite". But, while he was adopting an anti-slavery policy in Sinnār, his troops in Kordofan were carrying on the ghazwa and the stipulated number of five thousand slaves were delivered to a man. Pallme mentioned that at that time he was the only European in Kordofan, "and the governor condescended to request that I would not mention the circumstance in Europe".¹

The Viceroy himself, so claimed Pallme, ordered the province of Kordofan to contribute five thousand slaves towards the end of 1838. Pallme further stated that although no expedition was launched in 1839 and the troops were paid in cash, the government slave-raiding commenced in 1840 and 1841. He accused Muḥammad ʿAlī of being the "great slave trader" and the "most extensive slave merchant". That slave hunting had become a seasonal and well-regulated government activity was because the Viceroy needed to pay the arrears of his troops in slaves, instead of cash money and in order to increase his revenue.

There is no doubt that Pallme had put his finger on the main reason why the Pasha continued to authorize slave-raiding. p. Ibid., p.43.
Since one of the chief trades in the Sudan was in slaves, this branch of trade provided the Sudan Government with a main source of revenue. After every raid the Government had its share of the victims, the Government would sell those and the proceeds would go to the Treasury. Also a great proportion of imports was paid in slaves. Thus the government was a wholesale dealer in slaves.

The slaves were also a source of revenue to the Viceroy's Government in another way. Dr. Madden found that for each slave sold in the markets of Cairo and Alexandria a tax of one dollar was paid to the authorities, and on the exportation of each slave another dollar was paid. Independently of these duties levied by the Government on the sale of slaves Dr. Madden mentioned that "there is a direct permission sold to every Gallab to exercise his vile calling, and become a member of the Company of slave dealers, in the same way that the various classes of artisans, bankers .... etc., in Cairo and Alexandria are licensed, and obtain the privileges of a monopoly in the exercise of their respective calling - a licence which is called essendof, and given to the Gallabs as to any other company, legally sanctioned by His Highness".  

Dr. Madden was addressing Muhammad 'Ali who did not deny the Doctor's point. And Madden's point was the crux of the question of the slave trade from the point of view of the Pasha. While the traffic in slaves continued to be a source of revenue to the Viceroy it was wishful thinking to expect Muhammad 'Ali

1. R.R. Madden, op.cit., p.130.
2. Ibid., p.131.
to take such measures as might lead to its ultimate abolition. Moreover, the practice of slave-raiding was "so profitable to provincial governors, who at the same time carried on a private trade in captured slaves, that Muḥammad ʿAlī could not have prevented it even had he wished to do so".¹

In the years 1838-40 "an opinion had ... become prevalent in England that, "Muḥammad ʿAlī had taken such measures for the ultimate abolition of the slave-trade, as had already sensibly affected slavery itself, or at least diminished the supply on which that system mainly depended for its continuance".² This was the judgment of Dr. R.R. Madden; and nobody was more qualified than the Doctor to know and express the attitude of the anti-slavery movement. That the Anti-Slavery Society had erred in taking such an attitude was revealed by Madden himself who bitterly told Muḥammad ʿAlī:

"It can hardly be imagined how much error has been disseminated on this subject (of the slave trade) amongst a class of persons (anti-slavers) not much accustomed to be deceived by the apologists of those who sanction slavery, or give to its terrors the blandishments of an under-stated account of its enormities, and a very exaggerated one of the steps that have been taken for their prevention".³

The experience of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society with Muḥammad ʿAlī had taught the Society not to be too

3. Ibid., p.134.
fast in welcoming any acts or words of a future reigning Viceroy or Khedive and not to take them on their face. Indeed, the experience created a legacy of suspicion and of doubt in the sincerity of the Viceroys and Khedives on the issues of the slave trade and slavery. As we shall see later the society could not rid itself of such a mental attitude.

The Foreign Office was also disappointed with the results of its representations and appeals to Muhammad 'Ali. The high hopes which were raised by the promises of the Viceroy in the years 1837-39 seemed to have faded and were replaced in 1842 by suspicions of Muhammad 'Ali's good intentions. The British Consul at Alexandria thought that they were mistaken in supposing that Muhammad 'Ali was really desirous of putting an end to the trade as reports which had reached the Consulate confirmed that the trade was annually carried out. The Consul was annoyed that the Viceroy's attitude towards the question hardened. The latter complained to the former that he could do nothing to prevent the importation of slaves from the Sudan to Egypt because the practice was in conformity with the "Mohamatan law"; and that he could not with safety to himself abolish it. The Consul quoted to him the example of the Bey of Tunis, who likewise ruled over a Muslim population and asked Muhammad 'Ali whether he was less powerful in Egypt than the Bey in Tunis. The Pasha replied that the Bey of Tunis had acted hastily and without reflection; but that it was a dangerous

1. F.C. 84/426 C. Burnett to Aberdeen, April 17, 1842.
example for Muhammad 'Ali to emulate.¹

In such a frame of mind it was no wonder that Sa'îd's liberal approach to the question of the slave trade did not stir the zeal of the Anti-Slavery Society. In 1856 Sa'îd issued a decree that gave freedom to all slaves in Egypt who of "their own accord" wanted to leave "the service of their masters". Sa'îd had given explicit orders that "slaves should not be allowed to cross the boundaries of his dominions, and instructions to that effect were issued to the authorities at the southern frontiers as well as at the Red Sea Littoral".² Diplomatic dispatches had clearly stated that Sa'îd was "anxious to abolish slavery and to end the slave traffic in the Sudan, and that his desire to suppress slavery in his dominions was a genuine one".³ The Consul-General reported that besides prohibiting the sale and purchase of slaves, it was also decreed that on no account should the pay of soldiers be made in slaves, or the people be permitted to offer slaves in payment of taxes.⁴ The Anti-Slavery Reporter of January 1856 stated that "not only is the sale and purchase of slaves in Egypt prohibited, but all slaves now held by private persons are declared free"; and that "as soon as the decree was made known all the slaves, male and female, immediately quitted their masters who claimed them in vain through the police".⁵

Sa'îd's measures did not arouse as much enthusiasm as the

1. Ibid., same to same, July 12, 1842.
3. F.O. 84/1060 Greene to Malnesbury, Dec. 31, 1858.
one produced by Muhammad 'Ali's actions; in spite of the fact that he was sincere in his desire to put an end to the slave trade. Like Muhammad 'Ali he visited the Sudan in 1857 and he "did not leave the country until he had made various reforms, abolished slavery and declared the traffic in slaves illegal". ¹ On his accession Said had instructed the Governors of the Southern Provinces to prevent in future the introduction of slaves from Ethiopia, Dongola, etc. into Egypt across the southern frontier.² During his visit to Khartoum in 1857 he reiterated his desire to suppress the slave trade.

However, the failure of Said's efforts were evident soon after his departure from the Sudan; the officials began to connive at the activities of the slave merchants.³ The Viceroy himself was also responsible for the increase in the slave trade because he placed an order for a bodyguard of five hundred Negro soldiers with a great trader in Cairo with whom he stood in friendliest relationship; Musa Bey al-Aqqād. As a result of this, arose in consequence a great demand in Egypt for the importation of Negroes. Thus this gave impetus to the capture of slaves in the Sudan.

"The only tangible result achieved by Said's efforts to abolish the slave trade had been to cause the slave trade in the Sudan to operate beneath a flimsy veil of secrecy".⁴ But this was not the reason why his efforts did not excite the zeal

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². F.O. 84/974 Bruce to Clarendon, Jan. 17, 1855.
³. F.O. 84/1060 Green to Malnesbury, Dec. 31, 1858.
of the Anti-Slavery Society. It seems that Sa'id's labours and his visit to the Sudan were less publicized than those of Muhammad 'Ali's so-called actions and tour in the Sudan. Moreover, when Sa'id had been issuing decrees, sending instructions to his governors and touring the Sudan, the Anti-Slavery Society was wholly preoccupied with the struggle against slavery in the United States which was in a critical stage.

It appears that during 'Abbas's and Sa'id's reigns the Anti-Slavery Society paid little attention to the question of the slave trade in Egypt and the Sudan. The reign of 'Abbas (1848-1854) would have been a very favourable time to agitate the question. During his reign Britain had obtained a preponderant influence in Egypt that "when Abbas died ... in July 1854 English supremacy in Egypt has reached such a pinnacle that Abbas himself seriously feared the absorption of his native land into the British Empire". Had the Anti-Slavery Society agitated the question, the Foreign Office would have been forced to exert the highest pressure on Abbas and this pressure would have yielded good results as the Viceroy was completely under the influence of Britain.

2. Diplomacy, Actions and Debate over the Slave Trade and Slavery, 1863-1873.

Although the representations and protests of the Foreign Office and the Anti-Slavery Society in the years 1837-62 failed to bring about any tangible results, they prepared the ground

for a more intensive diplomatic campaign against the slave trade and slavery which was to be inaugurated in the year 1863. Since this date the question of the slave trade in the Sudan began to attract more attention from British official and public opinions. Several factors contributed to this interest. Some of these factors were external while others were internal.

By 1863 the attack on the slave trade in the Ottoman Empire, as well as that on slavery in U.S.A., came to a successful conclusion. In January 1857 a Firman was issued which declared (laying down penalties) the "final abolition of the negro slave trade with a view to the extinction of slavery itself throughout the Sultan's dominions." Indeed the steps taken by Said was an attempt to bring his dominions in line with Turkey. In 1863 slavery was abolished in the United States. So the energies of the Anti-Slavery Society in two big fronts were now free and were directed to the area where the slave trade was energetically carried out - East, North East Africa and the Sudan.

The internal factors were no less important than the external factors. During the first stage in the British attack on the slave trade in the Sudan in the years 1837-40 the White Nile had not yet been opened to navigation and commerce. The sources of supply were the Nuba mountains, the "pagan" tribes south of Sinnar, the Galla and other tribes to the south and west of Ethiopia. It was not until 1860 that the contribution of the Bahr-al-Jebel to the volume of slave trade became significant. Natterer, the

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Austrian Consul, thought that by 1860 an average of 2000 slaves were sold at Kaka each year and a considerable number were still smuggled into Khartoum by boat. ¹

So by 1860 besides the traditional sources of slaves, the Bahr-el-Jebel became an important source. But Europe knew little, if any, about this new source. And since it was the European travellers who had always carried the news to the extent that even consular reports often relied on their accounts, European traders had a good reason to conceal the facts from the eyes of Europe. By 1860 Europeans were amongst the major participants in the White Nile slave trade. By 1864 it was believed in Khartoum that all traders on the White Nile, including Europeans, permitted their agents to seize and sell slaves "being well aware of the fact and indirectly partners in the profits". ²

For this reason British public opinion did not know about the slave trade in the White Nile until the return of Speke and Grant in 1863. Official quarters had some knowledge about the actual conditions in the Southern Sudan from the report of Dr. Natterer, the Austrian Consular-Agent at Khartoum. The mentioned Consul reported on the situation in the Southern Sudan to his Consul-General at Alexandria in 1860. The latter passed Natterer's report to the British agent in Alexandria who in turn sent a French translation to the Foreign Office. ³

3. F.O. 84/1120 Colquhoun to Russell, 29 May 1860, enclos. a Report by Dr. I. Natterer, Austrian Consular-Agent at Khartoum, dated 5 April, 1860.
When Speke and Grant arrived at Faloro, the southern-most out-post of the traders of the White Nile the slave trade was in full swing. But the two explorers were intoxicated with their geographical discovery and were anxious to get away as soon as possible. They stayed in Faloro for five weeks and nearly six weeks in Gondokoro. In spite of their long stay in these two places which were the centres of the slave trade, the two explorers did not take advantage of this to conduct a thorough investigation into the slave trade. They did not anticipate that the subject would be interwoven with their discovery. They were not "humanitarians", so why should they bother themselves with a subject that did not concern them at the time?

That the two travellers did not take the trouble to investigate the subject of the slave trade on the spot was evident from Speke's two books. His two travel books published soon after his return and before the controversy over their discovery reached its height, contained little about the slave trade in the southern Sudan. In his first book, Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile, published in December 1983, there was no reference to the slave trade. In his second book, What led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile, published in 1864, he devoted only one out of 372 pages to describing the atrocities committed by the White Nile traders. 1

But Grant's book, A Walk across Africa, published in December 1864 devoted more space to the problem of the slave trade,2 not because Grant was more interested in the question and took

the trouble to inquire into it but because when his book was under publication the question of the slave trade was being brought into the forefront by the controversy over geographical discovery.

It was the controversy between the Burton-Petherick adherents and those of Speke-Grant that brought the slave trade in the Southern Sudan to the limelight and to public attention. MacQueen, the main propagandist of the Burton cause, accused Speke of condoning the slave trade in the Morning Advertiser. From the other camp, Speke in a banquet given in his honour at Taunton went as far as to accuse John Petherick of participating in the slave trade when he referred to "men with authority emanating from our Government, who are engaged with the native kings in the diabolical slave trade".¹

MacQueen's charge against Speke was not wholly unjustifiable. As has been mentioned earlier Speke failed to denounce in strong terms the slave trade. Speke had no strong views on the slave trade problem before the controversy between him and Burton. However, when the controversy became hot Speke could pose as an anti-slavery man and even went as far as to write a memorandum on the 28th May, 1864 to Sir R. Murchison describing the slave trade in the equatorial regions,² a thing he had failed to do in his two travel books.

The charge against John Petherick was a different one. Speke was not the first person to accuse Petherick of being a slave trader. The story of this charge went back to 1860 and

¹. Mr. and Mrs. Petherick, Travels in Central Africa (London, 1869) Vol. II, p. 139; quoting Speke's speech.
². F.O. 78/1839, Murchison to Russell, 28 May 1864, enclos. Speke to Murchison 28 May, 1864.
the full story was told in Petherick's own book.¹ In April 1860
when the Austrian Agent at Khartoum, Dr. Natterer, reported at
length to his superior Consul-General at Alexandria upon the horrors
of the slave trade on the White Nile, he mentioned among the
Europeans who took part in the traffic an Englishman. And since
Petherick was the only English trader at the time, it was obvious
that the remark referred to him. Again in the beginning of 1863
"an accusation was sent to the Consul-General (of Britain)
against Petherick", signed by nearly all the Europeans at
Khartoum, including the official declarations of two Consulates,
"charging Petherick with some former participation in slavery;
the seals of numerous natives ornamented the document".² And
lastly the Governor-General of the Sudan accused Petherick of
trading in slaves; and so did the Viceroy.³

To ward off this accusation Consul Petherick carried out
extensive correspondence with Dr. Natterer and other European
Consuls in Khartoum. The Austrian Consul, Natterer, gave a
vague answer to Petherick when the latter sought explanation to
the former's reference in his report of the 5th April 1860 to the
Consul-General in Alexandria, that an Englishman was engaged in
the slave trade. Natterer's answer dated March 14th, 1862, told
Petherick that: "At that time (1860) I did not at all know who
was carrying on the slave trade on the White River, and therefore
not the slightest imputation was intended to be cast upon you,
which fact I hereby acknowledge".⁴ Petherick also communicated

1. Mr. and Mrs. Petherick, op. cit., pp. 139-151.
2. Ibid., p. 140.
3. Ibid., p. 149.
4. Ibid., p. 141.
Theodore de Heuglin, M.L. Hansel, and G. Thibault, the representatives of Prussia, Austria and France in the Sudan and extracted documents from them to the effect that the charges put against him accusing him of trading in slaves were false. Lastly, he obtained a declaration from the Foreign Office which announced that "there is no evidence before Her Majesty's Government that" he "had any direct participation in this traffic; and Her Majesty's Government acquit" him "of any such participation". ¹

However, a paragraph in the same official letter points to the fact that the charges against Consul Petherick were not without foundation. The paragraph reads:

"I am to state that Her Majesty's Government have been informed that no trade has hitherto been carried on by native and European traders on the White Nile, and in the Sudan, without an indirect, if not a direct, encouragement being given to the slave trade; and that this traffic in slaves is incidental to, and arises out of, the ivory trade along that river". ² It was also known to the Foreign Office that all traders on the White Nile permitted their agents "to seize and sell slaves being well aware of the fact and indirectly partners in the profits". ³

Neither Petherick's agents nor himself were exceptions to this rule. It was proved that Petherick's men were engaged in slave-trafficking. ⁴ Petherick himself reported that on

¹. Ibid., p. 150;
². Ibid., p. 150;
³. F.O. 84/1246 Joyce to the Egyptian Trading Company, 10 Nov. 1864.
⁴. F.O. 84/1246 Russell to H. Bulwer, 22 Feb. 1865.
19 May 1862 while sailing up the Bahr-el-Jebel he encountered his own agent carrying slaves in his boat. Petherick's reporting of the incident gives the impression that it was completely unknown to him before that his agents had been carrying on such a practice. In spite of his show of innocence and prompt action by arresting the agent, Petherick must have known that his agents had been practising this for a long time.

Moreover, like all traders Petherick must have been sharing profits from the slave traffic with his agents. There is no reason to exclude Petherick from the generality of the European traders. As has been shown before, Petherick was not a man who felt strongly against the slave trade. Moreover, he was one of the early free lance adventurers who poured into Egypt and the Sudan and whose main object was to get rich quickly. But if Petherick was as unscrupulous as the other European traders in the Sudan, he was cautious enough not to give the slightest evidence that he had been implicated in the traffic in slaves. He, therefore, admitted that his agent was acting contrary to his orders. And this, alleged Petherick, was the rule as the agents of all European traders dealt in slaves contrary to the wishes of their masters.

Petherick as the official representative of his country failed to inform his government of the conditions in the Southern Sudan in time. His first official dispatch to Her Majesty's Government on the slave trade was dated 24 May 1862 - two years after the Austrian Consular had reported to his government. That Petherick

1. F.O. 84/1181 Petherick to Colquhoun, 24 May 1863, also Mr. and Mrs. Petherick, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 134-35.
was ignorant of the situation in the Southern Sudan while the Austrian Consul had been aware of it was unlikely. According to his own account he was travelling and trading in the Bahr-al-Ghazal district. That the subject of the slave trade was of an interest to his government he ought to have known.

Whether the charges against Speke and Petherick of condoning slavery in the case of the former and taking part in the trade in the case of the latter were true or not, they helped to draw the attention of the British public to the question of the slave trade in the Sudan. The controversy between the two camps was mainly over the geographical discovery of Speke and Grant, but in an attempt to discredit each other they were led to these accusations against each other. The charges led both Speke and Petherick to come out strongly against the slave trade, to denounce the trade and to take the mantle of anti-slavers. Before 1863 both Petherick and Speke did nothing to educate the British public and the Anti-Slavery Society on the issue of the slave trade in the Sudan because as mentioned before their publications contained very little, and this little of a negative nature, on the slave trade. But before the controversy had subsided it was evident to both parties that to attack the slave trade was becoming respectable. So Speke and Petherick were examples of two persons who were eye-witnesses to the horrors of the slave trade in the Sudan and who followed the anti-slavery sentiment not because their experience in the Sudan had converted them to such a sentiment but because they found the cause was more respectable at home.

Speke was obsessed with an idea - the establishment of trade
contacts between the Equatorial Kingdoms, the Southern Sudan and Britain - the discussion of which helped to bring the question of the slave trade to the attention of the British Government.

Speke was anxious that British merchants should take advantage of his discovery. He dwelt on the "surprising fertility of Uganda and Unyoro" and in general on the agricultural and commercial capabilities of the region south of Gondokoro. These kingdoms had already established a considerable market for European products through contact with Arab merchants from Zanzibar. "Their sovereigns," Speke reported, "evinced a keen desire for commercial intercourse with civilized countries, while the climate appears far superior to, and the soil more promising than those of any region adjoining, either to the north or south".

Speke carried Sir R. Murchison with him in his conviction that "the east coast of Africa does not offer a proper base of operations for opening up the Equatorial kingdoms, and as a result they focussed attention on the situation in the Southern Sudan"; and Speke's idea "placed the southern Sudan in the forefront of African history", for more than a decade.

Speke's main objective was to open the equatorial regions to British commerce. He was moreover anxious to return being fully convinced that much good would result if he could "meet the natives on equitable terms", and although "friends in trade, the honest merchants of England", appealed to him to ascend the

3. Richard Gray, op. cit., pp. 78-80
Nile, nothing would persuade him to do so unless he was "armed with authority to put the trade on a legitimate footing". It was a matter of great urgency that the "armed gangs" of De Bono and others "should be checked, or they would annihilate the kings of the Equator ... in the same way as the Arab traders have dethroned the Chief of Unyanyemba and established a colony of their own at Kaze". These problems could only be solved by the planting of a strong authority, and the immediate necessity was the occupation of Gondokoro by an organized force capable of preventing the import of firearms. "For although the tribes situated at a distance from their bank might only partially feel the benefits of a settled government, still the power in possession of the river would virtually hold the country, and the natives would gladly trade with the established depots". Having established this station at Gondokoro, an embassy should be sent to the court of Bunyoro "and the finest lands in the world would be open to Europe". It was suggested that ivory, together with considerable exports to the equatorial kings, "who would hail an opening for the products and manufacturers of the world", should make it a most profitable venture, and it was hoped that the undertaking would suppress "that nefarious traffic in slaves, which is at present carried on to an enormous extent upon the White Nile".  

Speke's central point was the assertion of Imperial control over the area which, he thought, would bring in its tail an increase in legitimate commerce and consequently the suppression

1. F.C. 78/1839 Murchison to Russell, 28 May 1864, enclos.  
Speke to Murchison, 23 May 1864.
of the slave trade. Speke believed that Egypt might assert its authority over the White Nile and extend its political influence to the equatorial regions. On their return journey, Speke and Grant had an interview with Khedive Isma'il on 1 June 1863, and appeared to have got the impression that the Khedive would be willing to extend his authority "if he received the slightest encouragement from the British Government".¹

Speke's ideas paid little attention to the concrete facts of the region. It was far from being certain that the imposition of "Egyptian authority" would tend to suppress the slave trade. The bringing of the Northern, Western and Eastern Sudan under the Ottoman yoke tended to increase, rather than decrease, the volume of slave trade. It was also far from being sure that the promotion of legitimate commerce would suppress the slave trade. The increase in legitimate commerce had sometimes tended to give an indirect encouragement to the slave trade. This is what had happened in the Southern Sudan in the fifties and the early sixties. As long as there were no means of transportation, except slaves, the slave trade would not come to an end. But Speke needed the approval of the British Government, of British merchants and "humanitarian" organizations to his project and so he presented his plan in a way that might convince business-men and "humanitarians" that their objects could be achieved if Speke's plan was adopted.

The only person who was converted to Speke's plan was the President of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir R. Murchison. That Speke should have sought the support of the Geographical

¹. Ibid.
Society rather than the Anti-Slavery Society showed clearly that his plan was not motivated by the desire to suppress the slave trade in the first place. Murchison identified himself with Speke's idea of the extension of Ottoman political power into the Equator and he did his best to convert the Foreign Office.1

The idea was not new to the Foreign Office. Already in September 1862 Sidney Saunders, the British-Consul at Alexandria, had indicated to the Foreign Office the necessity of urging upon the Viceroy the annexation to his dominions of "that position of the White Nile on which the traffic (of slaves) is carried on, namely Gondokoro".2 Even two months before, Saunders explained that "if the Viceroy could be induced to extend his rule to Gondokoro by annexing the White Nile to Egyptian territory, an inestimable boon would be thereby conferred upon the suffering natives in that direction, and an effectual blow struck at the root of so much misery".3

Saunders's first concern was the slave trade. He seemed to believe that the extension of Ottoman political influence to those areas in which the slave trade was carried out would bring about the suppression of the trade. This conviction could be attributed to his belief that the equatorial regions in which the slave trade was conducted were outside the authority of the Egyptian government; and that had they been under the effective control of the Khartoum Government such a situation would not have arisen.4

1. F.O. 78/1839 Murchison to Russell, 23 May 1864.
2. F.O. 84/1181 E. Hornby to Russell, 12 Sept. 1862.
3. F.O. 84/1181 Saunders to Russell, 31 July 1862.
4. Ibid.
For a short while Speke's project seemed to have been embraced by Colquhoun, the British Consul General in Cairo, who in August 1863 was ready to urge the Viceroy to establish Ottoman authority at "various stations beginning at Gondokoro". But the Consul changed his mind later. When Lord Russell referred to him Speke's project, he expressed his doubt whether the project if put into effect would effectually stop the slave trade if domestic slavery remained an established institution in Egypt and Turkey.

Official thinking at this period, as far as the Sudan was concerned was mainly concerned with the slave trade. So for any plan to gain official approval must have as its primary object the suppression of the slave trade. Viewed from this point of view, Speke's plan was not enough to suppress the slave trade. The Foreign Office was aware of the fact that an increase in legitimate commerce did not necessarily mean an end to the slave trade; that as long as the institution of slavery was given legal recognition in Egypt and the Sudan, slaves would continue to be carried to satisfy the demand. And lastly and most important factor "was the fear that Egypt, however good the intentions of its ruler might seem to some observers would prove an inadequate ally in the struggle against the slave trade". When the British representatives came out against Speke's idea and Speke himself died in September 1864, the Foreign Office was pleased to let the project die a natural death.

However, reports reached the Foreign Office pointing to an

1. F.O. 84/1204 Colquhoun to Russell, 17 August 1863
increase in the volume of the trade in the Sudan. It was reported to the Foreign Office from the Consul at Jeddah that an extensive slave trade was being carried on by steamers in the Red Sea belonging to the Egyptian Government. Petherick was on bad terms with the authorities in the Sudan at that time because of his commercial activities but his evidence, so stated Colquhoun, was confirmed "by one who has no interest in the country to bias her - Miss Tinne." The reports were further strengthened by the testimony of Samuel White Baker who wrote to the British Consul-General in Cairo informing him that "Gondokoro was swarming with slaves this years. Many thousands were there .... Debene's people are about the worst of the lot, having utterly destroyed the country; of course their Zareba is full of slaves .... I have much to say to you on this matter, as I have been a witness to the atrocities of the White Nile trade".

Baker lost no time in telling the story of the White Nile slave trade not only to the British Consul-General in Cairo who was fairly informed but also to the British reading public who hardly knew anything on the subject. In 1866 Baker published the record of his travels in Albert N'Yanza, Great Basin of the Nile; followed in 1867 with a third volume, The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia. The Albert N'Yanza ran into three editions; was reprinted in 1872 and at frequent intervals afterwards. Both books were written in a readable style and seemed to have

1. F.O. 84/1246 Calvert to Reade, 30 Nov. 1864, and Bulwer to Russell, 6 April 1865.
2. F.O. 78/2253 Colquhoun to Russell, 5 April 1865 enclosing Petherick to Colquhoun, 17 March 1865.
3. F.O. 78/1871 Baker to Colquhoun, 21 June 1865
enjoyed the popularity of "best sellers".

Although the bulk of the three volumes was not concerned with the slaves trade, the volumes contained new data on the question and Baker's information continued to fill the big gaps in the knowledge of his contemporaries on the slave trade. His views on the subject influenced both contemporaries and historians.

Baker recorded vividly the facts as they appeared to him. He stated that three thousand slaves were assembled at Gondokoro. 1 Baker had a distinct tendency towards exaggeration, but even if his figure is accepted, it must be remembered that it was an exceptional year as a Government blockade had recently been established on the White Nile with the result that the slaves had accumulated at Gondokoro, and of these three thousand a very large proportion was certainly the wives and attendants of the slavers. 2 Baker described the atrocities of the slaving parties. 3

The description of the chaos, the depopulation and the atrocities caused by the slave trade was not something novel to the British reading public. Baker's description of the camp of the slavers (Gondokoro) was intended to bring home to his readers how the slave trade had demoralized the slave and the slave trader. The progress of his explorations, he contended, was greatly affected by this demoralization. The local people were

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hostile to foreigners and he had to reckon with this hostility which was a consequence of the slave trade.

To him the evils of the slave trade did not stop beyond this; the slave trade was the source of all evils:

"What curse lies so heavily upon Africa and bows her down beneath all other nations? It is the infernal traffic in slaves - a trade so hideous, that every heart of slave and owner becomes deformed, and shrinks like a withered limb incapable of action. The natural love of offspring, shared with the human race by the most savage beast, ceases to warm the heart of the wretched slave. Why should the mother love her child, if it is born to become the property of her owner? - to be sold as soon as it can exist without the mother's care. Why should the girl be modest, when she knows that she is the actual property, the slave, of every purchaser? Slavery murders the sacred feeling of love, that blessing that cheers the lot of the poorest man, that spell that binds him to his wife, and child, and home. Love cannot exist with slavery - the mind becomes brutalised to an extent that freezes all those tender feelings, that Nature has implanted in the human heart to separate it from the beast; and the mind, despoiled of all noble instincts, descends to hopeless brutality. Thus is Africa accursed: nor can she be raised to any scale approaching to civilization until the slave-trade shall be totally suppressed".

It was Baker's opinion that for all the evils, the cruelties and the demoralization of society caused by the slave trade, the African himself should be held responsible. "In his own country", Baker stated, "he (the African) was a wild savage, and enslaved

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 311.
his brother man; he thus became a victim to his own system; to the institution of salvery that is indigenous to the soil of Africa, and that has not been taught to the African by the White man, as is currently reported, but that has ever been the peculiar characteristic of African tribes".  

He had watched the change that had been undergone by a slave who "had been civilized (?) by the slave traders. Nothing appeared so easy for such a creature than to become a professional in cattle razzias and kidnapping human beings, and the first act of a slave was to procure a slave for himself! All the best slave-hunters, and the boldest and most energetic scoundrels, were the negroes who had at one time themselves been kidnapped". And there were many blacks in the parties of the slave traders who had been once captured and now enjoyed the life of slave-hunting.  

Baker's views on the institution of slavery among the Negro peoples of the Upper Nile were not determined by what he had seen of the actual conditions of the slave trade but rather by his other view that the Negro could not be of the same "flesh and blood" of the White man. And so his opinions on slavery were closely related to those on the Negro. He was trying to provide his readers with concrete evidence that had the Negro been as equal to or as "civilized" as the White, he would not have tolerated slavery in his own society. Baker had forgotten that the institution of slavery was no more indigenous "to the soil of Africa" than it had been to the soil of other continents. Moreover, the operations of the slave trade in the Upper Nile were not conducted for the sole purpose of satisfying the demand

1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 293;  
of the institution of slavery in the area itself. A large proportion of the slaves were exported to the Northern Sudan, Egypt, Turkey and Asia. Nor was the cruelty of the situation in the Southern Sudan wholly due to the operations of the slave trade. Baker himself had been aware of one of these factors other than the slave trade - which produced the miserable conditions on the White Nile; and that was the ivory trade. Baker recognised that much of the destruction on the Upper Nile was caused by the ivory trade, and that a large proportion of slaves was procured as a result of waging wars on certain people for the sake of capturing their cattle to be bartered for ivory from other peoples. In spite of his awareness of this fact Baker assumed that it was the need to satisfy the institution of slavery in "African" societies that was responsible for the slave trade and in such case the blame should be put on the "African". It must be confessed that there was a certain amount of traditional African-type slavery but it was not wholly responsible for the situation in the White Nile. The old trade to feed the local demand was given a new penetrating thrust in the Southern Sudan with the introduction of guns. Baker had completely failed to realise this point.

Although Baker assumed that the slave trade was responsible for "what curse lies so heavily upon Africa and bows her down beneath all other nations", he argued that nothing would be easier than to suppress the traffic, if the European Powers were in earnest and if the Egyptian Government were compelled to exert its power for that purpose. This argument could hardly be reconciled with his opinion that slavery was indigenous to the

1. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 17-23; for this point also, Richard Gray, op. cit., pp. 82-84.
soil of Africa. Certainly, it is a hard task to try to suppress an indigenous institution in one society with intervention from outside. If Baker had exaggerated the effects of the slave trade in the Southern Sudan, he certainly underrated the difficulties in the way of putting an end to the slave trade. His measures for effectual suppression were as follows:

"Stop the White Nile trade; prohibit the departure of any vessels from Khartoum for the south, and let the Egyptian Government grant a concession to a company for the White Nile, subject to certain conditions, and to a special supervision. There are already four steamers at Khartoum. Establish a post of 200 men at Gondokoro; an equal number below the Shillock tribe in 13° latitude; and, with two steamers cruising on the river, not a slave could descend the White Nile".  

In another place he repeated his conviction that "nothing would be easier than to send a few officers and two hundred men from Khartoum to form a military government, and thus impede the slave trade;...".  

But, unlike Speke, Baker was convinced that there was no hope in Ottoman authorities taking any measures to end the slave trade. It was his considered opinion that "upon existing conditions the Sudan is worthless, having neither natural capabilities nor political importance; but there is, nevertheless, a reason that first prompted its occupation by the Egyptians, and that is in force to the present day. The Sudan supplies slaves".  

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 94.  
in favour of slavery. I have never seen a Government official who did not in argument uphold slavery as an institution absolutely necessary to Egypt, — thus any demonstration made against the slave-trade by the Government of that country will be simply a pro forma movement to blind the European Powers”.1 Baker complained that a bribe from the traders to the authorities was sufficient to insure an interrupted asylum to the slave traders.

For these reasons Baker's thoughts ran in the direction of European intervention rather than Ottoman intervention as Speke had advocated. To Baker "nothing easier than to suppress the infamous traffic, were the European Powers in earnest"; but if the eyes of the European Powers were closed, as Baker thought them to be, the question would be shelved and the traffic would resume its channels.2 Baker had already noticed signs of the lukewarmness of European nations on the question. He asserted that the European powers did not support their Consuls in Khartoum. The Austrian Consul at Khartoum, Herr Natterer, told him, in 1862, that he had vainly reported the atrocities of the slave trade to his Government; and he had not received a reply to his report. Moreover, when the Consuls had the courage to act, their acts were nullified by the impossibility of producing reliable evidence. The facts were potent; but who could prove them legally? The British Consul, Mr. Petherick, arrested a Maltese but the charge could not be legally supported. Baker would like to see the Consuls empowered with the authority to seize vessels laden with slaves and to liberate gangs of slaves

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 313.
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 312.
when upon a land journey.  

He was sure that every European Government knew that the slave-trade was carried on to an immense extent and that the Red Sea was the great slave lake. But the European powers did not want to act nor to allow their representatives in the Sudan to act, because the jealousies concerning Egypt muzzled each European power. Should one move, the other would interfere to counteract undue influence in Egypt. Thus was immunity insured to the actors in the trade.  

It must be confessed that Baker was enthusiastic about the suppression of the slave trade not because he was a "humanitarian" or concerned with the welfare of the Negroes. By 1866 the opposition to the slave trade had become respectable in Britain. And as a respectable and an enlightened English gentleman, Baker must have felt the pressure to stay within this spectrum of respectability. But he would not compromise and go beyond that and adopt the ideas of the Anti-Slavery Society. In fact many of his ideas ran contrary to the Society's ideas; and he was soon to become persona non grata with the Society. 

Baker thought that the Negro was not worthy of emancipation and he was no believer in immediate emancipation:

"However, severely we may condemn the horrible system of slavery, the results of emancipation have proved that the negro does not appreciate the blessings of freedom, nor does he show the slightest feeling of gratitude to the hand that broke the rivets of his fetters."

2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 313. 
He even went as far as to adopt one of the opinions advocated by pro-slavery opinion that when the Negro had been freed, he refused to work, and instead of being a useful member of society, he not only became a useless burden to the community, but a plotter and an intriguer, imbued with a deadly hatred to the White men who had generously declared him free. When the Negro was a slave, he was compelled to work, and through his labour every country, where he had been introduced, prospered. But after the Negro had been emancipated he refused to labour, and it was found that "either he must be compelled to work, by some stringent law against vagrancy, or those beautiful countries that prospered under the conditions of negro forced industry must yield to ruin, under negro freedom and idle independence". ¹

It was not surprising for a man whose family had inherited estates in Jamaica and Mauritius to express such pro-slavery ideas. However, this idea was hardly relevant to slavery as practised in the Sudan and Egypt. Slaves kept in the Sudan or those carried from the Sudan to Egypt, Turkey and Arabia were for the most part employed in domestic work. The expression of the idea could hardly have endeared him to Exter Hall.

Baker gave it as his opinion that the slave trade was the true barrier against all commerce and all improvement. His conviction was that no enterprise of "civilization" from the holiest work of the missionary to the most beneficial influences of honest trade could have any success in Africa until the slave trade was made an end of. If the measures mentioned for the suppression of the slave trade were adopted he was optimistic that the slave trade would end; and he conceived a plan, which if

acted upon, the slave trade would never return. He concluded that should the slave trade be suppressed, there would be a good opening for the ivory trade. Baker put forward an idea of developing commerce through a single company. If the conflicting trading parties were withdrawn, and the interest of the trade exhibited by a single company, the inhabitants would no longer be able to barter ivory for cattle, thus they would be forced to accept other goods in exchange. His newly-discovered Albert Lake would open the centre of Africa to navigation; and steamers would ascend from Khartoum to Gondokor. Seven days march south from that station, the navigable portion of the Nile is reached, where vessels can ascend direct to the Albert Lake. Baker thought that his plan would open an enormous extent of country to navigation and Manchester goods and various other articles would find a ready market in exchange for ivory, at a prodigious profit, as in those regions ivory had a merely nominal value. But Baker had some reservations.

"Beyond this commencement of honest trade, I cannot offer a suggestion, as no produce of the country except ivory could afford the expense of transport to Europe". 2

Baker concluded his scheme thus:

"If Africa is to be civilised, it must be effected by commerce, which once established will open the way for missionary labour; but all ideas of commerce, improvement, and the advancement of the African race that philanthropy could suggest, must be discarded until the traffic in slaves shall have ceased to exist". 3

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 314.
3. Ibid.
As the future experience of Baker himself and others would prove, Baker's ideas and plans for the suppression of the slave trade were naive and showed a lack of appreciating the real root of the problem. In spite of his emphasis on the slave trade and on slavery as an indigenous institution in the Sudan, he failed to conceive of, or perhaps deliberately under estimated, the difficulties facing any person or power who might try to put an end to the slave trade.

His plan was not as consistent as he had thought and contradictory in details. He had stated that no produce of the country except ivory would afford the expense of transport to Europe. On the other hand he admitted that the value of ivory brought down to Khartoum in a year hardly exceeded £40,000. Thus it was clear to him that there was no hope of increasing the trade in ivory. By 1866 it was evident that the number of elephants had drastically decreased and the inhabitants' stores of elephant tusks were exhausted. This is believed to be one of the reasons which led to the increase in the slave trade in the Southern Sudan after 1854. Since Baker was aware of this fact and he himself could see no other produce which could be exchanged for the foreign products it was clear that his plan for developing legitimate trade was a dream. Moreover, his whole scheme depended on whether vessels could ascend to the Albert Lake and he was not sure of this at the time. He, on the whole, underrated the obstacles to transport.

None of Baker's contemporaries were as informed on the subject as he was. So he was safe from any challenge to his

suggestions. In fact his book was favourably reviewed in the three leading journals of the day: the Edinburgh Review, the Quarterly Review, and Blackwood's Magazine. All three acquiesced in his opinions as far as the slave trade and slavery were concerned and they praised his project for ending the slave trade. The Edinburgh Review thought Baker's suggestions for overthrowing the slave trade were practical and had "no doubt that they will one day be acted upon by those who may have the courage and enthusiasm to follow in his adventurous path". Blackwood's Magazine noticed that his conclusions and suggestions were practical and "cannot but be worthy the consideration of all interested in so important a subject".

Before we consider how Sir Samuel White Baker handled the question when he had the chance to act, let us look how far the British were informed on the problem of the slave trade. While Baker's books served to feed the public interest, reports were received by the Foreign Office drawing its attention to the gravity of the situation in the Southern Sudan.

In January 1866 Robert Arthington, "perhaps the most important Protestant missionary strategist in the nineteenth century", forwarded to the Foreign Office reports from missionaries attached to the Pilgrim Mission of Basle with details of atrocities in the White Nile communicated to them at Khartoum. Arthington's comment on the report: "this abominable system of most wicked cruelties hinders us from planting mission stations promptly along the Upper Nile and sweeping with the Gospel ..."

around Victoria Nyanza, through the interesting kingdom of Rumaniki (sic) in Karogue, even forward to the East Coast".  

Moved by the report and the comments, Clarendon, the Foreign Secretary, asked Stanton, the Consul-General at Cairo, for his ideas as to how "we might best put a stop to the horrible state of things which undoubtedly exists on the White Nile". Stanton replied suggesting the appointment of a Consul at Khartoum who would watch and influence the Governor-General and who might be able to organise, beyond the boundary of Ottoman authority, a coalition of tribes who might be strong enough to resist the slave traders and with whom legitimate commerce might be promoted. The Consul-General put forward the name of a certain Gifford Palgrave as Consul in the Sudan.

Stanton's proposals were not far from the official thinking on this problem, and the Foreign Office was ready to discuss them. It was agreed by the Foreign Office and the consul that the experiment of a trading Consul should not be repeated and the Foreign Office wondered "what salary will be sufficient for such a man and with such pretentions, as Mr. Palgrave?" In any case, the small amount of attention that the Foreign Office could spare for North-East Africa was monopolized at that moment by the problem of rescuing the British prisoners held by King Theodore in Ethiopia.

If official attention was turned for a while from this


question, the Anti-Slavery Society resumed its campaign against the slave trade in the Sudan which had subsided since 1840. During this time most of the attention of the Society had been monopolized by the Atlantic slave trade. By 1865 the Society could pride itself on the successes that had crowned its efforts in the destruction of the slave trade in West Africa, the French and Portuguese colonies and the U.S.A., and the abolition of the trade on paper at least throughout all of Barbary except Morocco and throughout the Ottoman Empire except in Hijāz.

Livingstone's first crossing of the continent between 1853 and 1856, and his experiences on the Zambesi Expedition of 1858-1864 brought him into close contact with the horrors of the slave trade in the interior of East Africa. His brief visits home were spent largely waking up the public to the facts of the situation in East Africa. He went up and down the country telling the same story of West Africa - inter-tribal warfare, devastation and depopulation; and asking his audiences what was the use of suppressing the scourge in the West if it was allowed to spread over from the East? He was educating the public to the fact that there was much to be done in order to destroy the slave trade in Africa.

Dr. Livingstone's revelations and appeals for effectual action did much to set the pace for the attack on the slave-trade in East and North-East Africa. And from that time the attack on the slave trade in the Sudan became part of the bigger campaign against the traffic in that part of Africa.

The increased attention paid to the slave trade in the Sudan by the Anti-Slavery Society was clear from the big space given
to it in the annual reports of the Society commencing from 1865. The Annual Report of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society read at the meeting of May 28th, 1865 had much to say about the White Nile slave trade. The Report referred to the terrible nature and extent of the traffic in the region of the White Nile and to the fact that Europeans were engaged in it. It expressed sorrow that in spite of the fact that representation upon this dreadful state of affairs had been made; from the accounts which the Society had received from private sources "little has yet been done towards suppressing it". The Report noted that in reply to the remonstrances which had been addressed to him the Viceroy said that his Nubian regiments must be recruited by some means and the British Consul-General seemed to sympathise with him in this matter as the Consul stated no pay would induce a Nubian to enlist. It mentioned Consul Colquhoun's statement that the slaves "readily adapt themselves to their really bettered circumstances". The Report took the opportunity to refer to the judgment of another Consul, Mr. Consul Erskine, of Constantinople, whom the Report alleged had written to Earl Russell, on the 5th December 1863 remarking that: "It may be a question in a country where slavery is still tolerated, whether the male negroes will not be benefited rather than the reverse by their incorporation into the army". The Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society had strong words to say on the opinions of both Consuls. Its opinion was that no relative amount of benefit to one individual could possibly cover the infamous

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 July 1865.
wrong to the five who perish; and it considered that both Mr. Consul Erskine and Mr. Consul Colquhoun rendered themselves obnoxious to the severest censure for offering any kind of apology in extenuation of a crime exceeding all others in atrocity.¹

The Report was remarkable in many ways. It showed that the Society was bent on taking a militant attitude when considering the question of the slave trade with both the Ottoman authorities and official and diplomatic circles in Britain. The opinions of Consuls Colquhoun and Erskine and the reactions of the Society to them showed that the views of diplomatic circles were not in harmony with those of the Anti-Slavery Society's; and that the Society had to fight diplomats with ideas like those of Colquhoun and Erskine as well as the slave-traders and the Ottoman authorities. The Report gave an insight into the divergence of opinion between official and anti-slavery sentiment. This difference will be clear later. The Report was also remarkable for its usage of the old anti-slavery technique of exaggerating the extent and horrors of the slave trade in order to gain supporters for the cause.

Since 1865 the Anti-Slavery Reporter, which had appeared since 1825 as the organ of the Anti-Slavery movement, began to give significant space to the question of the slave trade in the Sudan. Its aim was to communicate what the Anti-Slavery Society thought to be correct information on that branch of the African slave trade and to promote the policy of the Society in that direction.

The Anti-Slavery Reporter of June 1867 carried a reprint of

¹. Ibid.
the extensive correspondence on the subject of the slave trade on the White Nile which had been carried on between Mr. Arthington and the Earl of Clarendon on one side and Earl Clarendon and Consul Stanton on the other side. The Reporter was pleased to believe that as a result of this correspondence "ameliorative steps have been taken, and that the trade has greatly diminished". The periodical hoped that the Consulate at Khartoum would be re-established - a demand which continued to be made by the Anti-Slavery Society but without success.

The Anti-Slavery Society took advantage of Isma'il's visit to Paris to demonstrate with him on the subject of the slave trade. On 25th June 1867 Isma'il received a deputation from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the French Emancipation Committee. The object of the interview, in the words of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, was "to call the Viceroy's attention to the continuance of the White Nile slave trade".

The deputation appealed to the Viceroy because they were aware that he was animated by a generous sympathy for the object they were pursuing. The deputation complained to the Viceroy that "the ivory-traders evade the vigilance of your officers, and continue to transport slaves from the region of the White Nile, and to convey away from certain of the ports on the coast those who survive the miseries of the overland journey". But the most important point which the delegation tried to bring home to the Viceroy was that the slave trade would not cease as long as the institution of slavery existed, and that they hoped that his Highness would seek to extirpate

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 June 1867
from the institutions of Egypt whatever was antagonistic to that
civilisation which his Highness was urging upon his people with
so much intelligence and energy. 1

The delegation seemed to be highly satisfied with the
interview. Ismail assured them that he was anxious to put down
the slave trade throughout his dominions; that he had already
adopted the strongest measures for this purpose, but although
he could act against his own people, and could ensure the execution
of his orders by his officers, he was defeated when he sought to
act against the Europeans who were the chief delinquents. The
Viceroy complained that the slave trading boats generally hoisted
European colours of some sort, because their owners were Europeans,
and, if any question respecting the cargo arose, the answer was
that the men are part of the crew, the women their wives or
concubines, and the young persons their children. The
authorities could not do anything under these circumstances, as
they were debarred from the right of search. The Viceroy
demanded that the European Powers should give him the necessary
authority to exercise the right of search over boats sailing
under European colours.

Ismail made it quite clear to the deputation that he did
not agree with them on their ideas of the institution of slavery.
To the Viceroy the question of slavery as an institution was a
distinct one from that of the slave trade. He told the anti-
slavers that slavery had existed in the country for 1283 years,
and was mixed up with the religion of the people. But he
personally considered slavery a horrible institution, and he

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 15 June 1867
desired to see it extinguished, but it was not to be done in a day. His view was that were the slave trade stopped, slavery would disappear in fifteen or twenty years, or very few traces of it would remain, because it would not be recruited from without. Of the actual slave population many would die during that time, a certain number would be manumitted and others adopted into families.

The deputation was quite satisfied with the Viceroy's response to their appeal. The earnestness of his manner produced upon them a very vivid impression, and the practical character of the remedy he suggested left no doubt of his sincerity - so stated the Anti-Slavery Reporter. The journal thought it highly encouraging to find the Viceroy quite decided against the institution of slavery and looking forward to its removal.¹

Nevertheless, the honeymoon between Isma'il and the Society did not last long. As we shall see the Society soon became an arch anti-Islamite. The contrary views held by both sides on the issue of slavery as an institution was one reason for the change in the attitude of the Society towards Viceroy Isma'il. But the most important factor which led to this change was Isma'il's project for the extension of his authority to the region south of Gondokoro. Before we deal with this, let us look at the official reaction to Isma'il's measures before 1869.

Dispatches to the Foreign Office from its consular agents left no doubt as to the sincerity of Ismail to combat the slave trade, and his willingness to co-operate "in any measures having for their object the putting a stop to the slave

¹. Ibid.
traffic.\footnote{1} Isma'il's good faith was manifested in his prohibition of the sale and purchase of slaves in Egypt and the Sudan.\footnote{2} To stop the supply of slaves from his southern dominions Isma'il put the vessels of Azizieh company under a stricter supervision.\footnote{3} On the 23rd March 1865 Sir H. Bulwer informed Lord Russell that Isma'il had conceived of a project to combat the slave trade. The project foresaw an effective patrolling of the White Nile; search should be made of all 'barques' on the White Nile, any slaves caught should be freed, strict supervision should be exercised over the importation of arms and ammunition to the Sudan, foreign consuls should be ordered to co-operate with the authorities on the subject and especially not to shelter Europeans who were trading in slaves.\footnote{4} The same Consul reported that Isma'il was determined "to put down the traffic in Blacks on the White Nile".\footnote{5} Moreover, Sir Henry Bulwer tried to minimise the burden of slavery on the slave in Egypt and the Sudan by pointing out that "it would be unjust not to state that slavery in the East is very different from that in America and is generally a means of fortune and advancement and protection to the poor man or woman which they would not otherwise have. It saves from misery and prostitution females without resource: and these women frequently rise to the highest positions".\footnote{6}

\begin{itemize}
\item F.O. 84/1246 Sir Henry Bulwer to Russell, 22 Feb. 1865
\item F.O. 84/1926 Henry Bulwer to Russell, 23 March 1865, enclos. letter from Sheriff to Bulwer, 19 March 1865.
\item F.O. 84/1246 Russell to Stewart, 22 Feb. 1865
\item F.O. 84/1246 Bulwer to Russell, 23 March 1865, enclos. letter of Sheriff to Bulwer, 19 March 1865.
\item F.O. 84/1246 Bulwer to Russell, 9 Oct. 1865.
\item F.O. 84/1246 Bulwer to Russell, 15 April 1865.
\end{itemize}
The Foreign Office was also in no doubt that Ismā'īl's measures had yielded some fruits. In October 1865, "it was learned by the English Government that during the past twelve months" no slaves had been brought to Khartoum down the White river. An eyewitness, Samuel Baker, confirmed that he had noticed a general consternation among the slave traders during the first half of 1865 when he was in Gondokoro. He stated that four steamers had arrived at Khartoum from Cairo; two of these vessels had ascended the White Nile, and had captured many slaves; their crews were imprisoned, and had been subjected to torture; the captured slaves had been appropriated by the authorities. It would be impossible, so reported Baker, to deliver slaves to the Sudan in the season of 1865, as a Government regiment had been stationed in the Shilluk country, and steamers were cruising to intercept the boats from the interior in their descent to Khartoum; thus the army of slaves then at Gondokoro would be utterly worthless. Baker had communicated these observations to the British Consult in Cairo who was most satisfied to hear that the Egyptian Government had so far interfered with the traffic in slaves as to prevent the passage of slaves down the river during 1865 and commented to the effect that if "the Egyptian Government is sincere in its intentions to put a stop to this traffic, it is in its power in a great measure to do so, but the spirit of slavery is so imbued into the reigning class here, that I fear the present prohibitive measures may be

1. F.O. 84/1246 Russell to Stanton, 9 Oct. 1865.
allowed before long to die away, and the traffic again become as general as before". 1

II

However, Isma'il's biggest scheme for combating the slave trade was yet to come. Anxious to win European approval of his regime and sincere in his dislike of the horrors caused by slave raiding, Isma'il thought it might be possible to reduce the evils by stopping the trade at its source. 2 He hoped that a decisive reduction in the volume of the slave trade would be one of the results to be brought about by the expedition he was going to entrust to Sir Samuel Baker in 1869.

Baker and some Egyptian historians insisted that the primary object of the expedition was to suppress the slave trade. Those Egyptian historians had their reasons. They wanted to represent the expedition as a "mission intended primarily to plant the seeds of civilisation in Central Africa" the object which the Official Journal gave as the Viceroy's aim in launching Baker's expedition. 3 Baker had his own secret reason. Like Speke he was anxious to go back to the region which he had traversed during his first journey. Baker must have felt some sort of sentimental attachment to these regions. His first journey had brought him fame and a knighthood. He was eager that his name should be attached to the history of these regions. He must

1. F.O. 84/1246 Colonel Stanton to Russell, Sept. 26, 1865.
return to those regions. But in what capacity could he go? Exploration was no longer an exciting subject and there was very little he could explore. Unlike Livingstone, he was neither a missionary nor a philanthropist. Belonging to a family with estates in Jamaica and Mauritius, his mind was that of a businessman. So he envisaged the idea of a trading company which would carry trade between Europe and the Equatorial regions. He must have imagined himself at the head of this enterprise. But to his disappointment nobody adopted his idea. So when the Viceroy offered Baker "the command of the greatest expedition of modern times", Baker thought "it would be folly to decline such a splendid offer which presents both fortune and prestige upon a path that I know well". 

It is clear from this remark that Baker was primarily thinking of "prestige and fortune" when he accepted Ismail's offer. He wanted to snatch prestige and fame from his own people so he ought to portray the aims and the achievements of the expedition in a manner which would make it appeal to his nation. He must have known that the British Government and those quarters of the public who ever cared about the Sudan were concerned primarily with the slave trade in that country. And so he insisted that the primary object of his expedition was to suppress the slave trade.

But when Baker accepted the Viceroy's offer his mind was not wholly pre-occupied with the slave trade; nor did the suppression of the traffic in slaves seem to him to be the chief

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object of the expedition.

When Baker was asked by Isma'il to draw up "a plan for the proposed expedition to Central Africa", in April 1869, he drew a plan in which he considered the annexation to Egypt of the whole country "dans le basin du Nile" "of equatorial Africa as the chief object of the expedition". ¹

Secondly, Baker accepted a firman and a preamble which both gave priority to the establishment of government, laws and security over the suppression of slave-hunts. The preamble set forth the considerations that had led to the decision to send the expedition to the Upper Nile as follows:

"We, Ismail, Khedive of Egypt, considering the savage condition of the tribes which inhabit the Nile Basin,

"Considering that neither government, nor laws, nor security exists in those countries,

"Considering that humanity enforces the suppression of the slave-hunters who occupy those countries in great numbers;

............ We have decreed and now decree as follows:-

"An expedition is organised to subdue to our authority the countries situated to the south of Gondokoro;

"To suppress the slave trade; to introduce a system of regular commerce; .............."²

Thus it is evident from the preamble and the Firman that the submission of the equatorial regions to the authority of the


2. Samuel White Baker, Ismailia, A narrative of the Expedition to Central Africa for the suppression of the slave trade organised by Ismail, Khedive of Egypt (London, 1874), p. 6-7
Egyptian Government was the first and primary consideration. The suppression of the slave trade came next to this object. But it must be submitted that both Ismā'īl and Baker believed that the subjugation of the Upper Nile to the Khedive's authority would put an end to the slave traffic.¹ This was not necessarily so. The history of the Sudan before 1869, and after it, had clearly shown this assumption to be a mistaken one. The Western, Eastern and Northern parts of the Sudan had been under the Ottoman yoke for nearly forty years and yet the slave trade continued to increase rather than decrease.

It seems that the whole attitude of Baker towards the expedition was a subjective one. His thoughts were self-centred. He had experienced the fame that some labours in Africa might bestow upon an individual in his own society. But Sir Samuel was an ambitious man and with a taste for good reputation. He had witnessed how Livingstone's career in Africa was looked to with admiration and envy by his own generation. Indeed, by 1869 there was some sort of a "Livingstone cult". At that time the achievements of an individual Briton in the so-called "primitive" countries were looked upon as the achievements of the whole British "nation". And to admire such an individual like Livingstone was to admire that nation of which he was a representative. But Livingstone was fighting for a cause which was near to the heart of at least those people who were interested or cared about Africa. So if Baker were to acquire

¹ F.O. 84/1305 Stanley to Clarendon, 4 Sept. 1869; also Ibid., Elliot to Clarendon, 3 Oct. 1869.
such fame as Livingstone, he had to pick a cause which might earn him a "Baker cult". And so he insisted that the main object of the expedition was to suppress the slave trade because the minds of at least those who had any interest in the Sudan were pre-occupied with the suppression of the slave trade.

But before he returned home it was clear to Baker that his actions in the Southern Sudan had not promoted the cause of the suppression of the slave trade. He was aware that he had not done much to foster that cause. On 30 September 1872, he communicated to Sir Roderick Murchison from Fatiko his fear that "there are many who will think I have hardly done enough; but God knows I have done by best". 1

Aroused by such an apprehension Baker tried to save his own face and reputation by attempting to win the sympathy of the public for his side in the controversy which had already flared up over the real objective of his expedition. The campaign on his side had been started on his behalf by the publication of his letters to friends and family before he had returned home. Three private letters from him to Sir Roderick Murchison, J. Baker and Sir H. Rawlinson were published in The Times of 15th, 14th and 13th August, 1873 respectively. In those letters he claimed that the main object of his expedition had been the suppression of the slave trade; and that in spite of formidable difficulties he had accomplished that object. "I have entirely suppressed the slave trade of the White Nile". 2 "Slavery was at an end". 3 "Should the slave-trade recommence

1. The Times, 15 August 1873
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 14 August 1873.
when I leave it will be the fault of the Sudan authorities".¹ These were the pronouncements of Baker from his ground of operations.

When Baker returned home he lost neither time nor opportunity for promoting his claims. He addressed the Royal Geographical Society, delivered the Rede lecture at Cambridge on slavery, addressed receptions given in his honour at Brighton and in the City, wrote to The Times and finally crowned his efforts by the publication of his stupendous book, Ismailia. These labours were not in vain. He enlisted the support of many quarters. On the other hand his attempt to publicise his supposed achievements had forced those circles who had doubts as to the objects and achievements of his expedition to refute his claims.

Among the quarters which sponsored Sir Samuel's cause was the Royal Geographical Society. The Society had always been a loyal friend of the Christian Pasha. On 8 December 1873 the Society held a reception in his honour: "the theatre of the London University has seldom, if ever, held a more crowded and brilliant assembly ..... a witness to the intense interest which Sir Samuel Baker's achievements have aroused among his countrymen .....", so judged The Times the next day.² Before about 1,500 people, who included the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Lord Chancellor, Sir Bartle Frere, several M.P.s, and "a very large circle of persons distinguished in science and politics", Sir Samuel entered fully into the details of his expedition to put down the slave trade. However, "Baker

1. The Times, 13 August 1873.
2. Ibid., 9 Dec., 1873.
did not enter into any particulars of the scheme of the Khedive, through him, to conquer and annex to the territories of Egypt all the countries in the Upper Nile district" complained the Anti-Slavery Reporter. To that distinguished gathering he emphasised that "his Highness's real aim was what professed to be - namely the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in those regions".

The municipal banquet given by the Mayor and Town Council of Brighton on 20 January 1874 was attended by people less distinguished, but the meeting itself was no less significant from Sir Samuel's point of view. By January 1874 he had clearly digested the objections and challenges of his critics. And he took the opportunity at Brighton to refute publicly the charges laid against him, to expound his views on the question of the annexation of the region south of Gondokoro to the Egyptian Government and to assert his claim that he had crushed the slave trade of the White Nile.

These public addresses must have given Baker some assurance that in "England and the British Parliament itself" as well as in some geographic and municipal quarters, "there was no lack of appreciation of the eminent offices rendered" by him to the cause of the suppression of the slave trade in the Southern Sudan.

But the climax of Baker's bid to obtain the approval of the

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 Jan. 1874
2. Pall Mall Gazette, 9 Dec. 1873
3. The Times, 20 Jan. 1874
4. Ibid.
British public came with the publication of his *Ismailia*; the sub-title of which was "A Narrative of the Expedition to Central Africa for the Suppression of Slave Trade organised by Ismail, Khedive of Egypt". The "sub-title as well as the text of the book, somewhat distorted Baker's terms of reference from Khedive Ismail who issued to Baker various administrative instructions one of which was an order to suppress the slave trade". 1

Nearly the whole of the two corpulent volumes were devoted to the description of the slave trade, its horrors, its effects on the country as a whole and on the growth and morals of the population; the attitude of the Ottoman authorities in the Sudan towards the traffic and lastly the Pasha's clashes with the slave traders and officials who conived with them and the measures he had taken to support his contention that he had crushed the slave trade. All through the book he took special care not to give the slightest doubt that the suppression of the slave trade was his primary object and so he always placed the words to "suppress the slave trade" before the words to "annex the Nile Basin".

He was of the opinion that the slave trade had increased greatly in the period between his first visit in 1862 and his second and he had witnessed the change in the scene. "All is wilderness. The population has fled. Not a village is to be seen". All this destruction was the certain result of "the settlement of Khartoum traders", who kidnap women and children

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for slaves and who "plunder and destroy wherever they set their foot".

It was natural that Baker should give an exaggerated picture of the whole situation. However, nobody at the time challenged this portrait although many quarters objected to his other claims. The picture was not much more exaggerated than those given by Holroyd, Pallme and Buxton of the slave hunts in the Western part of the Sudan before 1840.

Baker also over-portrayed the difficulties which had confronted him. He admitted that this "was a natural and inevitable consequence of a sudden reform which threatened so many interests". The difficulties in his way were enhanced by two facts: that the slave traders had incited the inhabitants against him and by the complicity on the part of certain government officials" with the slave traders.

Nevertheless, these difficulties were not formidable enough to hinder his success. He acted vigorously. He captured the traders' vessels, imprisoned their agents, liberated their slaves, and confiscated their ivory "subject to the decision of the Khedive". He caught the Governor of Fashoda "in the act of kidnapping helpless women and children whom he had immediately insisted upon liberating", although he had no legal jurisdiction in the Governor's province. He resolved that at the expiration of the contract between the Government and al-Aqqād in April 1872 Baker should assume a monopoly of the ivory trade for the Government on the principle of the fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company; "as it would be impossible to permit the acts of

the Khartoum traders who, I was convinced would never deal honestly with the natives. Thus with such actions he entirely suppressed the slave trade - so announced Sir Samuel.

In order to prove to his readers that his approach to the question of slavery was not only a negative one but also a positive one, Baker related how he tried to create what he called "a taste for agriculture" among the people whom he commanded. Shortly before the departure of the expedition Baker told his friend, Lord Wharncliffe that he had taken with him large quantities of seeds of all kinds that would be adapted to the climate and soil of Central Africa.

Shortly after the arrival of the expedition to Gondokoro in April 1872, Baker set out to clear a small plot of ground and sowed some garden seeds on it. His soldiers, so he wrote, took a great interest in the operation. So all his men had arranged gardens parallel with the line of their camp. He gave them various seeds, with a promise of prizes for the finest specimens of vegetables that might be produced. Even the women and boys, who were domestic servants and who were originally slaves that he had liberated from the traders, had learned to take a great interest in cultivation. Each had a garden, and a day never passed without some hours being spent in working on those gardens with the spade and hoe.

In the new settlement "which was the signal for cultivation", Baker watched how the seeds of English cabbage and carrot had

1. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 158
grown, and he wondered how "in a new settlement, in a wild country" he witnessed the success of his attempt to grow cabbage and carrot.

Baker's enthusiasm for, and interest in, the economic development of the equatorial regions, has been over-estimated by contemporaries and historians.¹ His plan for a "settlement" at Gondokoro, described above, was an example of the working of his mind on this question of economic development. Baker brought no economic development to the White Nile basin. It is not surprising as he failed to appreciate that there had been a thing called traditional agriculture, and no economic development could ever be achieved without using African agriculture as a basis for it.

Despite his claim of establishing a settlement, he failed to provide himself and his expedition with provisions and so he conducted regular campaigns against the Negroes to extract provisions from these "untutored" persons who, in his view, did not know even the rudiments of agriculture. However, Baker was not original in trying to plant a "settlement", nor was "his experience as a pioneer settler" had enabled him to bring to the idea a new vigour. Even Speke who was not a businessman nor an intellectual had conceived of the idea. The idea of developing African agriculture as a means of combating slavery was advocated by Thomas Fowell Buxton in 1840. Indeed Buxton's ideas were more clear because he accepted that there was some sort of traditional African agriculture while Baker assumed nothing of this sort. The Niger Expedition was supposed to put

into practice some of the ideas of Buxton on African agriculture by establishing a "model farm" on land purchased from the inhabitants at the juncture of the Niger and Benue; and a separate Agricultural Association, organised as a private firm, took responsibility for the model farm. But this plan, together with many plans and hopes connected with the Niger Expedition, had not the chance to be put into effect as the whole enterprise failed in the face of high mortality. Even Buxton himself who was behind the idea of the model farm and the development of African agriculture was by no means unique in his interest in the promotion of African agriculture. His "thought on this point closely followed the project put forward by the African Institution in 1808, and repeated with variations by MacQueen, but the base lay even further back in the ideas of Wadstrom, Beaver, or, less precisely in the hopes of Malachy Poslethwayt." In any case Baker's scheme of encouraging cultivation among his juniors came to nothing and even if his so-called "settlement" and gardens had succeeded they could hardly have had any effect on the question of slavery in the Southern Sudan.

Baker's story as presented in Ismailia contained many loop-holes besides the distortions which have been mentioned and which will be referred to again when we try to explain his critics' point of view. One loop-hole was that although he stated that at least fifty thousand were positively either captured or held in the various zeribas, he was in the area for

about three years and yet he did not claim to have liberated as many as fifty thousand during the whole three years. So in this case either his estimation was over-exaggerated or he had not suppressed the slave trade as entirely as he had claimed.

If some quarters of the British public were impressed with Sir Samuel's expedition and his alleged achievements, the British Government from the start to the end of the abortive enterprise did show caution towards it. Before embarking on his journey Baker had an interview with Clarendon. As far as Baker was concerned the interview was a disaster. The British Government had always pledge itself to the suppression of the slave trade in the Sudan, but, as the attitude of the British Government towards Baker's expedition showed, only if the suppression would cost them nothing. Even the support for some British subjects who would be engaged in the suppression process in the Sudan seemed to the British Government a high price for such a minor interest.

A report of the interview between Baker and Clarendon was prepared for Stanton, the British Consul in Cairo. But the hopes that Baker entertained that he might get the support of the British Government were shattered and Gladstone must have foreseen the dangers in supporting a vigorous and ambitious man like Baker; therefore, he advised Stanton that:

"I conclude we undertake no responsibility with regard to this expedition. Understand distinctly, and make it known to all British subjects who may take part in this Expedition, that H.M.G. undertake no responsibility whatever for the consequences of it either as regards themselves or as regards any matter
connected with it". 1

In spite of this rebuff, Baker swallowed a great deal of his pride and continued to impress the British Government with the expedition. On 30 June 1873 Lord Granville received a telegram from Vivian, which contained the substance of a telegram from Baker. The telegram declared that: "The country as far as the Equator annexed to Egyptian dominion, all rebellious intrigues and the slave trade completely put down, country orderly, Government perfectly organised; and road open as far as Zanzibar". 2

But if Sir Samuel would impress his audiences in the theatre of London University and in Brighton with his supposed achievements he could not do so with the British Government which was informed of his operations and their results. As far back as May 1870 Mr. Wylde, the head of the Slave Trade Department at the Foreign Office, had communicated to his superiors his doubts as to the success of the expedition. "Unless Sir Samuel Baker's expedition is very sharply looked after", he noted in a memorandum, "I shall be very much surprised if it does not turn a slave trade Razzia on a large scale". 3

The attitude of the British Government was consistent throughout the duration of the expedition. After Baker's final employment by the Khedive the Foreign Office consented to see that the "terms of his contract were faithfully carried out". But besides this the British Government continued to exhibit a neutral and disinterested attitude towards the activities of

1. F.O. 78/2092 Memoranda by Clarendon and Gladstone, 12 and 14 April 1869. F.O. 78/2091 Clarendon to Stanton, 15 April 1869
2. Hansard, 3rd Serni., ccxvi, Col. 1547, 30 June 1873.
3. F.O. 78/2253 Memo, by Wylde, 30 May 1870
Sir Samuel. Baker was disgusted with this attitude as he complained later that the British Government was indifferent to the failure or the success of his expedition.\(^1\) Baker wanted the positive backing of the British Government in case a dispute had arisen between him and the Egyptian Government.\(^2\) By 1873 the Foreign Office must have been pleased with itself as it was clear to it, by that time, that blunders had been committed by Sir Samuel and he had failed to suppress the slave trade.\(^3\)

However, the disapproval and the objections of those who controlled the "Corridors of Power" to Baker's expedition remained in secret. In fact the objection of the Foreign Office to the expedition was damped down by what appeared to be the Prince of Wales's high approval of the expedition.\(^4\) The support given by the young Prince to the Christian Pasha continued right to the end. When Baker returned home the Prince welcomed him "as a philanthropist who has carried out a great work for the benefit of human kind".\(^5\) Baker was aware of the Prince's support, valued it highly and made the best out of it in his speeches and writings; a thing which had betrayed some people into believing that the Pasha had some support behind him in the "Establishment". The sympathy of some M.P.s must have confirmed the belief of this section of the public.

However, as far back as September 1870 some public doubt, as to whether Baker's expeditions was primarily concerned with

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2. F.O. 84/1371 Granville to Vivian, 6 Oct. 1873
3. Ibid.
5. The Times, 9 Dec. 1873,
the suppression of the slave trade or not, was expressed. At a meeting of the Geographical section of the British Association held at Liverpool, the President Sir Roderick Murchison, read a letter recently received from the British Consul-General in Cairo stating that Sir Samuel had been made a Pasha by the Egyptian Government. "A discussion was followed, in which Sir Samuel was lauded for his energy in carrying out the wise act of the Viceroy for putting an end to the violent pillage of the people, and preventing them from being made slaves by violence". This pro-Baker discussion seemed to have excited the anger of a certain Dr. G. Campbell who rose to tell the meeting that he could not agree in the view that the suppression of the slave trade was the main object of the expedition. "He thought that possibly the extension of a great Mahomedan and slaveholding power over the natives of Central Africa, might NOT be the blessing that some anticipated". Dr. G. Campbell seemed to be expressing the views of many who were present because he was applauded for his remarks, and the statements of the Doctor gave courage to those who shared his opinions to give him support through the press. A certain William Allen wrote to the Anti-Slavery Reporter regretting that Dr. Campbell's view of Baker's expedition was the true one.

That the Anti-Slavery Reporter should have given space to such criticisms, was a clear indication that the Anti-Slavery Society had already come to the same view and from henceforward the

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
Society identified itself with the Anti-Baker cause. The Anti-Slavery Society was pleased that Baker's expedition should have aroused much doubt and criticism. It was a sign that there was public interest in the anti-slavery cause. As has been mentioned before, the public interest in the slave trade was aroused by Livingstone's revelations of the horrors of the trade in the interior of East Africa. The Anti-Slavery Society was no longer the only society in the field of anti-slavery; some missionary and philanthropic organisations joined the chorus of the Anti-Slavery Society in urging upon the Government to take some measures to end the traffic in slaves. The Church Missionary Society presented a memorial to the Secretary of State for India in 1869, and in 1871 a Parliamentary Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the whole question of the slave trade on the East Coast of Africa". Although mainly concerned with the slave trade in East Africa, the Committee received evidence that a considerable trade in slaves had been carried out in the Red Sea.

This evidence moved the Foreign Secretary who warned the Ambassador in Turkey that, as a consequence of the evidence before the Committee, he would probably have to make "an earnest representation to the Porte". Sir Bartle Frere was appointed by the British Government to negotiate a treaty with Zanzibar. In December 1872 on his outward journey, Sir B. Frere visited Egypt and had two long interviews with Ismail in which he discussed with the Khedive the two issues of the slave trade and

1. F.O. 84/1341 Granville to Elliot, 10 August 1871
slavery.

These two incidents showed that the slave trade in the Sudan had now come to be connected in the British official and public mind with that in East Africa. It was no longer possible to discuss or protest against the slave trade in the eastern part of Africa without expressing the same sentiment against the slave trade in the Sudan.

This public and official interest was welcome to the Anti-Slavery Society. "It is encouraging", so noticed Joseph Cooper in the beginning of 1873, "thus early to see the effect of an increase of public interest in the subject". But in his opinion this was no reason why the friends of the anti-slavery cause should relax their exertions. The Anti-Slavery Society knew well that whenever there was public interest in the question of the slave trade, it could put greater pressure on the Government and the Government would have no alternative but to respond and to act. Any government could not afford to ignore a pressure group like the Anti-Slavery Society, especially when the Society had some backing behind it from the public.

It was always the aim of the Anti-Slavery Society that the interest of the public should not flag because the Government had undertaken a part, if only a small part, of the subject. And the controversy over the main object of Sir Samuel's expedition had given the Anti-Slavery Society the chance to focus attention on, and to keep the interest of the public on the question of the slave trade in the Sudan.

Joseph Cooper's translation of Professor Berlioux's *The Slave*

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Trade in Africa in 1872, provided the reading public with some picture, if an exaggerated one, of the slave trade in the "Middle and Upper Valleys of the Nile". Although the book was written by an academic it was full of the over-colouring which often characterised the books of the anti-slavery adherents. The writer and the translator both agreed that the first step towards the abolition of the slave trade was its exposure to the public eye.\(^1\) And the exposition ought to be in such a way as to enlist the sympathy of the readers to the cause - and so there arose the need for over-colouring and exaggeration. The Professor was not an eye-witness. He based his book on the journals of Baker, Speke, Heuglin, Lejean and Madame Tinne.

The French Professor particularly emphasised the role of the European merchants in the slave trade in the Sudan. He stated that the European traders at Khartoum benefited enormously from the slave trade; that they lent money to the slave traders at an interest as high as cent per cent; and that the "merchants of western nations, whilst claiming the profit (from the slave trade) avoid being at the head of their men, thus screening themselves and charging their responsibility upon their Wekils ...".\(^2\) He charged the European traders with most of the destruction and demoralisation; that their presence around Gondokoro had brought into the operations of destruction an ability which did not characterise areas in which the non-European traders operated.\(^3\)

It was to Berlioux's credit that he did not concentrate on the slave trade in the Southern Sudan only. He did not forget to

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1. Ibid., p. iv.
2. Ibid., p. 20.
mention the fact that the slave trade in the Sudan was carried also in the Nuba mountains, at Fāzūghli and on the frontiers of Ethiopia. Since 1863 most writers seemed to neglect the sources of the slave trade in the Eastern and Western Sudan and to concentrate mainly on that in the Southern Sudan.

Both the author and the translator thought that "whenever the Powers of Europe shall agree to bring their united moral influence to bear upon it, the slave-trade will cease to exist". ¹ Professor Berlioux thought that "were the Ottoman Government and that of Cairo seriously desirous of abolishing the slave-trade, nothing could be more easy. In the desert the caravan escape without trouble; and the immensity of the ocean is equally favourable to the vessels of the man-hunters, but in this extensive Valley of the Nile in which the choice of the route is restricted, in as much as all transport go to the river, supervision and repression would be easy". ²

But, it was his opinion that the two governments could not be trusted and they were not anxious to put a stop to the slave traffic. As long as Government troops were paid in slaves, which he thought was still the custom, and as long as Egypt was in favour of slavery "every ostensible demonstration made by the Egyptian Government against the traffic of the blacks is nothing more than a formality for the purpose of deceiving the powers of Europe ... " ³

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1. Ibid., p. iv.
2. Ibid., p. 32.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
The last quotation was borrowed by Professor Berlioux from Baker's *Albert N'Yanza* and the Professor totally agreed with this idea expressed by Baker in 1866. For these reasons the Professor thought that Baker's expedition was not going to change the situation in the Southern Sudan drastically:

"We must not therefore be too sure of good results when we see Mr Baker starting at the head of a small armed body, commissioned by the Khedive, to bring into his subjection those countries in which the man-hunters exert their ravages. We can believe in the hatred of the English traveller against this traffic; but we can only have a very limited confidence in that government to which the natives are to be subject. It will be scarcely possible for the chief of the expedition himself in spite of his qualities to gain our entire reliance."  

Professor Berlioux's judgment on Baker's expedition must have encouraged the Anti-Slavery Society to explain publicly its attitude towards Baker's enterprise. Until the end of 1871 the Society was cautious in its attitude. The proceedings of the Society of the 6th December 1871 commented on the expedition in the following terms: "It remains to be seen whether Sir Samuel Baker's undertaking and action at Gondokoro have merely checked the trade for a time, or whether it will lead to its permanent suppression."  

This note exhibited a certain amount of optimism that Baker's enterprise would either check or suppress the slave trade.

Public criticism of Baker's actions continued to flow. The *Times* expressed the view that "the primary or professed aim of

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1. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
2. *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1 July 1872.
the expedition, that of putting down the slave-trade - had merged into a determination to traverse by force the ground which Sir Samuel and Lady Baker had previously .... succeeded in passing through". The Paper had no doubt that Sir Samuel's policy of trying to overthrow the slave trade by force and by slaying the slave dealers "can, at best, but temporarily check the traffic". ¹

That such a conservative paper as The Times should have criticised Sir Samuel's policy of using force to end the slave trade must have given the Anti-Slavery Society an idea that there were other quarters who also had their doubts that the expedition did not really succeed in ending the slave trade. And so the Committee of the Society saw the "present fitting time to send an address to the Khedive of Egypt, entreating him to adopt such measures as shall ABOLISH SLAVERY from his dominions". ²

The memorial was forwarded to the Khedive by the Foreign Office. The address communicated to the Khedive the Society's convictions that since they had addressed him on the question in 1867 little progress had yet been effected toward the extinction of slavery and that while it continued to exist as a recognised institution in Egypt, they had little hope of seeing the slave trade in the Sudan abolished. "So long as a profitable market for slaves exist, so long as there will be a supply, and all the efforts of your Highness and your officers, however faithful they may be, will prove powerless to prevent the slave trade". ³

This memorial was more militant and persistent than its

1. The Times, 11 March, 1873
2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 July 1873
3. Ibid.
predecessor in 1867. It laid more emphasis on the necessity of abolishing slavery as an institution in the Khedive's dominions. However, the Khedive's reply must have been disappointing to the society. Ismail expressed his willingness to do all that lay in his power to put an end to the slave trade, but added that time would be required for its total suppression. He had given stringent orders that slaves should not be introduced into Egypt from the Sudan. But it seems that the Khedive did not change his views, and those he expressed to the Society in 1867, on the institution of slavery. Those views ran contrary to those of the Society. So the Khedive evaded the whole issue of slavery as an institution in his reply.

On October 1, 1873 the attitude of the Anti-Slavery Society towards Baker's actions in the Southern Sudan was known to the public. The Anti-Slavery Reporter took the opportunity of the publication of Baker's letters in The Times to comment on the whole enterprise and to explain the attitude of the Society. The paper refused to accept Sir Samuel's announcements that he had completely suppressed the slave trade in the White Nile. It thought that everything pointed to the continuance of the slave-trade, which, no doubt, for a time had been checked, "but it is not destroyed". "To suppose however that", the Reporter added, "the hydra-headed monster has been killed, when it is only stunned for a time ...... would be disastrous to the cause we have at heart". ¹

The Reporter used some of the statements of Sir Samuel himself to support its judgment. Sir Samuel's letters contained some

¹. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 October 1873
contradictions which were, rightly, pointed to by the Reporter. Baker claimed in his letters that he had suppressed the slave trade entirely and yet he gave the impression that such a task was almost impossible because "every one of the Viceroy's subjects in the Sudan is in favour of the slave trade; that the greatest enemies of the expedition are the Viceroy's own subjects, who being pirates and slave-hunters detest the Government".

Commenting on these statements the Reporter asked: "such being the case what hope is there that the trade will be suppressed?"

"Should the slave-trade recommence, it will be the fault of the Sudan authorities". This sentence quoted by the Reporter was embodied in one of Sir Samuel's letters to The Times. The Reporter thought that the sentence indicated that even Baker himself suspected that the trade might recommence. And the paper had no doubt that this would happen because "all those who alone can assist to destroy the trade are in favour of, and will use every intrigue, for its continuance". 1

The Reporter had other reasons for disbelieving Baker's statements. One reason was that there was no longer an English Consul who could enforce, in the opinion of the Reporter, an anti-slavery policy. Another reason was that, supposing that through the vigilance of Sir Samuel no slaves were to go down the Nile, other routes were open by which slaves could easily be conveyed to parts of the Red Sea, Cairo and Alexandria. Moreover, so long as slavery existed in Egypt and Turkey and the trade was profitable, the slave trade would be carried on. In explaining the last point, the Reporter quoted Sir Bartle Frere

1. Ibid.
who had recently come from Egypt and who was reported to have remarked on the hope expressed to him by the Khedive that the stoppage of the supply of slaves from the Sudan would ultimately tend towards a gradual diminution and final extinction of slavery; Frere said that: "I feel that all experience is against this expectation. Whilst the demand continues I believe it to be practically impossible to cut off the supply. This is specially the case where the sources of supply are so many and spread over so large an area that ages would hardly suffice to reach them all by separate measures of repression; but if the demand is extinguished, the object is at once effected and the trade must cease". 1

The Reporter conceded that the trade had been checked, but before the slave trade in the Upper Nile could be effectually and permanently suppressed "continued efforts will have to be made to put down the hunts there; legitimate trade must be encouraged; sound-hearted anti-slavery English consuls must be established at Khartoum, Ismailia, and the slave exporting cities in the Red Sea. Slavery must be abolished in Egypt, Turkey, etc. etc. and paid must be substituted for forced, unrequited labour exacted from the "fellah". When these results are obtained then we shall have faith in the announcement that the slave-trade of the White Nile is suppressed". 2

Such were and continued to be the Anti-Slavery Society's ideas for the suppression of the slave trade. The Society continued to press them on the British Government, the Egyptian

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
Government and on individuals with authority in the Sudan. These ideas will be met with, from time to time, in the memorials of the Anti-Slavery Society, in the pages of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, in the writings of anti-slavery adherents like Joseph Cooper and in the public meetings organised by the Anti-Slavery Society.

If the Anti-Slavery Society did not undervalue the actual results obtained by Sir Samuel as far as the slave trade was concerned, it did over-estimate the extent and importance of the region annexed by Baker to the authority of the Khedive. In spite of Sir Samuel's claim that the expedition had conquered and pacified the country as far as the Equator, "no territory beyond Fowera and Fatiko was annexed"; he established "two military posts at Gondokoro and Fatiko, the station of Fowera and the town of Tawfaiqiya, and in the neighbourhood of these posts the Egyptian Government had no authority". In fact only a year after the departure of Sir Samuel the troops at Gondokoro "did not dare to venture a hundred yards from their station except when in bands and well-armed".

Since the Anti-Slavery Society supposed that Sir Samuel Baker had annexed large territories to the Khedive's dominions, the Society asked the British Government not to recognise the authority of the Khedive over these newly acquired territories until he would agree to abolish the slave trade and slavery in his dominions. On 31 October 1873, an influential deputation headed by Sir Bartle Frere and the Rev. Horace Waller together

with several M.P.s waited on Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary. They presented a memorial to his Lordship on the subject "of the extension of Egyptian territory to the basin of the Nile". The Memorial considered that it was "the duty of the several Powers who were parties to the declarations made at Vienna and Verona, to intimate to His Highness Khedive of Egypt that, while not unwilling to acquiesce in the extension of his rule to the farther regions of the Nile, the conditions of such extension being the extinction of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery, they are not prepared to recognise his authority in these countries so long as these may be tolerated within his dominions". 1

The Address was also meant to direct the attention of the nations of Europe to the "beneficial and almost boundless commerce with those regions of surpassing productiveness". The Memorial stressed that the nations of Europe were "entitled to view the subject of the slave trade and slavery in Egypt viz., that so long as these exist (and they mutually depend on each other), they effectually prevent an extension of civilisation, and commerce beneficial alike to Europe and Africa". 2

The Society had always tried to influence important sections of the community and to persuade them to show interest in the cause of anti-slavery by pointing to them that the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade might serve their own interests. The Society had always maintained that legitimate commerce could not co-exist with the slave trade, and so, if businessmen were anxious to extend their field of business to that part of Africa, they should

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 Jan. 1874.
2. Ibid.
work with the Society. The reference to beneficial and almost boundless commerce was a warning to the merchants of Europe that those regions would be lost to European trade if the slave trade were not abolished. The Society knew that mercantile groups as a whole and the City in general had great moral influence with the Government.

III

By 1869 anti-slavery sentiment had been frequently and increasingly occupied with the questions of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. The public meetings, the deputations to the Foreign Secretary, the addresses to the electors and references in Parliament were all manifestations of the increasing interest in the two subjects. But this interest was more evident in the volume of literature in English dealing with the two subjects.

In 1870 a certain Major E. Millingen contributed to the discussion of the questions in his book, *Slavery in Turkey.* 1 But the person who was mostly responsible for the writing and diffusion of anti-slavery literature was Joseph Cooper. Besides his translation of, and introduction to, Professor Berlioux's book, he published two books 2 which devoted much space to the discussion of the subjects of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. The translation of Dr. Georg Schweinfurth's journal of travels in the Sudan in 1874 was an event which was hailed by the anti-slavery

2. Joseph Cooper, *The Lost Continent; or, Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa, 1875* (London, 1875); also, *Joseph Cooper, Turkey and Egypt, Past and Present. In relation to Africa* (London, 1876)
sentiment. 1 Baker's two volumes on Ismailie, the reporting of his speeches and his articles greatly augmented the volume of slavery literature and widened the arguments on the issues of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan.

The Press was also increasingly touching upon the questions of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. Naturally the paper which gave most space to these issues was the Anti-Slavery Reporter. Some of the space in this paper was filled with matter from other publications and sometimes it depended upon pictures to illustrate some of the points. The leading papers of the time, The Times, Pall Mall Gazette, the Spectator and others found the questions of such importance and interest to the reading public as to merit writing leaders on them and to welcome correspondence and counter-correspondence.

This growing flood of slavery literature discussed the facts that had been obtained from various sources. These facts were used by the anti-slavery sentiment to educate the public in the evils of the slave trade and slavery. None of the contributors to the literature expressed his public dissent as far as the horrors of the slave hunts were concerned. There seems to be a conformity of opinion as far as this point was concerned. And this fact was exploited by the Anti-Slavery Society to escalate its campaign against the slave trade.

But the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan had many aspects and it was hardly difficult for any writer to write on the two issues without touching on some of these aspects. The

discussion of the two questions produced various questions and answers to them. Moreover, Baker's expedition had raised certain questions which no writer on the subject could avoid even if he wished to do so. These questions were mainly: What was the link between the slave trade and slavery? Did the abolition of the slave trade mean an automatic death to the institution of slavery? Or in other words was there any relationship between demand and supply? What were the real difficulties in ending the two institutions and what should be done to counter these difficulties? What means should be used to end the slave trade? Was it necessary, wise or morally defensible to use force? Was there any difference between the kind of slavery practised in the Sudan and that which had been practised in the British colonies and United States of America? To what extent was Islam responsible for the existence of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan?

It seems that almost all who had written on the two subjects linked slavery with the slave trade and in this they were in line with growing British opinion. It was a prevalent idea in anti-slavery circles that demand was the sole factor that determined the supply of slaves. Hence anti-slavers thought that the abolition of the institution of slavery was a sine qua non to the suppression of the slave trade.

The Anti-Slavery Society tried to make, with some success, the idea of the link between slavery and the slave trade acceptable and logical. Sir Bartle Frere played an important part in this. He tried to convert the Foreign Office to the idea by reporting to the Office that increased wealth in Egypt had led to an increased demand for slaves, and so it would "be practically
impossible to cut off the supply whilst the demand continues". In such a situation, so he was convinced, the only solution would be the abolition of "the legal status of slavery by a gradual measure similar to that introduced in Brazil". ¹

Sir B. Frere continued to expound the idea in his writings and speeches. At a meeting at Exter Hall on 8 July 1873 he put forward the following resolution: "Recognising, however, the fact that the slave trade is caused solely by the demands for slaves in Turkey, Egypt, Persia and Arabia and other countries this meeting regards the abolition of slavery as the only safe guarantee for its complete and permanent extinction". ²

The Anti-Slavery Reporter did its best to give the idea a wide spread; and so, when the paper saw that one of its contemporaries, The Spectator, had advocated the same idea that the abolition of slavery was the only effectual remedy to the slave trade, ³ the Reporter rejoiced.

Those who advocated this idea assumed that the demand for slaves was caused by the fact that "slave holding is necessary in the life of the Turks", ⁴ and that in the Ottoman dominions there were "very few places of any importance where there is not a lively demand for slaves". "In Egypt large towns everywhere and even in the small ones along the river, whoever is able to

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1. F.O. 84/1389 Frere to Grenville, 1 January 1873, enclosing memoranda on the slave trade and his conversations with Ismail.
2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1873.
3. The Spectator, 6 Sept. 1873.
afford it has one or two slaves, and nearly all Government officials from the sheikh of a ward in a little village to the Khedive's ministers of state, and not even excepting His Highness's own harems, have from one to thirty human chattels doing the hard work of the house, and nearly all the native merchants must have their bondmen and bondwomen, while in most places the position of a person is measured by the number of slaves especially in this time in the case of the women who take pride in telling how many slave girls they have under their command".  

This demand, or at least a large part of it, had to be provided for from the Sudan. The existence of this demand had ensured a constant flow of supply. But could it be that it was the supply itself which determined this demand? The anti-slavery adherents would not concede this point although others pointed to it and tried to argue it. A letter to the Pall Mall Gazette from "an English Traveller" stated that the "slave trade has its origin in those barbarous tribes .... who make war to get slaves ....." and that the victims who were brought into Egypt would have remained slaves in their own country. Anti-slavery sentiment could not tolerate such views. The Anti-Slavery Reporter retorted that such views could only serve to impede the efforts of the anti-slavery societies and dry up the sympathies of the Government for the cause.  

At least one writer, Major F. Millingen, attributed the slave

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1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, January 1873  
2. Pall Mall Gazette, 25 June 1867  
3. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 15 July 1867
trade to both supply and demand. To him "the causes of supply and demand" were so twisted and blended together that they secure to each other mutual support; "it is evident that the existence of the one implies the co-existence of the other".  

Major Millingen thought that there were "motives which stimulate the Negro races to supply the markets with their enslaved brethren". In the countries from where slaves were brought there were constant rivalry, feuds and internecine wars. And slavery was evidently the inevitable consequence of these wars. His view was that in the impossibility of putting a stop to these wars it would be lost labour to attempt to prevent the former. According to Major Millingen "the negro finds it profitable to catch and sell slaves, and that necessity as well as custom sanction and legitimise such a practice". Given this "suppose the negro brings forward a logical objection to defeat the liberal aim of the philanthropist and says, 'that's very well, my good sir, but what do you advise me to take as an equivalent to human flesh? Goods: We have none, our only property is a piece of linen which takes the place of the rather too primitive fig-leaves; what are we then to take, when victorious, from our enemies? Must we return from the battlefield without loot, and with our hands empty? Surely not - we make our enemies slaves and sell them to those who have riches to give us instead".  

However, the Major thought that if "the customers of Cairo, Mecca or Constantinople were not bidding twenty or thirty pounds for a slave, the victorious Negro chiefs would let the vanquished

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2. Ibid.
go free, or, at least, would allow him to exist under a sky congenial to his nature". The writer was not totally unaware of the fact that the Negroes were incited to war against one another in order to provide slaves for external markets. And it was the view of Major Millingen that the markets were scattered in the Muslim nations because "slavery is inherent in the religious system; inherent in the social system, and, also, congenial to the ideas and customs of Mohammedan nations".

It was often argued that it was the desire to satisfy the needs of the "harem system" which stimulated the demand for slaves. Major Millingen stated that the slaves imported from the Southern Sudan to Turkey were females, since the demand was exclusively for domestic serving in the "harem". Joseph Cooper stressed that "the principal demand for slaves is for the Harems". In any commodity there is a relation between demand and supply, and the slave merchandise is no exception. But was the Anti-Slavery Society justified in insisting that demand had been the sole factor that determined the supply? The Society had not based its proposition on statistics or even on a close and acute observation of both supply and demand.

Most writers appeared to give little consideration to the demand for slaves inside the Sudan itself. In any case whether the slaves were kept in the Sudan or exported to Egypt, Arabia and Turkey, they were all used for the most part as domestic

1. Ibid., p. 3
2. Ibid., p. 3
3. Ibid., p. 7
slaves. As such "slaves ...... are usually in demand as objects de luxe",¹ and consequently the price and the keeping up of the slaves ought to have affected both supply and demand.

Although there were some references to the prices of slaves, none of the writers went into the trouble to investigate how the price of slaves really affected supply and demand. If the price of slaves was cheap the number of those who took and kept slaves ought to be great, and so the price affected the supply.

Did it occur to the Anti-Slavery Society that the regulation of the price could have an effect upon supply and demand? The Society was not aware of this fact. Dr. G. Schweinfurth stated that the value of slaves would be regulated to a great extent by the more or less severe measures taken by the local authorities for the suppression of the slave trade.² Difficulties and risks in carrying on the slave trade in the face of strong governmental measures enhanced the price of the slaves. In such a situation it would no longer be possible to obtain a slave or slaves except by those who were rich enough to afford such a luxury. Even the rich might hesitate before they spent much money on buying and supporting the slaves, who, according to Dr. Schweinfurth, "lead an idle life, and are not valued according to their capabilities for labour".³

The experience of the Society in combating British slavery and slave trade must have shown the Society that it was harder to

². Ibid., Vol. II, p. 419.
abolish the former than the latter. A generation had elapsed between the legal abolition of the British slave trade and British slavery. But why should the Society insist that the legal abolition of slavery as an institution must come before the abolition of the slave trade? Besides the conviction of the Society, referred to earlier, that so long as there was a demand for slaves, so long would the supply, somehow or other, be kept up, some leaders of the movement cherished the mistaken belief that the abolition of the institution of slavery in Turkey and Egypt was not a difficult task. "It should not be overlooked", so judged Joseph Cooper, "that in Turkey and Egypt negro slaves are not employed in agriculture, or what may be termed productive industry. Hence it is no matter of surprise that those best acquainted with life in these countries maintain that the abolition of slavery may be accomplished at any time and need not be attended with any material difficulty". ¹

It might be true that slaves in Turkey and Egypt were not employed in agriculture, but this was not the case in the Sudan. In the Sudan slaves performed the bulk of agricultural labour. And since little consideration had been given to the slaves inside the Sudan by the Anti-Slavery Society, it must have been ignorant of this point. Misled by ignorance of the country as a whole and of slavery and its place in the Sudanese economy in particular, most anti-slavery writers looked to the problems of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan from the point of view of the slaves exported from the Sudan to Egypt and Turkey. In other words the ignorance of those writers had led them to the belief that

if slavery was abolished in Egypt and Turkey, and the slave trade was stopped, this would be the end of the slave trade in the Sudan. Nothing could be further from being correct.

From the late sixties, the Anti-Slavery Society had to choose between advocating one of the two policies: the demand for immediate liberation of the slaves and the abolition of the institution of slavery, or the other policy of insisting on the overthrowing of the slave trade thus preventing further enslavement and cutting off the supply of new slaves. The Society was powerless to execute either policy. It had to depend on the good will and co-operation of the Egyptian Government. Therefore, if the Society adopted any of the two policies it had to ensure that it convinced the Egyptian Government of that policy. But what happened was that the Anti-Slavery Society advocated the immediate abolition of slavery from the institutions of the Khedive's dominions and when the Khedive showed his reluctance to adopt such a view, the Society launched its campaign of attacks against him.

This approach of the Society was rather dogmatic, unrealistic and impractical. The Anti-Slavery Society was led to this approach by a general tendency among its leaders to under-estimate, or perhaps to ignore, the extent and force of slavery as an economic, social and religious institution. Slaves were part of the economic, social and religious structure of society. To help in farm labour, slaves were needed. Although slaves were owned to perform menial and socially undesirable economic functions, their existence in the family or among the household gave their owner some sort of a social prestige. And sometimes slaves were
acquired for the sole purpose of prestige. Some slaves were wanted for the purpose of converting them to the religion of their owner; and this was, for the most part, Islam. So in the Sudan slaves were an integral part of the social, economic and political structure of the country, and slavery had an economic, cultural and religious impact upon Sudanese peoples. Could such a powerful force be eradicated by the simple procedure of issuing a firman from the Khedive? The Anti-Slavery Society ought to have known from its experience that to illegalise the slave trade or slavery did not necessarily mean the end of either institution.

Even if the Khedive were willing to comply with the Anti-Slavery Society's wish and to issue a firman illegalising slavery, would he be in a position to enforce his and the Society's will? The experience of Baker ought to have given the Society some insight into the nature of the problem. It seems that the mutual antipathy between Baker and the Society had diverted the controversy from what it ought to be - a real positive discussion of the problem - into allegations and counter allegations. But the successor of Baker was a man in whom the Society had full confidence and he clearly pointed to the Society that the Khedive could hardly enforce what they desired him to enforce.

In view of the persistence and tenacity of the habit of slaving and the existence of the cultural, political, economic and social factors that supported domestic slavery, until such factors altered, the Khedive could hardly enforce his will - even if he wished - to extinguish slavery. Could the Khedive's hand reach the hundreds of thousands of slaves scattered all over the
Sudan and in as many families? Could the Khedive's Government compensate the hundreds of thousands of masters? What could the authorities do with liberated slaves? What social, economic, and moral problems might ensue from liberating the slaves? And had the authorities the power to deal with them? These were practical questions to which the Khedive had to find answers before he could illegalise slavery. But these problems had not been argued nor been considered by the Anti-Slavery Society.

However, the Society continued to cherish the naive thinking that if the Khedive could be persuaded to declare the institution of slavery illegal that would lead to the end of the institution. Obsessed by such an idea the whole labours of the Society were directed towards putting pressure on the Khedive. In spite of the fact that the Society had conceived of no solution to the problem of slavery except by the abolition of the legal status of slavery by a firman from the Khedive, it showed a lack of tactics in dealing with him. Although the response of Isma'il to the Society's addresses and representations was favourable, the organisation continued its anti-Isma'il propaganda and led the public into suspecting the Khedive's sincerity as far as slave trade abolition was concerned.

And the Anti-Slavery Society did not lack some evidence to support its doubts as to Isma'il's good faith. The Anti-Slavery Reporter made much play with the fact that the Khedive himself still kept some slaves among his household. This simple fact seemed to convince papers like The Spectator and the Pall Mall Gazette that the Anti-Slavery Society's attitude towards Khedive
Ismail was a correct one.

The Spectator complained that the Khedive's "palaces are still filled with captive negroes, and people of all classes who can by any means afford it follow their ruler's example rather than precepts". ¹ "Why does not", insisted the Pall Mall Gazette, "his Highness set an example to his people by liberating the hundreds of slaves attached to his household". It was the judgment of the paper that "were the Khedive so disposed, he might abolish slavery there as easily as he has abrogated or set aside several other time-honoured institutions of Islam".²

Ismail did not set free his own slaves because, like early British abolitionists, he was no believer in immediate emancipation. His policy was to take measures which in his view might bring about the overthrow of the slave trade, thus preventing further enslavement. By cutting off the supply of new slaves, he believed that after some time slavery itself would end because slaves would either die or be manumitted.

The Anti-Slavery Reporter believed that the "assertions of Khedive as to his desire to put down the traffic are worthless", because "his Ministers are among the chief aids and abettors of it".³ The point - the connivance of the Ottoman authorities in the Sudan with the slave traders - was confirmed by nearly every traveller and was emphasised by Baker in particular.

Yet this fact should not have undermined the confidence of the Anti-Slavery Society in the sincerity of the Khedive. The Khedive

1. The Spectator, 6 Sept. 1873.
2. Pall Mall Gazette, 9 Dec. 1873.
had no control over his representatives in the Sudan because of the remoteness of distance between him and them. Moreover, the "nature of his government and the morals of his officials, whose ranks are always filled with an enormous proposition of corruptibles make it extremely probable that the trade will be developed and carried on, whether he likes it or not". ¹

In fairness to Isma'il it must be noted he had always punished those officials who were caught in acts of flagrant disobedience to his orders regarding the slave trade. The Khedive himself told the deputation of the Anti-Slavery Society that had visited him in Paris in June 1867 that within the last six months he had caused to be shot a commandant and a colonel who had disobeyed his order and favoured the slave trade. ² The Khedive also punished the Governor of Fashoda who had been caught by Baker conniving with the slave traders.

The Anti-Slavery Society continued to attack the Khedive personally in spite of the evidence available to it which clearly demonstrated the sincerity of the Khedive in his desire to end the slave trade and slavery. The Society might have doubted the testimony of the British Consul-Generals in Cairo and Baker whom it did not consider to have strong anti-slavery sentiment. The British Government was also in no doubt that the Khedive was sincere in his protestations against the slave trade and slavery; Lord Granville had clearly explained this to the deputation of the Society that waited upon him on 31st October, 1873. ³ The

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¹ *The Spectator*, 6 Sept. 1873.
² *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 16 June 1867.
³ *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, January 1874.
Government also defended the intentions of Ismail in Parliament. ¹

The Khedive had also found some support among those whose anti-slavery enthusiasm the Anti-Slavery Society could not doubt, and who asserted their conviction in the honesty of the Khedive's intentions. In a public meeting convened by the Anti-Slavery Society at Exter Hall on 8 July 1873 Sir Bartle Frere bore "his testimony to the good faith of his Highness the Khedive of Egypt, who, he believed, as sincerely desirous of seeing not only the slave trade, but slavery also, put an end to throughout his dominions. His Highness is enlightened enough to perceive that Egypt would not range herself by the side of the civilised nations of Europe as long as slavery and the slave trade formed a part of her domestic institutions, but, as usually the case where the government is of despotic character, the sovereign was not able to carry out his will through the agency of his servants". ²

In consequence of slavery existing in many Muslim countries, it was generally thought that Islam sanctioned it. There seemed to be a general tendency among British writers to associate the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan with Islam and Muslims. One of the early writers on slavery in the Sudan was Sir Thomas Buxton who maintained that "Mohamedanism ... gives the sanction of religion to the Slave Trade and even enjoins it as a mode of converting the heathen". ³ This was a rather moderate view of the attitude of Islam towards slavery. Some British writers

1. Hansard, 3rd Ser., Vol. CCV.
2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, October 1873.
in the early 1870's took an extreme view on this subject.

Major F. Millingen asserted that "slavery is inherent in
the religious and social system of Mohammedanism, and is congenial
to the ideas and customs of Mussulman nations".¹ Joseph Cooper
gave it as his opinion "that Mohammedan religion sanctions slavery
is not to be questioned".²

Slavery as a permanent institution is by no means sanctioned
by the canons of Islam. It must be noted that none of those writers
who asserted their beliefs that Islam sanctioned slavery supported
his idea with quotations from the Koran or the sayings of the
Prophet to that effect.

Challenging the view that the Koran permits slavery, Sir
George Maxwell, Vice-Chairman of the League of Nations, Standing
Committee of Experts on Slavery, has written, "That is not so, the
Koran merely recognises the existence of the system. The Prophet
Mohammed saw that system as an integral part of the life of the
pagan people of Arabia, and it was as such that he accepted it
in teaching the Mohammedan religion. For many centuries before
the birth of the Prophet the practice of employing negro slaves
had been prevalent, not only in Arabia but in Europe".³

During the lifetime of the Prophet slavery was not a problem
in Arabia. It is contended that the number of slaves in Arabia
at that time was so very few that they could be counted on the
fingers.

1. Major F. Millingen, Slavery in Turkey (London, 1870), p. 3;
3. Sir George Maxwell, "Slavery in Mohammedan Countries", The
   Contemporary Review, (July 1938), p. 44.
At the time of the Prophet many forms of slavery were known but the Koran "recognised, in fact, only one kind of slavery - the servitude of men made captives in bona fide lawful warfare, Jihad-i-Sharai". This form of bondage is admitted even today. In case of war international law permits imprisonment of captives until there is some sort of an agreement between the two fighting parties to exchange or ransom the captives.

The captivity of enemies of Islam in a holy war does not necessarily have the effect of enslaving them; for Islamic law urges the state and the individual Muslim to enfranchise the slaves:

"The Prophet exhorted his followers repeatedly in the name of God to enfranchise slaves, 'than which there was not an act more acceptable to God'. He ruled that for certain sins of omission the penalty should be the manumission of slaves. He ordered that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their service; and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain, and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for the purpose, they should be allowed to leave their masters on an agreement to that effect. He also provided that sums should be advanced to the slaves from the public treasury to purchase their liberty. In certain contingencies, it was provided that the slave should become enfranchised without the interference and even against the will of his master. The contract or agreement in which the least doubt was discovered, was construed most favourably in the interests of the slave, and the slightest promise on the part of the master was made obligatory.

for the purposes of enfranchisement. He encouraged manumission to the freest extent and therewith the gift of 'a portion of that wealth which God hath given you', To free a slave is the expiation for ignorantly slaying a believer, and for certain forms of untruth. The whole tenor of Mohammed's teaching made 'permanent chattelhood' or caste impossible; and it is simply 'an abuse of words' to apply the word slavery in the English sense, to any status known to the legislation of Islam".

However, it is in the nature of religious teachings that there should be a considerable gap between the theory and practice. The Muslims who carried on slave-raiding, trading and enslaving were certainly not following the Islamic canons. The Ottoman authorities in the Sudan called their murderous raids on the "pagan" Negroes "ghazwas" in order to give the impression that those "ghazwas" were carried in the name of Islam. Those raids were in direct contravention of the precepts of Islam. No Islamic law has authorised making war for the purpose of capturing slaves which was really the aim behind the ghazwas. The "Turkish" Governor who gloried in slave-raiding was no more a representative of Islam than the Sudanese who kidnapped or purchased his fellow-Sudanese. "The possession of a slave by the Koranic Laws, was conditional on a bona fide struggle, in self-defence against unbelieving and idolatrous aggressors, and its permission was a guarantee for the safety and preservation of the captives".

Muslims in the Sudan practised slave taking and slave-dealing; but these aspects of the slave trade were utterly condemned by Islam. Slavery by purchase was unknown during the time of the

2. Ibid., p. 266.
Prophet and the reigns of the first four Khalifas. The mutilation of the bodies of some slaves - which was one feature of the slave trade in the Sudan - was explicitly forbidden by the Prophet.

Thus the practices of slave-raiding, trading and slavery carried out in the Sudan by some Muslims were in contradiction to the teachings of Islam. Islam had not succeeded in eradicating or modifying some of pre-Islamic institutions in the Sudan and the institution of slavery was one of them. After all, the slavery practised in the Muslim Northern Sudan was also practised in the "pagan" Southern and in neighbouring Christian Ethiopia. This was because there were certain cultural, political, economic and social factors which continued to support slavery, irrespective of whether the society had been Muslim, Christian or "pagan".

It was expecting too much from anti-slavery sentiment to understand these facts. It was doubtful that, even if it understood them, it could have admitted them. The recognition of such hard facts could hardly have promoted the anti-slavery cause inside Britain.

The persistence of anti-slavery sentiment in its attitude that Islam was the force behind the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan stemmed from outright ignorance of Islamic law as well as a considerable amount of prejudice against Islam. Their ignorance was cemented by the fact that some Muslim rulers out of ignorance of Islamic teachings or of self-interest in slavery claimed that Islam sanctioned slavery.

The classical example was the Sultan of Morocco. He claimed that "the making of slaves and trading therewith" were sanctioned
by the Koran, which "admits not either of addition or diminution", to abolish the trade or in any way impede it was completely out of the question. The Shah of Persia also opposed the abolition of slavery on religious grounds. Khedive Isma'il told the deputation of the anti-slavery society that visited him in Paris in June 1867 that slavery was mixed with the religion of the people of Egypt and "that the religion of the Mussulman did not forbid slavery ....".  

The anti-slavery movement's ignorance of Islamic teaching was also coupled with certain amount of prejudice. The prejudice against Islam in Europe, which was the legacy of centuries of wars between Muslims and Christians, was not extinct. This prejudice was evident in the writings of some individual anti-slavers who took the opportunity of writing on the question of slavery in the Sudan in order to pronounce their prejudice. "Islamism is simply destructive". Such statements often recurred in the writings of anti-slavers and was pronounced only out of ignorance or prejudice.

The Anti-Slavery Society continued to denounce and attack the 'Arab' slave trade in East Africa and the Sudan, but had remained nearly silent about the slave trade and slavery in Ethiopia. The organ of the Society, the Anti-Slavery Reporter, gave some of its columns to writers who claimed that whatever slave trade existed in Ethiopia was carried by the Muslims. "Abyssinia itself does not cultivate the slave trade as it is a Christian kingdom.

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1. F.O. 84/427 Hay to Aberdeen, 12 March 1842; also A. Adu Boahen, Britain the Sahara, and the Western Sudan, 1788-1861 (Oxford, 1964), pp. 141-142.
but slaves are carried from the country by Muslim merchants" — so claimed a certain Rev. Theophilus Walderneir, who was a missionary in Ethiopia.¹

Joseph Cooper claimed that Ethiopia as "a professedly Christian Power" was "opposed both to slavery and the slave trade". He added that "however debased maybe the Christianity of the Abyssinians, there must be something good among the people, for whereas the Mohammedans, a minority of the population, are great contraband slave-traders, the Christian portion of the people, as a rule, are neither slave-holders nor slave-traders".²

It is difficult to assume that such writers as well as the Anti-Slavery Society were ignorant of the branch of slave trade carried by Christian Ethiopians.³

The Anti-Slavery Society tried to arouse a fear among the missionary societies and the church at the spread of Islam in Africa. One of the main objections of the Anti-Slavery Society to the expedition of Sir Samuel was that the "conquering and the annexation" of the Southern Sudan meant the "extension of the system, influence and rule of Mohammedanism to the Equator".⁴

The Society was not the first to express the fear at the expansion of Islam as a result of Sir Samuel's expedition. At

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1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 July 1872
2. Joseph Cooper, Turkey and Egypt (London, 1876), pp. 17-18
3. Compare the statement that: ".... it is quite impossible for the Abyssinians themselves to abolish a system so deeply rooted in their social and economic structure; and one which is upheld by a powerful and barbaric church claiming guardianship of the Mosaic Law and regarding slavery as an institution decreed by Jehovah", (E.W. Poisson Neuman, "Slavery in Abyssinia", Contemporary Review, Vol. CX/viii, (December 1935), p. 42)
a meeting of the geographical section of the British Association in September 1870 at Liverpool, a certain Dr. G. Campbell, commented on Baker's expedition in the following terms: "The expedition raised the whole of the enormous question whether Central Africa was to be Christian or Mohamedan, and whether it was to be a free or a slave holding country .... if this expedition was successful Mohamedanism would be triumphant and Christianity extinguished".¹

As far back as 1844 the Bohemian traveller Ignatius Pallme had warned the missionary societies of Europe that "there are but few provinces in the interior of Africa where Mohamedanism has not already begun to gain a footing", and that something had to be done by the societies or "Nuba, Kodera, Shilluk, Runga, Kulla, etc. .... and many other states, will be lost to Christianity".²

The Anti-Slavery Society did exploit this alarm at the spread of Islam. It had always been the policy of the Society to gain the support of the missionary societies as well as the Church. The Church was a strong pressure group which no government could ignore. It was the policy of the Anti-Slavery Society to point to the Church that it had, besides the "humanitarian" motive, a strong motive for pressing for the suppression of the slave trade and slavery. And this motive was the missionary factor.

The "humanitarians" had often emphasised that slavery and Christianity could not co-exist. "Christianity has made but feeble

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¹ Liverpool Mercury, 17 September 1870, Sir Roderick Murchison pointed out, rightly, that there was no Christianity to extinguish.
inroads on this kingdom of darkness (Africa), nor can she hope to
gain an entrance where the traffic in man preoccupies the ground.
But, were this obstacle removed, Africa would present the finest
field for the labours of Christian missionaries which the world
has yet seen opened to them" - so thought Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton
in 1840.  

The same idea was expressed by Joseph Cooper in 1875. It
was his opinion that slavery formed such an obstacle to the
reception of Christianity and Civilisation; that "it is certain
that where these missions (Christian) have wasted away, languished
and died, it has been in consequence of the slave-trade; and
that unless slavery is abolished, the slave-trade may now, as
formerly, lay waste the projected missions and disappoint the
expectations of their promoters".

On the other hand it was contended that the "slave merchants
.... are generally missionaries for the extension of the
Mohammedan religion, and they do what they can for the propogation
of Islam in these interior districts of East Africa, and I must
say, with great sorrow, that they have succeeded so wonderfully
in their mission that tribe after tribe has become subject to the
false religion of Mohamed and thus a road for the slave merchant
is being prepared from the Red Sea to the interior of Africa".

It seems that the Anti-Slavery Society's attempt to arouse the
churches and missionary societies was not without success. Since

3. Ibid., pp. 89-90.
4. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 July 1872.
the late 1860's, anti-slavery sentiment grew among the churches and so did the number of "Reverends" in the Anti-Slavery Society's Committee. Perhaps it would be appropriate to mention that Dr. Livingstone did more than any individual or society to interest the churches in East and North-East Africa. Since his journeys the churches began to look to East Africa and its interior as a field ground to plant Christian missions and they came to accept the Anti-Slavery Society's view that unless the slave trade and slavery were abolished there was little hope of planting the Christian faith. So the churches interest in the suppression of the slave trade and slavery was not motivated by purely "humanitarian" motives, it was dictated by their interest in spreading the Christian faith.

In spite of the fact that anti-slavery sentiment believed that Islam sanctioned slavery, and in spite of the other fact that the movement was biased against Islam, some anti-slavers maintained that Islam did not offer any serious obstacle to the abolition of slavery. It was the opinion of Joseph Cooper that:

"A religion (Islam) which declares the manumission of slaves to be an act of the highest conceivable merit in this world, and one that even gives a title to happiness in the next, cannot be considered a stronghold of slavery".¹ Joseph Cooper cited some verses from the Koran to prove to his readers that the Koran strongly commends the virtue of giving liberty to the slaves.²

This point was used against the argument of some Muslim rulers that on religious grounds slavery could not be abolished.

2. Ibid., Appendix E.
In consequence of the opposition of the Shah of Persia to the abolition of slavery on religious grounds, a certain Colonel Sheil procured from six Muslim jurists of reputation in Teheran their opinions on the subject; and their reply was satisfactory to the anti-slavery movement. One of them replied: "Decree selling male and female slaves is an abomination according to the noble faith. The worst of men is the seller of men (tradition of Mohammed)."

However, some did believe that the religious belief of the Muslims was a great impediment to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. "It may be urged", wrote Colonel Stanton, "that the institution of slavery being admitted by the Mohammedan religion, it is by no means an easy task to eradicate the traffic in Mussulman countries; and this is, I believe .... the only ground of defence open to the authorities for this tacit approval of the slave trade".

Khedive Ismail was not one of those Muslim rulers who used supposedly religious grounds to refuse to abolish the slave trade and slavery. "As to the Koran", so Joseph Cooper told Lord Granville, "or the religious difficulty, the Khedive, and his Minister, Nubar Pasha, laid no stress upon it when we had an interview with him in Paris ....".

Islam constituted no difficulty in the way of the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. If a Muslim ruler was sincere in his desire to abolish slavery Islam would not stand in his way.

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2. F.O. 84/1305 Stanton to Clarendon, 22 Jan., 1869
3. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 Jan. 1874.
But the determining factor in this was always whether the ruler was going to lose or gain by such abolition. At least two Muslim rulers, the Bey of Tunis and the Sultan of Zanzibar, acted promptly and energetically to comply with the British Government's requests to abolish the slave trade and slavery when they envisaged that they needed the support of the British Government in other matters and that the abolition of the slave trade and slavery was not too high a price for the British Government's support. Khedive Ismā'īl, like the Bey of Tunis and the Sultan of Zanzibar, needed the support of the British Government in his attempts to prevent France from obtaining in Egypt a great and damaging influence, and to stop the interference of the Porte in the internal affairs of Egypt. As long as Egypt remained within the fold of the Ottoman Empire, Britain was prepared to support Ismā'īl and it was through British assistance that Ismā'īl obtained the Firmans of May 1866 and June 1867 which enlarged the autonomy of Egypt. After 1869 the Khedive depended on the sympathy of the British Government for the recognition of his new conquests south of Gondokoro. So the Khedive always responded to the British Government's requests to eradicate the slave trade.

The slavery which was practised in the Sudan had, in fact, little in common with that which had been operating in British colonies and the Americas until 1865. Although the Anti-Slavery Society had some knowledge of the form of slavery prevalent in the Sudan from the writings of Europeans who either visited or resided in the Sudan and Egypt, they were reluctant to concede the differences between Sudanese and Western slavery.
The popular notion of Egyptian and Sudanese servitude had been formed from illustrations of the cruel and brutalising bondage established in the British colonies till the 'thirties, which survived for thirty years later in the southern United States, and which still existed by the early 'seventies in Cuba and Brazil. The two systems had in common two points - that the two were fed by cruelties which resulted in great loss of life and secondly the owners' right of property in the slave was recognised in both systems.

However, by the standards of Western slavery, most slaves, if not all, in the Sudan who were categorised by European visitors as slaves were not slaves. Dr. G. Schweinfurth who travelled widely in the Northern Sudan and in the area which now constitutes the province of Bahr-al-Ghazal divided slaves in the Sudan into four categories:

First, boys from seven to ten years of age, who were employed to carry guns and ammunition. The second class included the greater part of the full-grown inhabitants in the Zaribas ...; these were provided with guns, forming a kind of N izzam. These constituted the fighting force in all the Zaribas. They had wives, children and land in the Zaribas, and some of the elder amongst them had even slave boys of their own to carry their guns. Their ranks were largely increased after every expedition into the interior, as numbers of young inhabitants would often voluntarily attach themselves to the Nubians, and, highly delighted at getting cotton shirts and guns of their own, would gladly surrender themselves to slavery. The third class of
private slaves was formed of the women who were kept in the houses. They were employed in the ordinary routine of preparing meals and did the domestic work of the house. The fourth class included all slaves of both sexes who were employed exclusively in husbandry.¹

According to Dr. Schweinfurth and the Anti-Slavery Society all the four categories were slaves. But judging by the standards of Western slavery, none of these categories could be considered as slaves. The first and second category could justly be considered as followers and vassals of a master who owned a colony. As a matter of fact the Zaribas were a sort of colony and all the populations who inhabited those Zaribas which European travellers called slaves, were merely subjects of the masters of the Zaribas. The third and fourth categories were constituted of domestic servants.

Dr. Schweinfurth himself had discovered the differences between Sudanese slavery and Western slavery. "It is certainly true", he remarked, "that the contrast in slave-labour is very great, and whilst Europeans have looked upon their slaves as little better than useful domestic animals, the Oriental slave is a mere object of luxury. Only a small proportion of the slaves that are brought annually from the interior are employed in field-labour in Egypt, though rather more frequently in the Nubian provinces".²

In the southern parts of North America as well as in the

2. Ibid., p. 436.
West Indies and South America it was the worst kind of slavery which Europe had revived — gang slavery — a kind that demanded vast numbers of slaves, which precluded their natural increase. It was inevitable that a community of white settlers surrounded by Negroes brought across the sea to do their menial work should feel, as a Jamaican official put it, that any kind of civilisation or education would lead to trouble and that the Negroes ought to be treated as a class "with orang-outangs as a different species of the same genus". So in Western institution of slavery the master and slave were separated in the sharpest contrasts of colour, occupation and religion. Slaves in the British colonies were not considered worthy of baptism; and the Church of England — in the words of Canning "was no more calculated for the Negro than for the brute animal that shares his toil".

But a slave in the Sudan was above all a human being, a member of a society or a family, and so a person who had rights and duties. There were no sharp contrasts between a slave and a master in colour, occupation and religion. The slavers in the Sudan whether they were Muslims or "pagans" had certainly no colour prejudice against their slaves for the simple reason that there was no great difference in the colour of both. As to occupation, although most of the domestic work was done by the slaves, slaves also fought side by side with their masters and the masters helped in the agricultural work side by side with the slaves. Whether the slave was employed in field labour

1. The Times Literary Supplement, 6 July 1933.
2. Ibid.
or in household work, the work was always light. Indeed some of
the slaves led an idle life as "it is the fashion in good society
to have a household of slaves, and their presence is considered
indispensable"; such slaves were acquired as objects of luxury
"and consequently lead an idle life, and are not valued according
to their capabilities for labour".¹ "I never saw", remarked
Pallme "one of these beings (slaves) ill-treated by his master
for doing too little work .... ".² In the course of time slaves
were encouraged to adopt Islam and if any of them did so he would
be freed but for the most part he would stay with his ex-master.

In any case a slave's position in respect of food and lodging
was the same as his master. The kind treatment of slaves, and
the comfortable lot that they enjoyed, in comparison to the
hardships of their crude, rough homes were often observed by
European travellers. The master had an interest in the welfare
of the slave so he treated him as a member of the family, and in
some cases gave him his liberty after a few years. When liberated
slaves got married, it was frequently to their master's daughters.
A master might also marry his women slave "and in accordance with
the universal rule in the Mohammedan Sudan the children of a slave
are reared as legitimate, and the mother receives the title of
a wife".³

Such were the differences between slavery in the Sudan and
slavery in the British colonies. However, the Anti-Slavery Society

¹ G. Schweinfurth, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 418
² Ignatius Pallme, Travels in Kordofan (London, 1844), p. 73
³ G. Schweinfurth, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 422
was not willing to accept these differences. Commenting on the mildness of slavery in Egypt and the Sudan, the Anti-Slavery Reporter had this to say:

"But even this mildness is only an accident, for in the absence of large sugar or other agricultural or manufacturing interests in the East, the temptation to harsh treatment does not exist".  

However, even those British writers who disagreed with the Anti-Slavery Society in its general view and approach to slavery in the Sudan conceded that there was one important feature which characterised slavery in the West and in the Sudan: the butchery and massacres involved in procuring slaves.  

3. Gordon, the Anti-Slavery Society, the Foreign Office, and the Slave Trade and Slavery, 1874-1881

In the years 1874-1881 there was no subject relating to the Sudan which occupied the British attention as much as the issues of the slave trade and slavery. Perhaps in the whole history of Anglo-Sudanese relations in the nineteenth century there had never been a period in which the British discussed and became involved

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1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 1 July 1877
2. "In the case of the whole the sufferings and consequent mortality of the victims before they reach the Nile are very great, and form indeed, the main argument against an institution which, however mild in its subsequent working is condemned in advance of these antecedent horrors". (J.C. McCoan, "Slavery in Egypt", Fraser's Magazine, Vol. XV, No. LXXXIX, (May 1877) p. 568)
in the two questions as in this period. One Briton, Charles George Gordon, was the key figure at the centre of British concern and involvement. His views and policies produced arguments and counter-arguments. They provided the Anti-Slavery Society with opportunities to commend the questions to official and public attention. The entanglement of a British officer in the slave questions, and the agitation of the Anti-Slavery Society enveloped the Foreign Office in an increasing interest in the matter. It is the purport of this section to attempt to examine, compare and appraise the ideas and actions of Gordon, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Foreign Office to the questions of the slave trade and slavery in this period.

In February 1874 Charles George Gordon was appointed by Khedive Ismail to succeed Sir Samuel Baker as Governor-General of the Equatorial province. Unlike Sir Samuel Baker, Gordon had had no contact with the Sudan or any other part of Africa before he took his appointment. And unlike Baker he did not insist on a contract with the Khedive before embarking upon his mission. The Khedive informed him that he would give him no detailed instructions and would leave much to his discretion.¹

These two facts considerably influenced Gordon's attitude and policy towards the two problems of the slave trade and slavery. The fact that he had no connection with the Sudan meant that he was

¹ W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, February 14, 1874.
as ignorant of the Sudan as most of his contemporaries. It also implied that he carried no strong views on the slave question.

The second fact enabled him to use his discretion in dealing with the slave traffic and slavery.

Before his arrival at the capital of his province, Gondokoro, Gordon revealed a naivety in his attitude towards these questions. He was very optimistic and anticipated no difficulty whatever. This optimism stemmed from Gordon’s belief that it was the will of God that the slave trade should be eradicated and he was the special instrument in God’s hands for this purpose. "I have", he told his sister, "a Banker and on that Banker I can draw. He is richer than the Khedive and knows more of the country than Baker. I will trust him to help me out of this (money difficulty) and every difficulty".

No person was more vulnerable to changes of mind than Gordon who was a "variable impressionable creature reflecting the circumstances around him", and who always "wrote just as he felt". Gordon’s correspondence with his sister, his friends and the Anti-Slavery Society during the years 1874-75 reflected the complexity of the slave problem and how this intricacy created a confusion in Gordon’s mind. He complained that he could not see his way

1. Ibid.
2. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51291 Gordon to Augusta, November 9, 1873.
clear and the issues were not clear to him.

Gordon's first reactions were to distinguish between the slave trade and slavery as a domestic institution. The type of slavery which was practised in the Sudan and Egypt was different from the British stereotype of slavery which was practised in the British Colonies until the 1830s and was the only form of slavery known to the British public. Gordon carried these two distinctions to the extent that some of his ideas, based on them, seemed like pro-slavery opinions.

Gordon declared that the slave was not to be pitied when in a Turkish family. His condition was much better than with his own tribe. Gordon felt sure that a "native semi-civilised" would give all he had to be enslaved in some good Cairo house. Gordon considered that the slaves were happy in their status of slavery. He was convinced that any one of the 300 or 400 slaves owned by the Khedive "thinks himself happy to be where he is and you would find it very difficult to get him out to leave his place". He gave many examples to support this view. Gordon alleged that one of his Captains sold six of his soldiers on their way from Cairo with their own consent. The six soldiers were originally runaway slaves; they preferred to be slaves to coming up to their own country because on the way they found that military service was much harder work and that Cairo as a residence, even for slaves, was preferable to these parts. When at Gondokoro, without any leave, three boys came on board the steamer and joined

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1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society, May 18, 1874.
2. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, January 29, 1875.
3. Ibid.
his service for no pay because they wanted to run away from home. \(^1\) Gordon told a friend that around one of his stations grew up a "semi-native semi-Arab by contact populations of lads and women who came to do certain work for the soldiers". \(^2\) For these people the station was much more amusing than their homes and so after a while it needed force to drive them out and "in nine cases out of ten they would go to another station". \(^3\)

If one of the main objections to the slave trade in the Sudan was that it cut off people from their families and homes, Gordon was prepared to argue that there was "no unwillingness among the natives to leave their homeland". \(^4\) He stated to a friend that in spite of what Livingstone said, he did not himself find that any affection existed between parents and their children; and that there was a mutual pleasure in parting with one another. \(^5\)

Gordon went as far as to condone slavery. "If I was a black up here", he told his sister, "I wish I was taken by the Arabs". \(^6\) He thought of getting the Khedive to let him encourage "the blacks to go north to his sugar plantations". \(^7\) He himself shared in the process of buying slaves. He confessed to have bought three boys, two of them from their father and the third from his brother.

As to family affection and the sufferings caused by separation in

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1. G. MSS. Add. MSS 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society, May 18, 1874.
2. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, January 29, 1875.
3. Ibid.
6. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51292 Gordon to Augusta, August 10, 1874.
7. Ibid.
buying, Gordon treated these with contempt. "The father", he wrote, alluding to the above-named purchase of the two boys, "did not even take leave of them; and though he has been over since has never noticed them or spoken to them". The boys appeared to him quite satisfied with their new status and they kept quite aloof from their former companions.

There was much truth in Gordon's belief that the form of servitude that had been practised in the Sudan and Egypt was a mild one and that slaves were well treated and provided for. A British resident in Cairo described the condition of the slaves in Egypt in the following terms:

"Once in the country and absorbed into its service, their condition, it may be affirmed, becomes not merely an immense improvement on their past, but in all respects one of the lightest forms of servitude to which the name of slavery can be given. From every material point of view, they are infinitely better off than the free-born fellahs, on whom indeed they look down with proud contempt as an inferior class".

However, the position of a slave in Egypt and the Sudan was more complex than Gordon implied. It was true that most of the slaves in Egypt were domestic servants. They were owned by wealthy Turks as articles of prestige or for the purpose of guarding their wives. To this rule there were few exceptions. It was thought that Khedive Ismail used slave labour to till the

1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51292 Gordon to Augusta, June 26, 1874.
2. Ibid.
land in his large cotton and sugar plantations. Also some of the village sheikhs, after the increase in wealth consequent on the development of cotton cultivation during the American war, in a few instances bought slaves to help in field labour.

The state of a slave in the Sudan was harder than that of his opposite number in Egypt. Some of the slave-owners in the Sudan were agriculturists and they expected their slaves to help them in field labour. Slave-troops and slave-porters also led a severe life, not because they were slaves, but due to the fact that their owners' life was not an easy life and they were expected to share in this life. However, whatever might be the occupation of the slave owner, he did not insist on exacting the utmost labour the slave was capable of yielding as the planter in the West Indies did.

Gordon appeared to have failed to distinguish sharply between the form of slavery - if it would be called slavery at all - caused when a man had sold his child (because he was sure that the child would die as he would not be able to feed him and because he knew that the buyer could support that child) and the commonly known type of slavery when people were snatched from their homes and taken away without their consent. But he was not completely unaware of the difference when he wrote to a friend: "I think the slaver's war made for the sake of taking slaves detestable, but if a father or mother of their own free will, and with the will of the child sells that child, I do not see the objection to

1. The Times, March 21, 1881.
it. It was and is the wholesale depopulation of districts
which makes slavery such a curse, and also the numbers killed,
or who perished in the collection of slaves. ¹

Gordon's views naturally affected his actions. During his
governship of the Equatorial province the suppression of the slave
trade - let alone slavery - did not occupy first priority in
Gordon's mind and actions. His correspondence and actions
revealed that he was more interested in what he called "opening up
the country", improving the means of communications, getting the
Nile communication open to the lake, and putting boats in Victoria
Nyanza rather than the suppression of the slave trade. ² The
slave trade question was secondary to these objectives.

However, he alleged that the opening up of the country would
bring about the fall of the slave trade. Gordon's modern adherents
have followed the same line of argument. ³ But this was not
necessarily so. The opening up of transportation routes might
have the effect of increasing the demand for labour and one way
of satisfying this demand might be slave labour. We have also
seen that expeditions undertaken by Turks and Europeans in the
period 1839-1869, which were hailed as "opening up the country",
brought in their train an increase in the slave trade.

Since Gordon was inactive against the slave traders at this
period, his adherents did try to interpret some of his actions as
being measures taken for the purpose of the suppression of the

1. O. Freese, (Mrs.) More About Gordon (London 1894), pp. 112-113
2. G. MSS. Add. MSS 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society,
   May 18, 1874; Add. MSS. 51292 Gordon to Augusta, April 7, 1874;
   Gordon to Stanton, February 2, 1875. "Unpublished Letters of
   Charles George Gordon to General Stanton", S.N.R. X (1927) p. 16
slave trade, while this was not the case. To give one example. One of the most important and controversial measures of Gordon was the decree he issued soon after his arrival at Khartoum de-
claring the Government monopoly of the ivory trade, the
prohibition of imports of arms and powder and the levying of armed
bands by private people. This decree was drawn up in Cairo in
collaboration with the Khedive.

It was claimed that this decree enabled Gordon to exercise a supervision over a trade which had in the past been made a cover for carrying the slave trade. It is doubtful whether Gordon when he issued the decree had the suppression of the slave trade first and foremost in his mind. He was certainly thinking mainly of the revenue that might accrue to him from such a measure. And he was not disappointed because the monopoly enabled him to be quite semi-
independent, financially, from Cairo. But it is doubtful whether the measure did make any contribution to the suppression of the slave trade.

Gordon was not as active against the slave traders, and dealers during his governship of the Equatorial Province as his admirers often portrayed him. His correspondence during this period with his sister, his friends and the Anti-Slavery Society did not support the view of those who claimed that his main object was to suppress the slave trade. As far as one could judge from his correspondence he mentioned the capture of no more than one

1. G. MSS, Add. MSS. 51292 Gordon to Augusta, March 17, 1874.
2. Bernard M. Allen, op. cit., p. 17
big caravan\(^1\) of 120 slaves and referred to another case when he waited to capture another caravan at the junction of the Sobat but soon got tired of waiting and steamed southwards.

No doubt Gordon could have caught many caravans had he been devoting more time and energy to suppressing the slave traffic. The occasional correspondent of *The Times* who accompanied Gordon said very little about the slave trade. Had Gordon made great efforts to deal with the slave trade, the correspondent would not have failed to report them. The most favourable comment the correspondent could record was this: "such slave dealing as he met, he (Gordon) sternly suppressed".\(^2\)

Gordon did not hesitate to take actions which would promote his main object of "opening up the country" but which might injure the cause of anti-slavery. One of these actions was his employment of many ex-slavers or slavers. He appointed Abū Su'ūd, the man whom Baker described as the most notorious slave trader in the Sudan, as his deputy for a short while. It was claimed that Gordon used the "slave traders as instruments to be used for a righteous end"\(^3\) - the suppression of the slave trade. Gordon himself did not give such a reason. He was honest enough to confess that he used them because they were such active, handy fellows.\(^4\) He employed a certain slaver, named Nasser, because

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he was a first rate man who did a lot of work. He also recruited Wad-el-Mek and a certain Suleimán, who were supposed to be slavers, into his service.

His employment of slave-traders did not promote the cause of anti-slavery. It was one of the serious charges levelled against Baker. Although Baker was criticised for this mistake, nobody seemed to criticise Gordon for it.

Gordon gave a contradictory assessment of his achievement during his governorship of the Equatorial province as far as the slave trade was concerned. In December 1876, he admitted to the British Consul in Cairo that there was still a slave trade in his province. But when he landed in London a month later he prided himself that "with respect to his province no slave trade existed".

From the previous review of Gordon's ideas and actions one is inclined to believe what he had told the British Consul.

Certainly this was the opinion of the Anti-Slaver Society. The Society was conversant with Gordon's ideas on the subjects of the slave trade and slavery and watched his activities with deep suspicion. The Society's attitude towards Gordon's mission had undergone a change in the interval between his departure from Britain and his return.

The appointment of Gordon to the governorship of the Equatorial province was a welcome to the Society. At the outset Gordon

1. Ibid.
2. F.O. 84/1371 C. Vivian to Granville, September 6, 1873.
3. F.O. 84/1450 Vivian to Derby, December 8, 1876.
4. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, January 24, 1877.
appeared to the Society as their man whom they had expected to execute what they would outline for him. An influential member of the Society described Gordon as a man in whom lived the same identical determination and philanthropic force which acted as the main spring of Livingstone. To the same person, Gordon appeared to be a God-sent successor to Livingstone because the news of Livingstone's death came on a Friday morning and Colonel Gordon set out for the Sudan in the evening of that day "with a devotion no less than Livingstone's to take up the cause of the abolition of slavery". 1

The Society instructed Gordon on their ideas on the two questions before he left for the Sudan. He was presented with an address from the Society. The address expressed the belief of the Society that Gordon accepted the position given to him by the Khedive because of his desire to bring about the extinction of the slave-trade. Gordon was informed that the Society would watch with deep interest every well-directed effort on his part to achieve this object. The object of the Society, so Gordon was told, was to attain the extinction of the slave trade in such a manner that it would not be revived at some future time, as the past experience of the Society had shown that the traffic suppressed by force in one part would spring up in another. It was the conviction of the Society, the address went, "that it was that demand for slaves which created the slave trade; and that so long as a profitable demand existed, the supply, through one channel or other, would never cease". It was the opinion of the Society

1. The Rev. H. Waller, quoted by the Anti-Slavery Reporter, July 1, 1874
that if his labours for the extinction of the slave trade were to be of permanent value, slavery ought to be abolished in Egypt; and so the Society requested Gordon to exert his great influence with the Khedive in favour of the total abolition of slavery throughout the Egyptian dominions. ¹

The Society took the opportunity of Gordon's appointment to forward a memorial to Lord Derby on June 4, 1874. In this memorial the Society expressed its conviction that the claims of civilisation and the commerce of the European nations demanded that efforts should be made to suppress the slave trade in the Upper Nile, and that the Khedive would welcome pressure on the part of Great Britain on the question of slavery. The memorial demanded that the Government should withhold its sanction to the annexation of the territories of the Upper Nile till slavery had been abolished. ²

The views of the Society were put to the public in a meeting held in the Cannon Street Hall, London, on May 21, 1874. The public was told that the surest and speediest way of putting a stop to the slave trade in the Sudan was to abolish slavery. In that meeting it was demanded that the British Government should appoint consular agents governed by sound anti-slavery principles in Khartoum and Musawwa. ³

The above review of the Society's opinions clearly indicates that a rift would soon develop between Gordon and the Society.

Gordon's ideas which were outlined in the first part of the

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¹ Address of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to Charles George Gordon, Anti-Slavery Reporter, April 1, 1874.
² Anti-Slavery Reporter, July 1, 1874.
³ Ibid.
section and which he communicated to the Society found little favour with it. Gordon's pragmatism came more and more into clash with the dogmatism of the Society. In his correspondence with the Society Gordon told them frankly that they were at fault on many points respecting the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan.

Gordon agreed with the Society on one central point - that the whole germ of the question rested in the demand for slaves. But this was as far as they could agree. Gordon dissented from the other ideas of the Society. The Society's remedy for the question was the immediate abolition of slavery. A distinguished member of the Society devoted a large part of a book he published in 1875 to the argument that, stop the demand and the supply would stop of itself. Gordon argued that to stop the demand meant that one ought to change the social and domestic habits of millions of people; he judged that this could not be done in a day and to him it was a task the Almighty alone could achieve. It puzzled him how some members of the Anti-Slavery Society should suggest such a change.

Gordon must have annoyed the Society when he announced to them that the efforts made by them up to now to suppress the slave trade were futile because they increased the sufferings of slaves tenfold. Gordon declared that the consequence of Baker's exertions had been that the slaves instead of going up the Nile more or less comfortably, had to walk over thousands of miles in blazing sand and that the efforts hitherto being made had tenfold

2. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society, May 18, 1874.
3. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, October 4, 1874.
increased the slaves' sufferings and had not in the least benefited them: "I say that to the present the slave is worse off than before your efforts and more die through the extra hardships of the route. For the slaves themselves you would have done more by having caravans of camels and steamers to convey them than by closing the port of Zanzibar and of the Nile. The more you attack the authorities the more the slaves suffer".  

Gordon tried to make the Anti-Slavery Society comprehend the practical difficulties in the way of the suppression of the slave trade in the Sudan. To him those difficulties appeared stupendous - the frontier was some thousand of miles in length and this frontier was guarded "by Egyptian soldiers and officials" who, in Gordon's opinion, were corrupt and connived with the slavers. But what worried Gordon more was what he should do with captured slaves. Would he let them loose on society with no ostensible means of livelihood? He reported that some time ago a lot of slaves were taken from the slavers and, not being cared for or fed, they were left about Gondokoro and Fatiko till most of them died. He commented on this: Was it a benefit to take them from the slavers? And he thought that it would have been better to have left them with the slavers.  

Gordon had some misapprehension that the Society did not fully appreciate his difficulties in dealing with the slave question and so he invited the Committee to send one of their members to investigate the whole question. In the light of the emissary's carefully prepared report, he thought the Society should keep up its pressure on the Khedive and the Foreign Office.

1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society May 18, 1874.  
2. Ibid.  
3. Ibid.
on these important matters.  

Besides this suggestion Gordon forwarded other proposals for the consideration of the Society. He believed that the establishment of Consuls at the principal places would do much to check the slave trade and thought that the Anti-Slavery Society must contribute towards this end: "If you care so much about the slave question give £1,000 towards this means of stopping it". He also believed that the appointment of Europeans as frontier soldiers would contribute to the object; but he doubted whether the Khedive would desire "much more of these foreign governors as he had trouble enough with my predecessor's expedition". Gordon's last proposition was a dubious one. He thought if the slave trade was legalised in some way such as compelling or coaxing, which he believed could be done, the families of "blacks" might come down and emigrate to Egypt and Turkey.

In 1875 and 1876 the attitude of Gordon and the Anti-Slavery Society towards each other and to the question of the slave trade hardened. With the clash of opinions, relations between the two were strained. There were accusations and counter-accusations. Joseph Cooper described Gordon's mission as one of conquest and aggression in which Gordon's men were armed with the most destructive weapons while the inhabitants were armed with the crudest arms, in vain attempts to defend their country and their homes. He levelled the same charges that were directed against

1. Ibid.  
2. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, January 29, 1875  
3. G. MSS. Add. MSS 47609 Gordon the Anti-Slavery Society, May 18 1874  
4. Ibid.  
Sir Samuel Baker on Gordon's head—charges of brutality and killing the inhabitants. The Anti-Slavery Reporter thought that the results of Gordon’s mission were similar to those of Baker. At last the man in whom the Society had seen a Livingstone in 1874 turned out to be a Baker by the end of 1876.

The attack greatly angered Gordon who replied that he had never claimed for his mission a role except that of conquest and annexation. He hit back by accusing the "arm chair" anti-slavers of "making the slavery a cry to draw attention to themselves and their advantages". He challenged the rich anti-slavers, like Cooper and Sturge, to "lean off wines (sic) and devote proceeds for the purpose of crushing the slave trade if they were sincere".

It is to the credit of Gordon that he showed a fair understanding of the varied aspects of the slave question. However, his attitude, like that of the society, remained essentially negative. Both did not nourish any comprehensive positive plans for dealing with the question.

While Gordon and the Society were at each other's throats, the Foreign Office was engaged in negotiations with Ismail for the purpose of concluding an anti-slavery convention. The initiative came from the Khedive as far back as July 1873. At that time he was on a visit to Constantinople when he submitted to Sir H. Elliot, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, through his minister Nubar Pasha, the substance of a convention.

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, March 1, 1877.
2. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, October 4, 1875.
4. Ibid.
for the suppression of the slave trade which he would be willing to conclude with Her Majesty's Government.¹

The Khedive's motives were not purely "humanitarian". He was anxious at that time to act in a manner which he believed to be agreeable to Her Majesty's Government.² He felt the obligation under which he lay for the course taken by Her Majesty's Government on the question of the Egyptian reforms, which the Khedive had greatly at heart; and the Khedive knew that if that measure was ultimately carried out it would be owing to the refusal of the British Government to follow other Governments in retarding or modifying approvals once given. Secondly, the stand taken by Her Majesty's Government against the pretensions of M. de Lesseps had also been eminently satisfactory to His Highness as he thought it would enable him to break a yoke under which both his pride and his interest had long been suffering. The Khedive was anxious to prove to Britain that he had enlightened and progressive views and for this reason he would turn into good account not only the recent Firman, which was issued by the Porte with the help of Britain giving Isma'il complete sovereignty in the internal administration of Egypt and her dependencies, but also any additional privilege or liberty of action which he might obtain from the Sultan with the British aid. The Ambassador added that each of these considerations had probably some effect and that the readiness of the Khedive to come to an understanding with the British Government on the slave trade was more likely to be due

¹ F.O. 84/1371 Sir H. Elliot to Grenville, July 12, 1873.
² Ibid.
to the above reasons than to any interest that he might have taken himself in the question.¹

The Ambassador had certainly put his finger on the main motive which drove the Khedive to seek an understanding with Britain on the slave question. Since 1863 he had depended on Britain's good offices with the Sultan to gain more and more concessions. The last instalment was that on June 8, 1873 when Ismā'īl secured from the Porte a final and comprehensive firman that actually codified all his privileges and in particular those obtained since 1866. Egypt, the Sudan, Suakin, Musawwa "annexes and dependencies" were all definitely brought under one rule of succession which was to be in direct line from father to son in Ismā'īl's dynasty. The Egyptian rulers enjoyed henceforth complete sovereignty in the administration of their country. The ultimate and nominal sovereignty of the Porte alone remained to connect Egypt with Turkey.²

And it was exactly this last thread of the Sultan's sovereignty over Egypt that Ismā'īl was bent on breaking. His move on the question of the slave trade was, perhaps, directed towards convincing the British Government to use her influence with the Porte to make him abandon his nominal sovereignty over Egypt.

The negotiations for the convention were dropped because the Khedive refused to make substantial concessions. The Foreign Office had certain objections to the proposals communicated by Nubar Pasha to Sir Henry Elliot. Wylde, the head of the Slave Department, thought that the project was a very crude one because

¹. Ibid.
whilst it made no provision for preventing the importation of slaves into Egypt, it provided for their exportation. The Khedive's scheme also stipulated that British subjects who might be caught engaging in slave traffic on the Egyptian frontiers should be subordinated to courts-martial for trial on the capital charge of piracy. Wylde commented on this point that, however willing the British Government might be that British subjects engaging in the slave traffic should meet with proper punishment, it was obvious that the British Government should not submit them for trial to an Egyptian court-martial.¹

There were also certain difficulties with regard to the 6th Act of the Counter Draft by which it was proposed that British cruisers should have the right to search and detain vessels under Egyptian flag which might be found engaging in the traffic in slaves or which there might be good grounds for believing were intended for that traffic or had been engaged in it on the voyage during which it was met with. The difficulty was that Egyptian vessels had no distinctive colours of their own but carried the Ottoman flag and the British Government had no treaty with Turkey giving them the right to visit and detain vessels under the Turkish flag.²

It appears that British official experts on the question did not think much of the Khedive's project of 1873. Moreover, at the commencement of 1874 a certain incident took place which made it necessary that negotiations should be dropped for the moment. It happened that the boats of the British Government in the Red

¹. F.O. 84/1371 Memoranda by Wylde, October 30, 1873.
². F.O. 84/1450 Derby to Stanton, January 14, 1874.
Sea destroyed some Turkish vessels on suspicion of their being engaged in the slave trade. So it was thought that the moment was not opportune for proposing to the Porte that British cruisers should be allowed to search and if necessary to detain and send for adjudication vessels under Turkish flag in regard to which suspicions might be entertained that they were engaged in the slave trade.1 And without such a provision the British Government considered any convention useless.

In these circumstances the negotiations for an anti-slave treaty with Egypt was allowed to lapse for the moment; more particularly as the British Government had at the time seemed to be more concerned with the slave trade in the East African coast which occupied the attention of all the British naval force available on that coast.

In September 1874 the Khedive renewed his readiness to enter into a convention with the British Government for the "prevention of the export of slaves from Egypt and for the eventual suppression of slavery within his dominions."2 The British Consul in Cairo was of the opinion that a convention entered into with Her Majesty's Government could produce a marked effect upon the Egyptian authorities and if supplemented by the appointment of British Consular officers at Musawwa and Suakin to see that proper supervision was exercised by the local authorities, the difficulties in the way of the slave dealers would be so great that the export of slaves from the Sudan would in a very short time be virtually suppressed.3

1. Ibid.
2. F.O. 84/1397 Stanton to Derby, September 9, 1874.
3. Ibid.
However, it was not until January 1876 that the Foreign Office showed a sudden enthusiasm for the resumption of the negotiations. On the 14th of that month Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, informed the British Consul in Cairo that the time had now arrived when in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government the subject of an anti-slave trade treaty may again be broached to the Khedive, and that the British Government did not doubt, from the enlightened views which His Highness entertained in this subject in 1873, that he would be ready now, as he was then, to adopt measures not only for putting a stop to slave traffic in Egyptian territories but also for placing a term to the status of slavery in Egypt.  

Stanton was instructed to take the first favourable opportunity to open negotiations with the Khedive and, should the Khedive be ready to enter into an engagement, it might be at once recorded in a preliminary protocol.  

This sudden and energetic enthusiasm on the part of the Foreign Office must be attributed to the fact that the Parliamentary position of the Government began to weaken. In the General Elections of February 1874 the Tories secured a majority of 83 in Great Britain, but the emergence of an Irish Home Rule Party in 1876 began to have its effect on the Parliamentary position of the conservatives.  

The Government was bent on making the treaty with Egypt in the hope that this would strengthen their position in Parliament. This was clearly indicated in a despatch from Lord Derby to Stanton urging him to endeavour to have the Slave

1. F.O. 84/1450 Derby to Stanton, January 14, 1876.
2. Ibid.
Protocol with the Khedive arranged so that it would coincide with the opening of Parliament in February 1876. Lord Tenterden, Under Secretary of State, was also of the opinion that the agreement "would have a very good effect on public opinion in England", especially if Stanton could arrange it "in time for it to be announced to Parliament" at the beginning of the session.

The Khedive had no special reason at this time to rush the negotiations; on the contrary he had a good reason for procrastination. He was trying to use the negotiations to persuade the British Government to support his request for an Indian Ocean port. The negotiations crawled because Ismail was determined to extract the support of the British Foreign Office for his scheme of an Indian Ocean port; but, by August 1876, it was clear that, owing to the strong opposition of the Sultan of Zanzibar and Kirk, the British Consul in Zanzibar, the British Government found it difficult to support Ismail's request. In December 1876 Ismail pointed out that he saw no advantage in concluding a convention which "might involve him in responsibilities for suppressing the slave trade without any corresponding advantage to Egypt". He concluded that what he really wanted was a port near the River Juba.

When Ismail knew that he was not going to get the port, he became uncompromising and unyielding on certain points.

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1. F.O. 84/1450 Derby to Stanton, February 4, 1876.
2. Ibid., remarks by Lord Tenterden dated February 3, 1876.
4. F.O. 78/3189 Vivian to Derby, December 8, 1876.
insisted that an article empowering the British cruisers to search and detain vessels under the Turkish flag was absolutely necessary for the effectual suppression of slave traffic in the Red Sea. Should this be opposed by the Khedive, an engagement on the part of the Khedive to prevent the import into and the export of slaves from Egyptian territories, and to fix a date for the abolition of the status of slavery in his dominions would, in the opinion of Derby, be an important step in the right direction and means might be found for modifying the 6th Article of the English counter-draft of the convention in a manner to enable British cruisers to cooperate with the Egyptian authorities for the prevention of the slave traffic from Egyptian territories.¹

The Khedive seemed to have hardened on the question of the right of search of Egyptian vessels by British cruisers. He considered that the Egyptian Government were entitled to reciprocity and that Egyptian cruisers should have the right of search and of handing over any vessel under the British flag which may be found engaged in the traffic of slaves within the Egyptian waters whether inland or otherwise.²

The Khedive considered it necessary that certain questions as to the territorial limits, especially the question of the Khedive's right to the Somali country and the determination of the frontier between his territories and those of the Sultan of Zanzibar, should be settled before the convention was concluded.³

The Khedive also persisted in the postponement of the

1. F.O. 84/1450 Derby to Stanton, January 14, 1876.
2. F.O. 84/1450 Stanton to Derby, February 11, 1876.
3. Ibid.
operation of the law to be promulgated for the prohibition of all slave traffic between family to family from seven years, as he proposed in 1873, to twelve years in those parts of his territory, where Egyptian authority was duly constituted, and to twenty years in the Sudan. He asked to defer any positive obligations for the present in those portions of his territory where he had not yet been able to establish his administration in a decisive manner, though for such districts he was prepared to enter into conditional engagements with the understanding that they were to be definitive as soon as his action could be regularly exercised. ¹

The Foreign Office was disposed to amend the Draft of the convention to meet as far as possible these views of the Khedive. Both Lord Derby and Mr. Wylde were ready to concede the right of search of British vessels by Egyptian cruisers. ²

The Foreign Office did not want to enter into negotiations with the Khedive to define the limits of his territories on the East Coast of Africa and to determine the frontier between his territories and those of the Sultan of Zanzibar because, in the view of Lord Derby, if the conclusion of an anti-slave trade convention with Egypt were to depend upon an arrangement being come to between the Khedive and the Sultan of Zanzibar in regard to the limits of their respective territories, the negotiations might be indefinitely postponed. Lord Derby, therefore, asked the Consul to deprecate strongly any attempt to deal, in an anti-slave trade convention with Egypt, with any question of

1. F.O. 84/1450 Stanton to Derby, February 11, 1876.
2. F.O. 84/1450 Derby to Vivian, March 2, 1877; also F.O. 84/1450 Stanton to Derby, February 11, 1876 enclosed remarks by Wylde dated February 19, 1876.
defining her territorial frontier and to use all his influence to avoid any discussion on this matter being mixed up with the negotiations of the proposed convention.¹

In spite of these objections and counter objections the negotiations started between Vivian and Sheriff Pasha in Cairo in March 1877. In accordance with Lord Derby's instructions, Vivian endeavoured to modify the Draft Convention in order to meet the wishes of the Khedive. The negotiations dragged on until they were successfully concluded with the signature of what came to be known as the "Convention between the British and Egyptian Governments for the suppression of the Slave Trade" on the 4th of August 1877.

The Convention declared that the Government of His Highness the Khedive, having already promulgated a law forbidding the trade in slaves (Negroes or Abyssinians), within the countries under His Highness's authority, engaged to prohibit absolutely from henceforth the importation of any slaves (Negroes or Abyssinians) into any part of the territory of Egypt or her dependencies, whether by land or sea; and to punish severely, in the manner provided by existing Egyptian law, any person who might be found engaged, directly or indirectly, in the traffic of slaves. Such persons who might be found engaged in the traffic in slaves should, together with their accomplices, be considered by the Egyptian Government as guilty of "stealing with murder". If subject to the Egyptian jurisdiction they should be handed over for trial to a court-martial; if not, they should immediately be handed

¹. F.O. 84/1472 Derby to Vivian, March 2, 1877.
over for trial according to the laws of his country to the competent tribunals, with the dispositions drawn up by the Egyptian superior authority of the place where the traffic had been proved.¹

The Convention considered that, since it was impossible to send back to their homes slaves who might be captured from slave-dealers and liberated, the Egyptian Government would continue to take and apply in their favour such measures as employing them in field, domestic or military service.²

The Egyptian Government agreed that British cruisers might visit, search and, if necessary, detain, in order to hand over to the nearest or most convenient Egyptian authority for trial, any Egyptian vessel which might be found engaged in the traffic in slaves as well as any Egyptian vessel which might fairly be suspected of being intended for that traffic or which might have been engaged in it on the voyage in which it had been met. The British Government, on its part, agreed that all vessels navigating under the British flag in the Red Sea, in the Gulf of Aden, along the coast of Arabia, and in the East Coast of Africa, or in the inland waters of Egypt and her dependencies, which might be found engaged in the traffic of slaves might be visited, seized and detained by the Egyptian authorities; but it was agreed that the vessel and its cargo should, together with its crew, be handed over to the nearest British authority for trial.³

By Article V of the Convention; the Egyptian Government

2. Ibid., p. 541.
3. Ibid., 540-1.
promised to publish a special Ordinance, the text of which would be annexed to the Convention, prohibiting altogether all traffic in slaves within Egyptian territories after a date agreed to by the two governments, and providing also for the punishment of persons guilty of violating the provisions of the Ordinance. By that Ordinance, annexed to the Convention, the Khedive ordained that the sale of Negro slaves or Abyssinians, from family to family, should be and should remain prohibited in Egypt in an absolute manner. This prohibition would take effect in seven years from the time of the signature of the Convention. The same prohibition would extend to the Sudan and to the other Egyptian provinces; but only in twelve years from the date of the signature of the Convention. The Ordinance also declared that every infringement of this prohibition on the part of any individual subject to Egyptian jurisdiction would be punished with hard labour, of which the duration would vary from a minimum of five months to a maximum of five years.¹

From the outset, the Convention was subjected to fierce criticism. The Porte objected to the right of search given to British ships in Turkish territorial waters as well as in the maritime waters of Egypt and her dependencies. The Turkish Government objected to the delegation by the Khedive to British cruisers of the right to seize and, if necessary, to detain Egyptian vessels in Egyptian waters, as a power, which, it was stated, the Khedive did not himself possess and which he could not, therefore, delegate to a third party. The British Government denied that it had any intention of calling into question

¹. Ibid.
the rights of the Sublime Porte; it argued that there were precedents for such a concession to British cruisers on the part of other foreign powers notably in the case of Portugal and Muscat. The British Government argued that the omission to stipulate for such provision would have resulted in the carrying on of the slave traffic with impunity along a portion of the coast where British cruisers had hitherto been accustomed to act for its suppression.¹

The Anti-Slavery Society was not quite satisfied with the treaty; probably it had anticipated a militant one. For the time being the Society kept silent and contented itself with reproducing the treaty in the Anti-Slavery Reporter. But in 1880 the Society voiced the criticism of those, notably Gordon and A.B. Wylde, who argued that the treaty was a mistake "and it would have been better to have waited and got a better document, giving the commanders of Her Majesty's cruisers some satisfaction for the work they do, instead of handing the slaves they catch over to the Egyptian authorities, and towing the buglas back to Jeddah, where they are not condemned, and merely handed back to their owners, who pay a baksheesh (gratitude) to the authorities to have their craft returned to them".²

A British writer³ hailed the Slave Convention as a charter of future freedom, while a French writer⁴ and an Egyptian historian⁵

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1. F.O. 84/1510 Derby to Layard, January 3, 1878.
had condemned it as impracticable, dangerous and one of the principal causes leading to the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution.

But more significant than these judgements was that of Charles George Gordon. Gordon held the view that the Khedive was forced by Britain to sign the slave trade treaty and that the provisions of the treaty were beyond the powers of the Khedive to carry out vigorously at once in the outlying provinces of Egypt. Until the beginning of 1881 Gordon continued to criticise the Convention as impracticable. He held that the convention stipulated the liberation of the slaves without compensating their owners and that this would impoverish the latter and thereby cause a great loss of revenue to the Sudan and Cairo Exchequers. Furthermore, discontent would render necessary the maintenance of a huge force in the Sudan in order to keep the country quiet; and this would be a drain on the Cairo Exchequer. Gordon maintained that the Convention anticipated the liberation of slaves and that it made him wince to think how on earth the slaves of all the Bedouins were to be freed in twelve years.

Gordon considered that there were some discrepancies in the Convention and the decree. According to Article 11 of the Convention any person engaged in the traffic of slaves, either directly or indirectly was to be considered guilty of stealing with murder. Gordon thought that, according to his reading of this article, the slave dealer was to be tried and, if found guilty of stealing with murder, he would be punished with death. But according

1. F.O. 84/1571 Vivian to Derby, March 29, 1879.
2. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Derby, March 27, 1878.
to article 1 of the Khedive's decree, the sale of slaves from family to family would be prohibited. This prohibition would take effect in seven years in Cairo and twelve years in the Sudan. After the lapse of this term of years, Article 11 said that any infraction of this prohibition would be punished by an imprisonment of from five months to five years. From this Gordon inferred that for seven years in Cairo and for twelve years in the Sudan, the sale of slaves from family to family was permitted. Gordon then continued to ask: why, by the Convention, was traffic in slaves to be considered stealing with murder (and consequently if proved to be punished with death), while, by the decree, it was allowed for the space of twelve years in the Sudan and, even after the expiration of that period, it was to be punished only by five months or five years' imprisonment? 1

This is an example of how Gordon came to misinterpret the Convention. Gordon's views on this Convention were mistaken in many ways. He was wrong when he thought that the Khedive was forced to conclude this Convention. The Khedive himself rejected the charge that the treaty was either forced upon him or that he was unable to carry it out; and affirmed that he well understood what he was signing, that it was clearly understood between him and the Foreign Office that he should not agree to any conditions which he was not perfectly certain of being able to fulfil. 2

It seemed that, until the beginning of 1881, Gordon did not bother much to read the provisions of the Convention carefully.

2. F.O. 84/1571 Vivian to Derby, March 29, 1879.
He thought that the provisions of the decree would liberate the slaves after twelve years in the Sudan, and he had objections to such liberation because of the practical difficulties in the face of such a measure. But the decree had not stipulated the liberation of slaves. It merely prohibited the sale of slaves from family to family. Gordon realised his mistake at last in January 1881 when he told a friend that he had never seen that the clause on which he had for so long based his arguments was only one of stopping the sale of slaves from family to family, and that it was not one which would liberate slaves at the end of the fixed period. This discovery, in his own words, upset him completely.¹

Gordon appeared to have missed the two important aims of the Convention and the decree. It seemed that the particular object of the Convention was to prevent the public sale and purchase of slaves, while the object of the decree was to make a clear distinction between public and private trading in slaves. The decree did not prohibit private trading until after twelve years from the signature of the Convention.

However, it was not the weakness of the provisions of the treaty and the decree which prompted Gordon to criticise the Convention immediately after its signature. In August 1877 Gordon had been Governor-General of the Sudan for only five months. So he was naturally anxious lest any high handed or over-zealous attempt to enforce the treaty might destroy all his difficult

¹. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, January 29, 1881.
work in the Sudan which he was carrying out "with insufficient means by very delicate handling and regard for the religious prejudices of the natives". With such fears Gordon imagined that the Convention embodied all the ingredients of hampering his delicate task of administration. ¹

II

Gordon was back as Governor-General of the whole Sudan in May 1877. There is evidence to show that the Foreign Office used the slave trade question to gain this appointment for Gordon. Vivian, the British Consul in Cairo, warned the Khedive, as Lord Derby desired him to do, that he would find no sympathy in England with the extension of his territories in Central Africa as long as the slave hunting and slave trading practices were carried on in the provinces he had annexed.²

Gordon was greatly impressed with the powers given to him:

"No one could possibly have imagined that such powers as His Highness has confided to me would be so full and complete as those I have had given me, and say that from henceforth I alone ought to be considered responsible if the hunting of slaves does not cease".³

Gordon qualified his last statement by considering that he needed some time in order to remedy the present state of affairs, and that it would be injudicious on his part, in the face of the astonishing authority the Khedive had given to him, to attempt any

¹ F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Derby, March 29, 1878.
² F.O. 84/1472 Vivian to Derby, January 19, 1877.
³ Ibid., enclosed Gordon to Vivian, February 16, 1877.
violent or sudden course of action. Thus, one could see his fears that the Convention might produce some disturbances, if executed; or that it might prejudice his own freedom of action to deal with the question of the slave trade in the way he deemed best.

In the first year of his governorship of the whole Sudan, Gordon showed a cautious and reserved attitude. He was not in a hurry to act before he would inform and fully educate himself on the question. It became clear to him a few weeks after his arrival in Khartoum that he had learnt more by a few weeks residence in Khartoum than he had imagined. Therefore, his caution in dealing with the problem was unmistakable.

Gordon clearly kept in his mind the distinction between the slave trade and the institution of slavery. As far as the slave trade was concerned he had no doubt that large slave caravans would cease, and although he felt sure that there might be small parties of slaves still sent down, the slave trade, he considered, might be put an end to. This could be achieved if he was allowed enough time because, in his opinion, a trade of centuries should not be expected to cease entirely in a year.

Slavery was a different matter. "You have little idea", he informed his sister, "of the great difficulty and the many questions involved in it viz., in domestic slavery. First I have to disband some 6,000 Turks and Bashi-Bezouks, who are the frontier guards and who must be replaced, for they let the caravans pass. You might as well order the sea to stop the caravans as these men!

1. Ibid.
2. P.P., LXVII Slave Trade No. 3 (1878) No. 41. Vivian to Derby August 11, 1877, enclosed Gordon to Vivian, June 19, 1877.
Now, think of disbanding suddenly 6,000 men. Second, consider the effect of harsh measures among an essentially Mussulman population carried out by a Christian—measures which touch the pocket of every one.¹

But, to him, the question was not an easy one. Men possessed slaves and to liberate them without compensation meant to him robbery. What was foremost in his thinking was that how one could deal with the question of slavery without causing a servile war on a rising of the people.²

Gordon felt that he had no power to enable him to tamper with slavery. He claimed that when in 1834 Her Majesty's Government abolished slavery, they had an irresistible force, with fleets and troops at their disposal: also a machinery of magistrates to carry out the emancipation. He alleged that he had nothing of the sort. The force he had, he considered, antagonistic or, at any rate, very indifferently disposed to such a scheme.³

Gordon was again struggling with the problem of what to do with captured slaves. He reported that there was among the merchants at Dara a lot of women and children slaves. The merchants were waiting for an opportunity to pass them down. With the authorities on the watch, the merchants would be obliged to follow unfrequented roads which entailed great sufferings on the slave, for unfrequented roads imply roads with little or no water. He was in a dilemma what to do with these slaves. He could not send the women and children to their homes, for they came from far

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2. Ibid., p. 229.
3. Ibid., p. 148.
and they would be seized by other slaves en route. He had no men to send with them on this return journey. He could not feed them at Dâra at Government expense. If he seized and liberated them who would feed them? So he concluded he must leave them with the merchants and let the merchants run them down as best as they could by frequented roads, with plenty of water. By this course of action he would cause the death of not more than 5%; while, if he did not authorise their passage, the merchants would be forced to follow unfrequented roads and, in this case, Gordon estimated that half of the slaves might be dead. He, therefore, authorised the passage of slaves.¹

It appears that, during the first six months of his administration, Gordon was overwhelmed with the problem. He confessed that he did not see how he could prevent the slave trade and that he would be glad to be taught how to do it.² As late as September 1877, he confided to his sister that he had a regular struggle with himself over the subject. He believed that the subject would require great research for some time, far more than he could be expected to devote to it. Thus, he wrote to an influential member of the Anti-Slavery Society asking whether he or some other member would come out, see for himself and then suggest to him some idea as to how to deal with the question.³

Gordon received no such person and it was clear that the gulf between his ideas and those of the Society was widening.

¹ W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, July 30, 1877.
² W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, June 22, 1877.
³ Ibid.
He had written to the Society outlining his ideas on the subject and he asked for some positive answers to some of the questions which still perplexed his mind. But instead of providing him with such answers the Society tried to convince him that he was wrong-headed.

The Society declared to Gordon that they had always been aware of the wide distinction between the prodigal slavery of the Western World with its systematic and cruel exaction of the utmost labour the slave was capable of yielding and the strictly domestic slavery of the Sudan; and that the latter, however degrading, was a comparatively easy one. But they reiterated that, as long as it existed, it would be fed by the "murder of nations, tribes and the desolution of Africa". 1

As to the problem of compensation, Gordon was reminded that the Emperor of Russia abolished serfdom throughout his dominions by what might be called a confiscation of property in some forty millions of people and no question of compensation appeared to have risen. 2

The Society argued that it could not accept Gordon's view that the abolition of slavery would lead to a servile revolt or to such a disturbance of economic arrangements as would prove disastrous to the country. They declared that the whole history of abolition pointed to but one conclusion: that there would be little interruption in productive industry and cultivation. 3

To the question of dealing with fugitive slaves, the only

1. A.S.S. MSS. Anti-Slavery Society to Gordon, June 1877.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
answer Gordon got from the Society was that "it is one which has been inseparable from slavery in all times".

One of the questions where there was a conflict between the Society and Gordon was how far Khedive Isma'il was sincere in his desire to suppress the slave trade. Gordon was convinced that the Khedive had for years done his best to stop the slave trade. He argued that the Khedive had a vested interest in the suppression of the slave trade because the slave traders threatened his supremacy. "If you were here", he told Waller, "you would see how anxious and terribly (the Khedive) is to put down the slave trade. Such is no gain to him, and which threatens his supremacy". Gordon requested the Society to be "somewhat more charitable towards His Highness and do not judge on hearsay from men whose sickness of self have not been forwarded by him, and who use the slave trade for their own ends". He accused them of letting free Portugal while they kept running down the Khedive in every way.

However, Gordon's argument in favour of the Khedive did not convince the Society to change its attitude towards the Khedive. Their belief was that either his policy of slave suppression was a sham, or that he was powerless to enforce such a policy from the lawless character of those who were nominally under his orders. The latter reason appeared to be the conclusion of the Society.

1. Ibid.
2. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, June 22, 1877.
3. Ibid., September 11, 1877.
4. Ibid.
5. A.S.S. MSS. Anti-Slavery Society to Gordon, June 1877.
This clash of ideas between Gordon and the Society must have reinforced the Society's fears as to the real motive behind the Khedive's appointment of Gordon as Governor-General of the Sudan. When the appointment was announced in February, 1877, it evoked uneasiness amongst the "humanitarians" who feared the extension of Egyptian territory. In March 1877, the Church Missionary Society and the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society addressed two memorials to Lord Derby. The first memorial was the result of the meeting of an influential group, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Buxton, and several M.P.s in February. The meeting decided to present a memorial to Lord Derby urging him to prevent the annexation of Buganda by Egypt, and to keep it "free and open to English commerce industry and civilisation".\(^1\)

The two memorials prayed Her Majesty's Government to use its influence with the Egyptian Government to prevent the Khedive from extending his dominion over the regions in the neighbourhood of the Lakes Victoria and Albert Nyanza.\(^2\)

The attitude of the Anti-Slavery Society to Gordon's appointment was revealed in the Antislavery Reporter. In March 1877 the Reporter reproduced J.A. Grant's letter to The Times of January 31, 1877, expressing his belief that the "chief object" of Gordon's return was the "annexation of Victoria Nyanza". In that letter Grant strongly protested against the occupation of any position on the lake by the Khedive as it would immensely increase the difficulties in the suppression of the slave trade.

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1. F.O. 141/108 Derby to Vivian, March 29, 1877.
2. F.O. 84/1472 Derby to Vivian, March 29, 1877.
The Anti-Slavery Reporter supported Grant's idea that any addition to Egyptian territory was an increase in the area of the slave trade because, since the Sudan came under the rule of the Egyptian Government, it had become notorious for this traffic.¹

The Reporter feared that Gordon might be checkmated or got rid of should he really attempt to stop the slave trade. It expressed the Society's view that the questions of slavery and the slave trade were absolutely inseparable in practice and unless domestic slavery in Egypt was abolished there would be no end to the slave trade.²

Gordon did not allow these attacks to pass by. He did not spare his words on them:

"I do not believe in you all, you say this and that and you do not do it. You give your £ or 10s. and you have done your duty. You praise one another .... You now ignore all this past (the fact that their fathers were slave-owners) and think that your opinions are to have immediate weight and you speak and pass resolutions on matters of great import without understanding the whole question. Every one who does not agree with you, you brand as conniving at slavery ... Sir Buxton says England will stand, because she abolished slavery, why a nation should be rewarded for relieving one infamous act, is not clear".³

Gordon concluded his attack by telling them that they were a very unpractical set of men, perfect theorists and that they

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, March 1877.
2. Ibid.
3. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, September 11, 1877.
had some large quantity of "hideous hypocrisy" among them. ¹

There was much truth in Gordon's charges, as will appear at the end of this section. However, Gordon was annoyed not because the Society had attacked him but because he was afraid that the Society's actions might force his hands into actions he dreaded. In the first year of Governorship of the Sudan Gordon considered the upholding of the Egyptian Government's authority and the improving of the administration as of first priority. He was determined at this time not to take any action that would hinder this object even if that action would promote the Anti-Slavery cause. There was evidence to show that some of his acts with that object in mind, hindered the anti-slavery fight. One classic example was his clash with Captain Malcolm.

Captain Malcolm was appointed in March 1878 Director General of the Egyptian Anti-Slave Police Service whose purpose was to supervise the slave trade in the Red Sea. Captain Malcolm was an energetic officer who was clearly anxious to do his job properly and efficiently. This officer accused Gordon, under whose authority he was put, of threatening and opposing his efforts to suppress the slave trade.² Captain Malcolm convicted Sheikh Abū Bakr, the Governor of Zaila, and his family of being directly implicated in trading in slaves at Tajūrah. He arrested the Sheikh's son, grandson and nephew and referred the case to Gordon. In the opinion of Vivian, the British Consul, the evidence against the family of Abū Bakr was perfectly convincing and the

¹. Ibid.
². F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury, May 12, 1878.
Consul was very anxious that advantage should be taken of so flagrant a case to make a striking example by the punishment of a chief who had long been known to be engaged in slave practices. But Gordon was of the opinion that the Khedive's authority had not been sufficiently established at Zalla to admit the punishments of the relations of Abū Bakr and so Gordon let the big fish escape. Captain Malcolm was so annoyed because of the way in which his action and his authority were overridden in slave matters that he threw up his appointment.

Gordon's behaviour in this affair was deeply resented by the British Government. Lord Salisbury requested the Consul in Cairo to ask the Khedive for an explanation of Gordon's action.

One other action which was an anathema to anti-slavery opinion was Gordon's method of recruiting his soldiers. He used the same technique that had been used by what he called slave-traders. He bought slaves for this purpose or enlisted captured slaves in his troops and made them soldiers against their will. He justified this on the ground that it was necessary for him to put down slavery: "I need troops - how am I to get them but this? If I do not buy these slaves unless I liberate them at once they still remain slaves, while when they are soldiers they are free from that reproach. I cannot liberate them from their owners without compensation for fear of a general revolt. I cannot compensate the owners, and then let the men go free, for they would only be a danger. Though the slaves may not like to be soldiers, still it is the fate of many in lands, where there is the conscription,

1. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Derby, March 22, 1878
2. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury, June 1, 1878
3. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury May 12, 1878, enclosed remarks by Salisbury dated May 20, 1878
and, indeed, it is the only way in which I can break up the bands of armed men, which are owned by private people—slave dealers and get these bands under discipline ... I need the purchased slaves, to put down the slave dealers and to break up the semi-independent bands. .... The slaves I buy are already torn from their homes; and whether I buy them or not, they will, till twelve years have elapsed, remain slaves .... It is not as if I encouraged raids for the purpose of getting slaves as soldiers. But people will of course say: "By buying slaves you increase the demand and indirectly encourage the raids".  

In spite of these actions Gordon seemed to be deeply concerned with the slave trade and slavery at this period. He had formed certain decided opinions on the questions. To him the only remedy was to stop the slave raids on the frontier and this, in his opinion, would only be done when he had put the slave traders' Zaribas under his own people. He thought that the trade must be stopped at the source. Once the slaves had left the source, it was useless to try. 

One way he thought of dealing with the slave trade was to stop at once the slave markets at the main cities like Shaka, Qallabat and Qadariff. 

Another way by which he thought he could stop the slave gangs was by telling the "tribes" to capture and keep all the gangs that pass. He was sure the "tribes would soon do it; but then they

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2. Ibid., p. 286.
3. Ibid., p. 289.
would use no discrimination and would plunder every one, besides which he thought the slaves would prefer servitude with the Arabs of the towns to servitude with Bedouins. ¹

His views on slavery were cynical: "When you get the ink which was soaked into blotting paper out of it, then slavery will cease in these lands". ² He argued that in all previous emancipations either there had been a strong government to enforce obedience, or a majority of nations wished it. But in the Sudan there was not one who wished it, or who would aid it even by advice. He considered that many would willingly see the sufferings of the slave gangs cease, and also the raids on the Negro tribes. But there they would stop because "the tenure of slaves is the ABC of life here (in the Sudan) to rich and poor; no one is uninterested in the matter". ³

Gordon was exaggerating the difficulties involved in the abolition of slavery in order to silence the Anti-Slavery Society and others who would not accept less than that. The abolition of slavery was neither an easy task as the Anti-Slavery Society imagined nor was it an impossible task as Gordon tried to represent. It was even doubted whether Gordon in his heart of hearts thought that it was so. In 1877 he started formulating a project which, if it was adopted, would have the effect, in the long-run, of ending slavery.

In May 1877 Gordon forwarded to Vivian a scheme which he thought would extirpate domestic slavery. It ran as follows:

1. Ibid., p. 287.
2. Ibid., p. 285.
3. Ibid., p. 290.
1. Enforce the law compelling runaway slaves to return to their masters, except when cruelly treated.

2. Require masters to register their slaves before January 1, 1878.

3. If the masters neglect to register them, then Regulation 1 not to be enforced in their favour.

4. No registration to be allowed after January 1, 1878; any new slaves being considered as property until their masters are compensated or a term of years has elapsed.¹

This plan recognised in the people the institution of slavery. The people would be allowed to retain the slaves in their possession at the time although an increase in the number of slaves after January 1878 would be extremely difficult.² It was thought that in the course of time, and without imposing on the Exchequer the burden of the compensation, which he saw the owners were equally entitled to, he would have put an end to the slave trade throughout the Sudan.³ It was also believed that if the registration scheme was carried out, it would have been received in the Sudan with little resistance.⁴

It seemed that in 1877 Gordon had not fully developed his scheme and so he did not press it. The negotiations for the convention had already gone a long way by May 1877. His scheme was rejected in 1877 but it was an interesting one and, as we shall see, Gordon developed and publicised it later energetically and with consistency.

Until his departure to Cairo on February 7, 1878, Gordon did not do much to advance the cause of anti-slavery in the Sudan.

1. Ibid., p. 227.
Indeed some of his deeds did much to foster the trade in slaves. His troops were composed either of captured or purchased slaves. In some cases he legitimised the transport of slaves. He paid no regard to the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1877 between Britain and Egypt and in some instances he acted contrary to its provisions. He wrote and spoke on the astounding difficulties in the way of anybody who might try to fight the slave trade but did nothing to tackle some of these practical difficulties. At times he encouraged the slave trade by letting the slaves stay as they were and letting the owners run the cordon as best as they could.\(^1\) He conceived of some pro-slavery ideas when he considered that the slaves were sub-human.\(^2\)

If these were his views and actions, it was no surprise that a rumour circulated about this time at Cairo that Gordon was actually giving encouragement to the slave trade. The Anti-Slavery Society was naturally highly critical of him. The Foreign Office resented his enforcing Captain Malcolm to resign. The British Consul at Cairo intimated to him that he was not sufficiently active in his campaign against the slave traffickers.\(^3\)

But Gordon did not care much for all this criticism. More than one observer declared that ambition was, in reality, the essential motive in his life - ambition neither for wealth or titles, but for fame and influence.\(^4\) It appeared that Gordon at this time found such fame in ruling a vast country like the Sudan; and so he desired to continue to rule and to expand that country.

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2. Ibid.
As long as Ismail continued to trust him, and he, on his part, to appease and flatter his master, he had no fears of being kicked out of the Sudan.

But the financial storm in Egypt was gathering strength. In February 1878 Gordon embarked on his journey from Khartoum to Cairo in an attempt to save his sovereign. His attempt turned out to be a fiasco. His visit to Cairo had led him to the bitter conclusion that "His Highness will be curbed in, and will no longer be absolute sovereign". This conclusion dealt a death blow to Gordon's ambition for fame. All he hoped for now was that the fall of Ismail should not be hastened. If this could be delayed he could build for himself a new image and fame as the staunch and stern fighter of the slave trade and slavers. This entailed a radical change in Gordon's views and methods. It was not a difficult task for a changeable creature like Gordon. He had felt this change immediately after his visit to Cairo when he confessed at Zaila on April 17, 1878 that he felt very differently about the Sudan. After that date Gordon concentrated exclusively on fighting the slave trade, and embarked on an extreme policy of coercion to enforce the Slave Trade Convention.

The first victims of his new policy were the high ranking Egyptian officials. In May 1878 he dismissed Rauf, his successor as Governor-General of the Sudan, from his governorship of Zaila; and also turned out Ibrahim Bey Fawzi from the Equatorial Province. In May 1878 he reported that in one month he had dismissed three Generals of Divisions, one General of Brigade and four Lieutenant Generals. His idea was to put on the frontier posts European

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2. Ibid., p. 310
3. Ibid., p. 314
agents, to see that no slave caravans came through the frontier. He tried his best to replace Egyptian officers with Europeans because he believed that the Egyptian officers could not be relied upon to act honestly and vigorously against the slave traders. He requested Sir Richard Burton to come out as Governor of Darfur but his offer was declined and so was that made to Baker and Watson. However, he succeeded in finding lesser Europeans. He promoted Lupton, Emin and Slatin and recruited the services of Gessi, Messedaglia and Marno. He posted these Europeans in the key jobs in the three main slaving districts: the Equatorial Province, Darfur and Bahr al-Ghazal.

His next step was to pursue and capture slave caravans. In July 1878 he reported that he had captured twelve caravans in two months. He considered this was not bad and he hoped to stop caravans before long. At the beginning of August he informed his sister that he was striking daily blows against the slave trade and that he was "establishing a sort of Government Terror about it".

He estimated that from June 1878 to March 1879 he captured sixty three caravans. So Gordon used to the full the powers that the Slave Trade Convention had conferred on him.

Gordon was busy formulating plans to deal with the slave trade and slavers in Darfur and Bahr-al-Ghazal, the two provinces in which the slave trade was mostly carried. As far as Darfur

1. Ibid., p. 337.
2. Ibid., p. 318.
3. Ibid., p. 319.
4. Ibid., p. 346.
was concerned he conceived of an idea which in his view would crush the slave trade; the opinion ran as follows:

"All persons residing in Darfour must have a permis de sojourn; all persons travelling to and from must have passports to themselves and suite ..... As Darfour surrounds the Soudan, and all slaves must pass through Darfour before coming to the Soudan, no one can reside in Darfour without an ostensible mode of livelihood, and no one can go to or from Darfour without Government permission for himself and his followers. I have added to these rules 'All infractions of these orders will be punished with imprisonment and by confiscation of property'. That was a grand idea but Gordon did not pause to think of how he was going to put it into practice and certainly he did not execute it.

His thoughts were then turned to Bahr-al-Ghazal which he considered to be the hot-bed of the slave trade. His plan for dealing with the slavers was twofold: (1) To cut the slavers in Bahr-al-Ghazal from all communications with the outside world; and (2) to set the "tribes" against them. He was not sure that his plan would succeed and so he sought the advice of Sir Samuel Baker. Baker thought that the first part of the plan was feasible and a good one. By cutting off the slavers, and prohibiting all traffic in the river, he could blockade the slavers and make them utterly helpless. But Baker thought that Gordon's second part of the plan was unwise as it was dangerous to hint to the "tribes" that the total disappearance of the slavers

1. Ibid., p. 343.
2. Q. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Baker to Gordon, October 16, 1878.
would not offend the Government "as a negro success in a conflict with the slavers might encourage them to resist the Government troops at some future time". ¹

Gordon followed Baker's advice and adopted the measure of blockading the slave dealers of Bahr-al-Ghazal in October 1878. He was satisfied that in four or six months they would be hard up for anything like luxuries or even essentials. ² To the second part of his plan, he introduced some modifications. Gordon ordered the Jallāba, whom he considered all to be slave-dealers, to evacuate districts south of the route from El Obeid to Dāra in Southern Kordofan. When this order was ignored Gordon resorted to the harsh expedient of instructing the tribal chiefs of the area to seize the jallāba and to expel them to the Government posts at Dāra, al-Tuwaysha, Umm Shanga, and El Obeid, warning them that they would be held responsible for the jallāba found in their territories after a given date. The order was received with enthusiasm by the nomads. The traders were hunted down and plundered of all they had. ³ And so instead of inciting the Negroes against the traders, he instigated the nomads against them.

Baker seemed to be disturbed with Gordon's uncautious attitude and so he counselled him to use caution and tact in dealing with the slave dealers in Bahr-al-Ghazal: "It is a difficult affair to manage because all these Dongolawis who are now mere brigands in these districts have innumerable relations and friends in the Sudan.

¹. Ibid.
². George Birbeck Hill, op. cit., p. 324;
If the Government troops came into collision with them a number will be killed and a cartload of petitions and lying statements will be sent up to His Highness in Cairo and your name will be blackened. I therefore think your idea of cutting away all communications is the safest and best as it will relieve you from active responsibility". 1

Sir Samuel Baker gave Gordon an idea which Gordon executed. He informed Gordon that "a severe blow at a high authority would do more good than the hanging of a dozen little men like raises of vessels or wakeels of stations - ". 2 The idea appealed strongly to Gordon. At this time no Sudanese name was better known to the British reading public than that of al-Zubair Pasha Rahma Mansur - who was known to them as the arch-slave trader in the Sudan. Zubair was far away from Gordon but his son, Sulaiman, was as strong as his father. Gordon knew that no more act would be popular in Anti-Slavery circles than the execution of Sulaiman.

Gordon claimed that the "destruction of Sebehrr's (Zubair's) gang was the turning-point of the slave trade question". As a prelude to his action against Sulaiman he portrayed him and his troops as slave traders. He announced that all the "neighbouring nations in Central Africa would hear of Zubair's gang ... They would also know that why he was crushed i.e. on account of the slave trade and by whom, i.e. the Christians". 3 And so Gordon provoked Sulaiman into rebellion; and he intended to hang him. "I shall give Gessi £1,000 if he succeeds in catching Sebehrr's son. I hope he will hang him, for if he is sent to Cairo he

1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Baker to Gordon, October 16, 1878  
2. Ibid.  
3. George Birbeck Hill, op. cit., p. 350;
will be made much of".  

By the execution of Sulaiman and the disbanding of his troops Gordon could, and did, claim that he had crushed the slave trade in the Sudan.

It has often been claimed that the main motive of Gordon in taking up the Governor-Generalship of the Sudan was his desire to suppress the slave trade. But from tracing the working of his mind and his actions during his administration one would come to the conclusion that his primary motive had been a personal one - to promote his personal ambition. He consistently and energetically followed and promoted his ambition. His ambition had always been to gain power - he was interested in and enjoyed power. In his first year as Governor-General he saw clearly that if he was active against the slave trade and traders this might spark off a revolt and a revolt meant the end of his dream of an empire in the Sudan. In November 1877 he confessed, privately, to his sister that he was ambitious when he accepted the Governor-Generalship. But, he qualified his statement, that his ambition was not for money or honours. Perhaps he would have added that he was ambitious for power.

But Gordon's dream of empire and power in the Sudan had vanished with the eclipse of Ismail in 1879. This eclipse was evident to Gordon as far back as April 1878. And so instead of relying on Ismail, after April 1878, he depended on his vigorous fight against the slave trade and slavers in the hope that if it

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1. Ibid., p. 337.
it did not help him to remain in power it would at least win for him the support of the British public and Government. He guessed that the British public and Government might be in a position to put pressure on the new order in Egypt to keep Gordon in his position as he was indispensable for the cause of anti-slavery. The Times took this line when it declared that "If England really desires a faithful performance of the Slave Trade Convention she must herself lend a hand and control the appointments at Khartoum and other similar focusses of slave traffic". And if Britain could dictate such a course who could be better than Gordon to be a Governor-General as the same paper believed that "none can do his work as well as himself, and it is more than doubtful whether anyone can be found who will even prevent its being undone. His main endeavour has been throughout to take effective measures for the suppression of the slave trade".

The last sentence clearly indicates that Gordon had succeeded in convincing the British public into believing that he had put an end to the slave trade in the Sudan. In his correspondence with his friends he prided himself that the slave trade was utterly crushed. This declaration soon appeared on the pages of the Press. The Times talked of his extermination of the slave dealers in their strongholds in Bahr al-Ghazal. The paper praised the Colonel and estimated that the slaves he had liberated could be counted in their thousands, and the slave dealers he had punished

1. The Times, October, 2, 1879.
2. Ibid.
by imprisonment, banishment and sometimes death in their hundreds.¹

The Anti-Slavery Reporter which was nearly silent the first year and a half of Gordon's administration announced, at last, that Gordon "had been doing important work by putting down the slave trade in the Sudan". It went on to plead for his continuance in office: "This (the suppression of the slave trade) has, however, been accomplished by force of arms and the question would arise: How long will this state of things survive should anything occur to remove Colonel Gordon from his position as virtual ruler of the Sudan? Would not the slave-trade again raise its hydra head in those regions".²

In spite of this declaration of The Reporter, the Anti-Slavery Society had not yet shed its fears and doubts as to the sincerity of the Egyptian authorities in dealing with the slave trade. "The Society", wrote the Anti-Slavery Reporter, "has long felt that while the Turkish flag is still permitted to cover the slave in the Red Sea and elsewhere, and while slavery is a legal institution in Egypt itself, Colonel Gordon has occupied a false position as the representative of Egypt; that his high character was a necessary factor for the realisation of those dreams of extended empire in which the late ruler indulged and that, sooner or later, he would feel the unreality of the policy he was engaged to carry out".³

The Anti-Slavery Society considered that the abolition of slavery was a cardinal object. Khedive Ismā'il repeatedly refused the appeals of the Society to abolish slavery as an institution

1. The Times, October 2, 1879.
3. Ibid.
because he observed that there were great difficulties to contend
with in abolishing an institution which had existed for so long
and which had come to form part of the customs of the country; and Ismail judged that this should be the work of time. This
might be the reason why the Society was not completely satisfied
with Gordon's measures.

It was also the reason why the Society refused to endorse
Gordon's estimate, supported by the Foreign Office and The Times,
of Khedive Ismail. Gordon assured the Society that during the
time he was Governor-General of the Sudan, Ismail gave him full
powers with respect to the slave trade and took the greatest
interest in its suppression, sending him congratulatory telegrams
on every success he achieved; and that, in spite of the immense
efforts that were made to set Ismail against him, he never flinched
in his support. Gordon went as far as to tell the Society that
Ismail Pasha enabled them to show that the extinction of slave-
hunting was possible which had before been doubted.

However, Gordon found support from The Times and the Foreign
Office on this point. The Times judged that Khedive Ismail was
eager to suppress the slave trade and that as far as it lay in his
power, he faithfully carried out the Slave Trade Convention.

The Foreign Office was convinced that Khedive Ismail was
sincere in his determination to put an end to the slave trade.
From July 1878 the Egyptian Foreign Secretary continued to send
reports to the British Consul in Cairo informing him of any

1. F.O. 84/1511 Frank C. Lescelles to Salisbury, November 26, 1878.
2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, March 1880, quoting Gordon's letter
to the Society.
3. The Times, October 2, 1879
seizures of slaves made by Gordon and of the actions taken against the traders and the officials implicated in the trade. Reports from other sources continued to reach the British Consul. Mr. Rosett, the British Vice-Consul at Khartoum conveyed to Vivian on July 5, 1878 that Gordon had taken energetic measures with respect to the Government officials who failed to carry out his orders; that in the course of three weeks five caravans of slaves had been stopped in different districts; and that in his opinion those and other measures that had been adopted would greatly increase the risks and dangers of engaging in the slave trade as almost to annihilate it. Vivian was impressed with these reports and he reported to Lord Salisbury that he was very satisfied with the way in which the slave trade was being attacked in its strongholds, and of the measures taken. He thought that if Colonel Gordon was allowed to continue his work, as hitherto strongly supported by the Central Government, the cure that he would effect would be radical and complete. With such reports from its representatives, the Foreign Office could come to one conclusion — that Ismail and the Egyptian authorities had displayed much commendable zeal and energy in carrying out the provisions of the Convention of August 1877. The Foreign Office, through the British Consul in Cairo, expressed to the Khedive the satisfaction of Her Majesty’s Government with the energetic measures taken by Colonel Gordon against the slave trade.

1. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury, July 13, 1878, enclosing Riez to Vivian July 8, 1878; Vivian to Salisbury, August, 12, 1878 enclosed Riez to Vivian, August 11, 1878.
2. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury, July 31, 1878
3. Ibid.
4. F.O. 84/1511 Vivian to Salisbury, December 14, 1878
There was no doubt that Ismail gave his full support to Gordon especially in the period after April 1878. This was not due to any "humanitarian" motive on the part of the fat Pasha. Ismail must have thought that if he had showed vigorous zeal in the cause of the suppression of the slave trade this might have earned him the support of the British Government against the European money lenders. However, Ismail must have exaggerated the interest of the British Government in the slave trade question. When it came to the question of priorities the financial interests must come first. Moreover, the British Government had no reason to suppose that it could not exert the same pressure on the slave trade question on Ismail's successor.

Did Gordon really crush the slave trade as he claimed?

There was no doubt that Gordon's efforts resulted in numerous and important seizures of slaves and slave-dealers but he did not put an entire stop to the slave trade. It must be remembered that the slave trade of the late seventies was quite different from that of the sixties. One observer noted that the raids for ivory and slaves were almost things of the past;¹ and Bishop Comboni, the head of the Roman Catholic Mission at Khartoum testified that there were no longer to be seen on the routes those immense crowds of slaves he had seen twenty years ago.² Gordon himself conceded this point. So the majority of slaves in the 1870's were inside the houses and Gordon had done nothing to liberate them. In some

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1. A.S.S. MSS. Memorandum by A.B. Wylde, November 1878
cases his intervention did not benefit the slaves at all. In many instances he confessed that he had given the slaves he had captured "to the natives of the place, who were of their own blood".\(^1\) In other cases he forced the captured slaves to join his troops. In April 1879 he confessed that "the 25,000 black troops he had were either captured slaves or bought slaves".\(^2\)

Moreover, many of what he called slaves whom he had captured were not really slaves; they were soldiers. Gordon claimed that thousands of slaves were captured after the defeat of Sulaiman al-Zubair; but Gordon must have misled the British public because those captured were really soldiers and not slaves.

Two informed contemporaries of Gordon had expressed their beliefs that Gordon did not put an end to the slave trade. The German Giegler, who was in the Sudan service since 1874, ridiculed the idea that Gordon had crushed the slave trade.\(^3\) Malet, the British Consul in Cairo, announced to Lord Grenville that "Colonel Gordon's administration of the Sudan had no perceptible effect in diminishing the supply".\(^4\)

In spite of the fact that Gordon's forcible and harsh measures contributed little to the suppression of the slave trade, they had a great influence on the history of the Sudan. An Egyptian historian has claimed that Gordon's merciless measures were directly responsible for the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution.\(^5\)

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2. Ibid., p. 351.
British historian thought that his violence in attempting the suppression of the slave traffic precipitated but did not cause the Mahdist revolution. However, it is not realised that Gordon's policy had its disastrous impact on the modern Republic of the Sudan. It halted a process which might probably have prevented what is now called the "Southern problem" from showing its head. By 1879 a "process of biological adaptation" to Arab dress and domestic apparatus, to Arab social customs and modes of behaviour and even to Islam had gone a long way in Bahr al-Ghazal and especially in the north-western part, where a number of small tribes had been more or less thoroughly Arabised and at least one, the Feroe, had been fully converted to Islam. In some parts of Equatoria the chiefs had adopted Arab dress and certain Arab social customs. In both provinces Arabic of a sort was well on its way to becoming a lingua franca. The process was furthered not by contact only, but also by intermarriage between northerners and southern women. This process of "Arabization" and "Islamization" seemed to have gathered considerable momentum especially in Bahr al-Ghazal when Gordon embarked upon his policy of dispersing the 'Arab' element and thus halting the process. Had not Gordon harried the "northerners", and especially Zubair's troops, the process would have gone a long way to destroy many of the differences which helped, and help, to create and complicate the "Southern problem".

Gordon left the Sudan in December 1879 after his resignation. In April 1880 he was back in England. During the years 1880-81 Gordon was fully preoccupied with the questions of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. There was a complete reconciliation between Gordon and the Anti-Slavery Society and they formed a common front. The Society realised that Gordon stood high in the public eye and it was determined to use his influence with the public. On the part of Gordon, he envisaged that he could use the Society as much to further his own personal ends. Gordon would pay visits to the Office of the Anti-Slavery Society in New Broad Street, where he would draft with his own hands reports and articles upon the slave trade, with strict injunctions that his name was not to appear. Gordon was not only privy to all the schemes of the Society at this time, but was the main mover of all these projects. He supplied them with information, inspired them with ideas and drafted memorials and addresses for them. He was constantly urging them to be more active and advising them what to do, and what they should not do. His correspondence with Allen, the Secretary of the Society and Horace Waller, a prominent member of the Society, clearly reveals this.

Immediately after the arrival of Gordon in London the Society launched a fierce campaign against the Ottoman authorities in the Sudan. By articles in the Anti-Slavery Reporter, by letters to The Times and other papers and by deputations, memorials to the Foreign Office and an address to the Prime Minister, the Society

tried to convince the public and the Foreign Office that since the departure of Gordon from the scene of his labours in the Sudan, the slave trade had not only increased in Egypt, the Sudan and the Red Sea but was also conducted openly with the connivance of the authorities. The Society claimed that this undesirable state of affairs was brought about because Rauf Pasha, the Governor-General who succeeded Gordon, was an instrument in the hands of the slave traders. It was alleged by the Society that the whole career of Rauf Pasha pointed to one conclusion; that he was a man who could never be trusted to devise or carry out effective measures for fighting the slave trade.

This Press Campaign was well documented. The Society could confidently point to the public that its information was reliable because it had been received from persons well acquainted with the Sudan. Among its many informants and correspondents were Gordon, Gessi, Dr. G. Schweinfurth, G.B. Messedaglia, A.B. Wylde, the Rev. C.T. Wilson and R.W. Felkin; all of whom were persons who either travelled extensively in the Sudan or were in the Ottoman service in the Sudan. All of them were known to the British reading public through their writings, or the writings of others, on their travels and exploits in the Sudan.

The attack against Rauf was unjustified. Although he was anxious to reverse the extreme policy of Gordon, there was no evidence to show that he undid Gordon's work of repressing the slave trade or that he connived at the slave traders. As we shall see later, the evidence against him produced by the Society was contradictory. The campaign against Rauf was instigated
and encouraged by Gordon in secret who wanted his name to be omitted as authority in informing the Society about Rauf. The Society refused to publish the correspondence it had received from such persons as Giegler, the Deputy of Rauf, and Malet, the British Consul in Cairo, who protested that the attacks against Rauf were unjust and untruthful. In the end the attack against Rauf served no purpose and the Society was accused "in high quarters of weakening the hand of the Governor-General and his officials in their endeavours to carry out the orders of the Government, it being understood that these orders involved the suppression of the slave trade". The attack satisfied Gordon who was not on friendly terms with Rauf whom he sacked twice from the Sudan service in the years 1874-1878. Gordon also wanted to prove to the British public that no Egyptian could carry on the work of suppression of the slave trade he had begun and that any Egyptian Governor was certainly going to undo what he had achieved. The campaign against Rauf in particular and the Egyptian authorities in general served the purposes of Gordon and other correspondents of the Society especially Dr. Schweinfurth, who had an axe to grind, but it helped to discredit the Anti-Slavery Society because it produced what came to be known as the "Buchta affair".

On 27th October 1880 there appeared in various London papers a statement furnished by Mr. Allen, the Secretary of the Anti-

1. A.S.S. MSS. Gordon to Allen, April 20, 1880.
2. Ibid., Giegler to Allen, January 16, 1882.
Slavery Society, on the authority of the well-known traveller Dr. Schweinfurth, which professed to be a report of an eye witness upon the present state of the slave trade in the Sudan. The eye witness was an Austrian called Herr Buchta who had recently been travelling in the Sudan. The report was to the effect that the slave trade was carried on openly and that the Egyptian officers and Governors were still implicated in the slave trade. It was stated that Ahmad Bey Atrouch, Mudir of Makareka, Hassan Bey Ibrahim, commissioner of Rohl, Yousif Pasha Mudir of Sinnār, Muḥammad Taha, Mudir of Latuka, possessed in Bahr al-Ghazal and the Upper Nile large depots of slaves and they continually slipped slaves in the Government steamers to Khartoum. It was also claimed that the Mudir of Pashoda exacted, in April 1880, a tax for all slaves shipped and that Ibrahim Fawzi Governor of Equatoria carried on slave hunting. The statement alleged that all junior officers and all the steamers on the White Nile were constantly implicated in the slave trade and assisted in every way in its development. The supposed report of Herr Buchta concluded that while he was travelling from Khartoum to Berber in June 1880 he had noticed that the vessel he had taken was filled with slaves destined for Jeddah. When he asked for the passage tickets of the slaves, they were produced; and he had seen the signature of Raṣūf Pasha, the Governor-General, affixed to those tickets.¹

This report caused a considerable stir in London, Cairo and Khartoum. In a letter dated December 20, 1880 to Mr. Malet, the British Consul in Cairo, Giegler set out to refute the accusations in Buchta’s alleged report. Giegler quoted a letter

1. The Times, October 27, 1880.
sent to him by the said Buchta to the effect he had neither seen nor communicated in writing or verbally the charges against the Ottoman authorities in the Sudan, related to him, to Dr. Schweinfurth. Buchta confessed that he had spoken to a certain Shroader about the subject of the slave trade in the Sudan. Shroader, in spite of Buchta's wish, and in a much corrupted manner, revealed what had been told to him by Buchta to Dr. Schweinfurth. The latter brought the story in the shape of a report which he sent to Mr. Allen.¹

The supposed Buchta report caused uneasiness in the Foreign Office which instructed the British Consul in Cairo to make enquirie's on the subject. The consul contacted the Egyptian Foreign Minister who assured him that the accusations referred to in the report took place in 1878 when Gordon was Governor-General. The statement of the Egyptian minister was confirmed to the Consul by independent testimony from Colonel M. Mason, an American officer in the Egyptian service who had been in the Sudan and who stated that he had received the information concerning the functionaries named and their punishment from Colonel Gordon himself. The Consul enquired from Dr. Schweinfurth who told him that he had transmitted the information to Mr. Allen without dates.²

The findings of the Consul on the affair were supported by the correspondent of The Times in Cairo. The correspondent quoted a letter from Buchta declaring that it was far from his intention to give the construction that Rauf was responsible for the facts mentioned, the less so as the majority of them fell into the period

². P.P. Egypt No. 89 Malet to Granville, November 30, 1880.
of Gordon's administration. Buchta's letter mentioned that he did not meet the caravan in June 1880, as the report of Dr. Schweinfurth claimed, but in May 1878 and that the atrocities of Ibrahim Fawzi could not be put to Rüf's administration as the former had been dismissed by Gordon. Buchta's letter in The Times of February 1, 1881, concluded that he simply expressed doubts that the present Governor-General Rüf Pasha would be able to put an end to an institution like slavery that had grown into the habits of so many thousands.¹

Finally, Gordon came upon the scene when he confessed that the proceedings alluded to respecting the officials mentioned happened during his administration and that he dealt with their cases.²

"The Buchta affair" clearly demonstrated the weakest point of the Anti-Slavery Society. The Society was always eager to receive information on the slave trade in Egypt and the Sudan because it could only agitate the question in Britain if it had intelligence from persons in Egypt and the Sudan. But the Society had no correspondents of its own on whom it could rely to provide it with accurate reports. The Society, therefore, depended on European residents and travellers to supply it with the information it needed. But the Society had always taken as good coin any intelligence and views communicated to it by European travellers and residents in the Nile Valley. It would not take care to verify the authenticity of their information or to investigate their characters and motives before it would publish it in

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¹ The Times, February 1, 1881.
² G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, (undated).
the Reporter and the other national papers. Some of the reports the Society had received contained exaggerated and incorrect charges against the Egyptian Establishment. But the Reporter continued to publish such accusations and to claim that "we must earnestly disclaim being responsible for any of the facts or the opinions we publish on their (the informants) authority".

Unfortunately for the Society, its informants often mixed up their personal animosities and private quarrels with their information. Most of them were men who wanted to use the Society as a vehicle for their private ends. Some of them had grudges against the Egyptian Government: they had either asked the Egyptian Government for certain services but were refused; or they were in the Egyptian service but had been dismissed for one reason or another. And so, when the Egyptian Government refused to further their ambitions and their monetary considerations, the only way they could revenge themselves on the Government was to use the slave trade question to discredit and abuse the Egyptian Government. Both Gessi and Messedaglia, who were active in communicating to the Society reports in 1880-1881, were dismissed from the Egyptian service because they had arbitrarily misused their powers. Dr. Schweifurth was once in the Egyptian service and he used the slave trade question to exert pressure on the Government to re-employ him.

It is ironical to notice that the same persons who used the Society to serve their own purposes, warned it against persons who might exploit the Society for their own ends. Gordon claimed

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, December 14, 1881.
that his object was to prevent the Society from being a vehicle for one or other person using it for private ends.¹ Dr. Schweinfurth commenting on charges brought by Messedaglia against Giegler and published in the Anti-Slavery Reporter of November 16, 1881, advised the Society to take care in publishing letters from the Sudan because disregarding the personal animosity might injure the authority of the Society and its cause.² A certain John Crawford, a correspondent of the Society in Cairo informed Allen that there was much truth in Schweinfurth's above remark that the petty jealousy that existed between the foreigners employed by the Egyptian Government and between them and the Egyptian Pashas tended to mutual recriminations and to their mixing up their private quarrels and personal jealousy in their correspondence.³ From this it was clear that the Society was aware that some of those who provided it with information had done so not out of purely altruistic motives. But the Society continued to receive and publicise their intelligence because it believed that the Egyptian authorities would never act against the slave trade unless they were harassed energetically and continually. The Society also entertained the hope that Press attacks would always induce the Foreign Office to escalate its pressure on the Egyptian Government. The latter did not at all ignore the attacks and charges of the Society, especially those inserted in influential papers like The Times. Sometimes the Egyptian Government found truth in

¹ G. MSS. Add. MSS 47609 Gordon to Allen, November 2, 1880.
² Anti-Slavery Reporter, December 14, 1881.
³ A.S.S. MSS. John Crawford to Allen, December 10, 1881.
the Society's accusations against its officials and tried to satisfy the Society. But this satisfaction would come only after the Society's charges were put to the Egyptian Government by the British Consul in Cairo. Therefore, the influence of the Society with the Egyptian Government was nearly nil. This was not surprising because the Society was too ready to give publicity to inaccurate and exaggerated accounts and, not having to face the responsibility, it could hardly expect the Egyptian Establishment to have much respect or consideration for the Society's views and actions. Moreover, the Society was most uncharitable to some of the Egyptian officials who really took the cause of anti-slavery to heart and did all they could to fight the slave trade with the means at their disposal. All the credit of fighting the slave trade was given to Gordon in particular and to the European employees of the Egyptian Government in general. But it could hardly be conceived that so few individuals could achieve anything without the aid of their Egyptian junior officers and soldiers. One European remarked to the British Consul in Cairo that when the fight against the slave trade was discussed the talk was always centred around a few Europeans; but he thought that the Europeans had "done nothing in comparison with all these people (Egyptian officials) who were pronounced upon the moment Gordon left the Sudan instead of receiving their proper share of praise".¹

¹ A critic of the Society at that time pointed out that the Society was trying to advance a good cause by foul means.² The

¹ A.S. MSS. Giegler to Malet, December 16, 1880.
² Ibid.
The Egyptian Foreign Minister took the opportunity of the "Buchta incident" to declare to the British Consul in Cairo that the Society was showing malevolence towards the Egyptian Administration. The Consul thought that the Minister was justified in his remark and this seemed to be the point of view of the Foreign Office which the Society pressed to influence the new régime in Egypt to suppress the slave trade and abolish slavery.

During the years 1880-81, two deputations from the Society met the Foreign Secretary. The first deputation met Earl Granville and Sir Charles Dilke on June 7, 1880, when the Society presented the Ministers with a memorial "on the alarming increase of the slave trade in Egypt and the Red Sea". The second meeting between the Foreign Secretary and the Society took place on August 18, 1881. The deputation of the Society called "the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the deplorable attitude which the slave trade has lately assumed in the outlying territories of Egypt, and on the Red Sea Coast".

The two deputations and the memorial tried to convince the Foreign Secretary that since the accession of Tawfīq Pasha, the Egyptian Government withdrew its support from Colonel Gordon and from his anti-slave trade policy in the Sudan and that, as a consequence of this action the slave hunts and the slave trade again prevailed in these countries in their former horrors. The Society demanded that to remedy this situation the British Government should establish a permanent Consulate at Khartoum and

1. P.P. Egypt No. 89 (1881) Malet to Granville, November 30, 1880.
3. Anti-Slavery Reporter, September 15, 1881.
vice-Consulates at Suakin and Mussawwa. The Society requested that the British Government should urge the Khedive to amend the slave trade treaty so as to abolish immediately the legal status of slavery. These were old demands. The second deputation presented the Earl with a new proposal. It was argued that, since the French Government was entirely in sympathy with the views of the British Government on the suppression of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery in Egypt and her dependencies and she was willing to take prompt action in the matter in accord with or jointly with the British Government, the moment was propitious for such a combined action. The two super-powers might obtain the establishment of a Mixed Commission whose function was to exercise the same kind of supervision over the slave trade department as was done in the control of the financial affairs of Egypt. The deputation argued that if Europe might supersede one of the primary rights of self-government in Egypt on behalf of her bond-holders, it was not too much to say that she had a stronger right to interfere on behalf of the claims of humanity. 1 By this plan of a Mixed Commission, all the offenders of the slave trade decrees and conventions would be put under Mixed Tribunals: that is, they should not be under Egyptian courts.

This proposal together with the new scheme of registration conceived by the Society were presented to the Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, in an address from the Society on March 18, 1881. This address, which was somewhat long, contained a sketch of the

1. Ibid.
history of the slave trade in Egypt and the Sudan since the time of Muhammad 'Ali, tending to show that Her Majesty's Government had a long standing right to insist upon the extinction of the slave trade and that measures as yet adopted for the purpose had been ineffectual and delusive. The memorial was signed by a number of influential persons, including Lords Shaftesbury, Ebury, Brougham and Kinnaird, the Bishops of London, Exeter and Liverpool, Cardinal Manning, Lord Justice Lush, Sir Robert Phillimore, Canon Farrar, the Lord Mayors of London and York, the Mayors of several provincial towns, many members of Parliament, the Deans of St. Paul's Canterbury, Ripon, Durham, Carlisle and Bangor, Colonel Gordon, Sir A. Cotton, the President of Trinity College, Oxford and other academicians and school teachers.

In the address the Society for the first time proposed a new plan of registration for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. The scheme conceived of a complete registration of the existing slaves, by which the Society believed that a great check would be placed upon the increase of domestic slavery and that such a check would not fail to render slave hunting less remunerative in the future. The plan of registration ran as follows:

1: All existing slaves in Egypt and the Sudan were to be registered by the Governors.
2: Registers had to be kept in each Government office with the names of slaves and their owners with descriptions of each.

1. The Times, March 19, 1881, Anti-Slavery Reporter, April 14, 1881.
3: Slaves were to be free if not registered after the expiration of six months to the period given for registration; all slaves born after signature of this decree to be free.

4: Register books were to be closed for ever after the expiration of six months.

5: Owners of slaves thus registered were to be bound to produce the Government Certificates corresponding with the register books when required to do so by the Egyptian Government.

6: The Governors of Egypt and the Sudan were to proclaim this throughout the land.

7: All purchases or sales of slaves from family to family were to be endorsed on the registration papers and inscribed in the Government books of the registry.

The Society hoped that the Khedive would be induced to issue a Decree adopting these provisions. And to execute the project the Society urged Her Majesty's Government, in concert with France, to obtain the establishment of the Mixed Commission referred to earlier.

The adoption of the registration plan on the part of the Anti-Slavery Society was a complete departure from the rigid line the Society had taken as far as slavery was concerned. The Society had always maintained that it could hold no compromise with slavery as a status and insisted that the Egyptian Government should abolish slavery at once. By adopting the scheme the Society had given up this cardinal principle because the registration plan would not have brought about a complete and immediate emancipation.
of slaves. But it must be admitted that the scheme would ultimately, but slowly, cause slavery to end. It was thought that unless some measures were taken for registering the slaves at the time in Egypt and the Sudan they would be replaced by fresh slaves obtained by some other channel, and therefore, the object of the registration proposed, was that slavery in Egypt and the Sudan should rest simply in its present condition and that there should not be any new slaves introduced.

In spite of the fact that some members of the Committee of the Society were not happy with this departure,\(^1\) it marked the beginning of a realistic approach to the question of slavery in the Nile Valley. The Anti-Slavery Reporter conformed with the new line of the Society and campaigned vigorously for the registration scheme in which it saw "the best and most peaceable solution" of the problem of slavery.\(^2\)

This might be true, but how could the project be carried out? The Times expressed its fears that the plan might cause turmoil and rage and warned that such inquisition into domestic life would arouse slaves against the Administration in Cairo. The paper added that the machinery was wanting for carrying out the project, and that it was not very clear that, could it be created, the result would be worth the trouble. The Times asked by what title the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society or Downing Street, in execution of its behests, could compel the Khedive to try the

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1. Gordon realised that Joseph Cooper was not reconciled to the plan of registration as he still did not think anything would stop the slave trade till the slaves ceased to exist in domestic life. (G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, November 14, 1880).

experiment; and how the Society could defend its claim for a Mixed Commission to supervise the Egyptian Slave Trade Department on the model of the existing financial control? The paper saw no parallel between a financial disorder which, besides injuring the European creditor, menaced Egypt internally with revolution and anarchy and "native disinclination to alter the arrangements of domestic life in deference to what a Mussulman regards as Western crotchets ....". 1

Sir Samuel Baker also raised some objections to the plan. He thought it would be simple and excellent for any "compact and civilised nation", but he doubted whether it would work throughout a "semi savage country", because the people would conceal their slaves and would trick the authorities in a thousand different ways. 2

The Anti-Slavery Reporter replied to those critics, who thought there would be great difficulty in registering the slaves, that the Egyptian Government found no difficulty in registering people for the purpose of taxation and that, surely, there would be as little difficulty in registering slaves. 3 Gordon replied to The Times that its fear that the execution of the scheme might cause havoc was unwarranted. He had discussed this question of registration for years with those who held large numbers of slaves in the Sudan and this proposal of registration was the compromise they agreed would be fair and just. 4

1. The Times, March 21, 1881.
2. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Baker to Gordon, December 16, 1878.
3. Anti-Slavery Reporter, August 15, 1881.
4. The Times, March 24, 1881.
Indeed the project was a compromise between issuing a declaration abolishing slavery immediately which might have produced the turmoil The Times had predicted and the existing status quo which was unsatisfactory to anti-slavery sentiment. Still the objections of The Times and Sir Samuel were valid. It was doubtful whether the Ottoman administration in the Sudan was efficient or had enough resources to execute the idea. This point could not be precisely determined; but if the British Administration, after 1900, adopted similar schemes of registration and by executing it brought about the fall of slavery, there was no reason to suppose that the Ottoman administration should not have tried to carry out the registration plan. It seems that the main objection to the Society's plan was that part suggesting the founding of a Mixed Commission. The financial control had already brought humiliation to the Egyptian ruling class; and to impose a European control over a second department of the Egyptian Government was an act of "neo-colonialism" which the new Khedive could not afford to bear. The Foreign Office must have been aware of this and so it abstained from recommending the project to the Khedive. So the plan fell because of the reluctance of the British Government to press it upon the Egyptian Government.

The idea for registration was the child of Gordon's brain. He had envisaged it in 1877; and in 1878-9 he was discussing it with Baker. In October 1880 Gordon presented the Society with

his scheme for registration which was adopted without any change and forwarded, in the name of the Society, to Mr. Gladstone in March 1881.\textsuperscript{1} During the years 1880-81 he was continually pushing the Society to put pressure on the Foreign Office so that the latter would arrange with the Egyptian Government the plan for registration.\textsuperscript{2}

Gordon also urged the Society to persist in its demand for the establishment of Consuls. He suggested the appointment of a Consul-General with a roving commission but with headquarters at Khartoum; and Consuls at Suakin and Musawwa.\textsuperscript{3}

It had often been suggested that the appointment of British Consuls in the Sudan would at least solve the difficulty of getting correct information on the extent of the slave trade and the operations of the slavers. The Anti-Slavery Society complained that the information reaching the Foreign Office was inadequate and incorrect. The Foreign Office had always depended on the British Consul in Cairo to provide it with such intelligence; and for want of a Consular Agency in Khartoum, he depended, so claimed a member of the committee of the Society, on the reports of the employees of the Egyptian Government.\textsuperscript{4} And so it was the conviction of the Society that a Consul who would range throughout the Sudan would keep the Foreign Office fully informed as to what

\textsuperscript{1} G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to the Anti-Slavery Society, October 28, 1880.

\textsuperscript{2} G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, November 11, 1880; Gordon to Allen, November 2, 1880; and Gordon to Allen, May 17 1881.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{4} Anti-Slavery Reporter, August 15, 1881.
were the real facts of the case with regard to the slave trade. It was felt that the simple presence of an accredited Englishman would do as much as an "Egyptian army" for the intimidation of kidnappers. He would be, so claimed the same source, a nucleus round which all the elements of obedience to law and justice might gradually gather. It was argued that a Consul would act as a moral check on the slave traders and the officials. He would see to it that the authorities would fulfill their engagements according to the provisions of the Convention of August 1877.

There was much truth in the last point; the presence of a Consul would strengthen the hands of honest officials and might intimidate the corrupt officials, who in spite of their corruption, did not want to lose their jobs. But this would depend on the personality and integrity of the Consul himself, and it seemed that both the anti-slavery sentiment and the Foreign Office were aware that if Consuls were to be appointed, honest and energetic men were to be selected. However, it looks as if the influence that such Consuls might exercise on the slave trade was much exaggerated. The line of trade was always remote from Khartoum and even a roving Consul could not exercise much supervision over the varied slave routes. Moreover, if such a Consul was able to get information about large slave caravans, which by 1880 were very rare, and might be able to draw the attention of the authorities to such caravans, it was doubtful whether he could do much to stop the sale of slaves.

The British Government was not entirely unsympathetic to the

1. The Times, March 21, 1881.
idea that they should extend their consular superintendence to the Sudan. Lord Granville told the deputation of the Anti-Slavery Society that waited upon him on August 18, 1881, that the Foreign Office had transmitted to the Treasury a proposal that Consuls should be appointed at Khartoum and Suakin. But it seems that the Treasury rejected the proposal as it thought that there was no reason to justify such an expenditure as the trade between Britain and the Sudan was not significant. Besides this, it was felt that the Government hesitated to commission Consuls for districts in which it might prove impossible to support their authority or protect their persons. The suggestion of Gordon and The Times that, in case the Treasury failed to sanction the plan of Consuls, the Anti-Slavery Society would do well to raise money for this purpose came to nothing. Therefore, the second important scheme of both Gordon and the Society fell. In any case, if a Consul had been appointed in 1881 he was unlikely to have pre-occupied himself with the question of the slave trade in the coming years as much as with the political situation in the Sudan. If a Consul had been appointed, he would have exerted a powerful influence in the crucial years to come and by providing the British Government with correct and reliable knowledge of the political situation would have saved the British Government from committing many of its mistakes during 1880-85.

That the Foreign Office did not do much about the two important demands of the Anti-Slavery Society must have convinced the Society of Gordon's opinion that much pressure was needed to restore the

1. Earl Granville, August 18, 1881, quoted in Anti-Slavery Reporter, September 15, 1881.
2. Sir Charles Dilke, quoted in The Times, April 23, 1881.
3. The Times, March 21, 1881.
power of the Anti-Slavery Society over the lukewarm Consuls and Foreign Office. Indeed during the years 1880-81 Gordon was constantly pushing the Society to apply more and more pressure on the Foreign Office until they would get a definite satisfactory answer. He subscribed the sum of £100 for the Society, and hoped that the members of the Society would go round the counties and make "one good effort" which would restore the prestige of the Society with the Foreign Office. To attain this object he thought of going into Parliament.

Gordon's dislike of the Foreign Office at this period was clear from his correspondence with the Society. He did his best to set it against the Foreign Office. This was not due to any evidence that the Foreign Office had given less attention than it used to do to the question of the slave trade but it was mainly attributed to Gordon's belief that the Foreign Office was responsible for the deposition of Khedive Ismail and the instalment of Tawfiq. Gordon had conceived a unique hatred to the new Khedive and régime in Egypt. He did his best to make the Society come to the conclusion that Tawfiq's pronouncements against the slave trade and slavery were insincere. But he failed in this as there was evidence that the new Khedive went as far as to declare his intention to abolish slavery. In as much as the Society dissented from Gordon's views on Ismail they showed the same attitude as far as Gordon's opinions on Tawfiq were concerned.

1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, May 17, 1881; October 28, 1880; November 2, 1880.
2. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, November 5, 1880
3. W. MSS. Gordon to Waller, February 1, 1881; G. MSS. Add. MSS. 47609 Gordon to Allen, September 29, 1880; and Gordon to Allen November 9, 1880.
4. The Times, April 19, 1881, also Anti-Slavery Reporter September 15, 1881.
This point clearly demonstrates that Gordon mixed his own feelings and ambitions with the slave trade question and used the question to attack his enemies with.

If this was the only point on which Gordon and the Society differed in the years 1880-81, the Foreign Office had taken entirely different views from both. The assertion of both Gordon and the Society that the slave trade had increased since the departure of Gordon, appeared to the Foreign Office to be unfounded. Moreover, the Foreign Office did not share Gordon's opinion that the Khedive and the Egyptian Establishment were not desirous to put an end to the slave trade. The Foreign Secretary did not hesitate to tell the deputation of the Society that visited him in August 1881 that the official reports did not confirm their apprehension of an increase in the slave trade. To support this view and to prove that the Society was wrong in its allegations, the Foreign Office issued a blue book at the end of 1880 giving the official information which the Office had possessed as to the state of the trade up to the end of 1880.

The attitude of the Foreign Office had often been determined according to the news and views reaching them from the British Consul in Cairo. A look at the above mentioned blue book leaves no doubt as to where the sympathies of the Consul lay. Mr. Malet had repeatedly assured the Foreign Office of the good disposition of the Khedive with regard to the slave trade and that he had confidence in the real desire of the Khedive and the Egyptian Government to end the slave trade. He claimed that the present Khedive had not a single slave in his service. The Consul

1. Earl Granville, quoted in Anti-Slavery Reporter, September 15, 1881.
considered that the "present Government was the first purely native Government" that had honestly desired the suppression of the slave trade; and he felt confident that, as time went on, they would take further measures, if those adopted prove insufficient, and that they would continue their efforts till they would arrive at success.¹

The Consul supported his observations with those of an independent observer. He reported that he had questioned Prince John Borghese, who had just returned from a journey in the Sudan that extended over six months, on the subject of the slave trade and in particular with reference to the manner in which the orders of the Egyptian Government with regard to the suppression of the slave trade were being executed there. The Prince stated to him that the energy and activity displayed by the officials in this manner was worthy of the highest praise, that the orders of the Government were known in the remotest villages and that a sort of panic existed in the country with regard to their severity; that he knew of many instances of their being put into execution.²

The Consul was, perhaps, over-enthusiastic for the new régime but there was some truth in his belief that the Khedive was more anxious to deal with the question of the slave trade and slavery than the ex-Khedive. Tawfiq was keen to prove to the outside world that he was more enlightened than his father. Moreover, he was entirely dependent upon the support of the British Government and so he was desirous to please it. Therefore, he

¹ P.P. Egypt No. 62 (1881) Malet to Granville, June 10, 1880.  
² P.P. Egypt No. 92 (1881) Malet to Granville, December 13, 1880.
went further than his father had done by declaring that he was in favour of the total abolition of slavery.

The Foreign Office endorsed the views of its representative in Cairo and so was not enthusiastic with the Society's demands. While the Foreign Secretary was ready to listen to the Society, he did nothing about their appeals. We have seen that the Foreign Office did not appoint Consuls in the Sudan nor did it urge the Egyptian Government to adopt the Society's plan for registration of slaves.

It seems that the Government had no reason to appease the Anti-Slavery Society in 1880-81. In April 1880 the Liberals emerged from an election which gave them a majority of 137 over the Conservatives and even allowing for the emergence of the Irish Nationalists with 65 seats, the Liberals had a comfortable and solid majority in the new House.

The Government had also another reason not to fear the Society at that time. There were signs to show that the Society's influence was considerably contracting. It still had the support of influential persons. But among the public it could no longer claim the support it used to have. The Anti-Slavery Reporter, painfully, confessed that there was a great apathy among the masses on the subject of the slave trade.¹ In November 1882, at an important meeting on the slave trade in Egypt at which Shaftesbury, Buxton and Forster were present, Cardinal Manning contrasted the scanty attendance with the multitudes that used to throng Exeter Hall.² A correspondent of the Society, John Crawford,

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, June 1881.
2. Ibid., December 1882.
complained that the British public did not care a "rap" for the subject of the slave trade.\(^1\)

This apathy of the public was reflected in the very poor response to the appeal of the Society for pecuniary aid. The Secretary, Allen, told Waller in January 1881 that the subscription list "would have been a miserable affair but for Colonel Gordon’s donation" of £100.\(^2\) The Secretary added that the readers of the Anti-Slavery Reporter no longer took the trouble to send them the five shillings subscription for each copy.

The Reporter believed that this public apathy arose mainly from ignorance on the subject of the slave trade and from a sort of "good tempered carelessness and an idea that all these things are now matters of history. England paid her money, the slaves were liberated and there is an end of the matter".\(^3\) Sir Samuel Baker judged that the British Government and public were sick of the question.\(^4\) Perhaps Sir Samuel should have added that the Society had contributed towards this sickness by its constant harassing of both the British Government and public and by its effortless arrogance. Moreover, the British reading public found more interest and excitement in the developing political situations in Egypt and the Sudan.

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2. W. MSS. Allen to Waller, January 29, 1881.
3. Anti-Slavery Reporter, June 19, 1881.
PART TWO

THE AGE OF CONFLICT

1881-1896
CHAPTER II

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO THE MAHDIST REVOLUTION,
1881-1885.

1. The Revolution through British Eyes

The years 1881-85 represented the revolutionary and militant period of the Mahdia. During this time interest in the movement was gradually increasing in Britain until it reached a climax in February, 1885. This concern generated a variety of British thoughts and opinions relating to the revolution and upheld by individuals and groups. It is the subject of this essay to examine the main views on the Mahdia which were developed in Britain up to 1885; to outline their sources; how they were formed and how current they were. It is also hoped to reveal the degree of ignorance and self-interest which thrust on certain individuals and groups certain ideas, forced them to uphold those views and to contribute to their currency.

Until the forces of the Egyptian Government under the British General, Hicks, were annihilated at Shaykān on the 5th of November, 1883 by the Ansār, the Mahdist revolution had attracted little attention in both public and official quarters. This small attention was confined to the top British military and civil authorities in Egypt; those individuals, like Sir Samuel Baker and Dr. Robert Felkin, who had travelled in the Sudan and lastly to the Anti-Slavery Society. It was through the above mentioned that the British Government and public were informed of the struggle that was going on in the Sudan.
Sir Samuel Baker kept in touch during the first two years of the revolution with events in the Sudan through his correspondence with Giegler Pasha the Deputy Governor-General of the Sudan at the time and other friends in Cairo.¹ Dr. Robert Felkin corresponded with Emin Pasha, Governor of Equatoria. The Anti-Slavery Society received constant reports from its correspondent in Cairo, Dr. Schweinfurth, who claimed to be in communication with friends in Khartoum who had provided him with information. The news communicated to the above three personalities were produced in the pages of The Times and the Anti-Slavery Reporter and it was mainly through the material in those two papers that the British reading public was informed of the rise and progress of the Mahdi.

One needs hardly to mention that the reports in these two papers were third or fourth-hand information. Its inadequacy, contradictory nature and its mixture with the personal ignorance, prejudice and interest of those who communicated it can hardly escape the eye of an observer at this distant time.

Of more value and significance to the British Government and reading public was the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart which had appeared as a Parliamentary Paper in the first half of 1883.² Lieut. Colonel Stewart was sent on an expedition of enquiry by the British Government in December 1882. He stayed

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¹ A lengthy letter dated 18th November 1882 from Giegler to Baker gave an account of the rise and success of the Mahdi and provided Baker with the courage to write as an informed person; quoted in Murray, T.D., and Silva White, A., op.cit., pp.294-305.
² Egypt Nos. 11, 19, 28, 31 (1883).
in the Sudan for about three months during which he visited the towns and the villages where troops were kept. He did not venture to travel into Kordofan where the Mahdi's writ ran. Stewart's report was an able one as far as his detection of a large number of abuses in the administration of the country. But his attempt to draw an "account of the present rebellion" was a feeble one. His knowledge of the real origins and nature of the revolution was a second hand one. He relied on "native informants". He was aware of "the conflicting evidence" that he gathered and that it "was difficult to know what the exact facts" were. In spite of these facts he ventured to pronounce some interpretations, conclusions and predictions on the Mahdist revolution. Many of his predictions were not realised and many of his judgments are disputed now. However, his report exercised a far reaching influence on the thinking of the British Government and public. None of his conclusions were challenged and they were often quoted by the Press and in Parliament.

In August 1883 two journalists arrived at Khartoum. The senior of the two was Edmond O'Donovan, the Daily News correspondent, and the other was Frank le Poer Power, who was soon to become the correspondent of The Times and British Consular Agent. The presence of the two journalists in the Sudan did not help much to provide authentic knowledge of the situation in the Sudan; as both of them set out with Hicks's army. At al-Duwaym Power developed dysentery in a severe form

1. Egypt No.19 (1883).
and set back to Khartoum; while O'Donovan left that place on the 25th September 1883 with the army and no more was heard of him. Power remained in Khartoum until the 10th September 1884.¹

The Times of November 17, 1884, wrote, and rightly, that "it was almost exclusively through Mr. Power's despatches, published in these columns, that England and Europe, first of all, learnt the details of the disaster which befell Hicks Pasha's army, the triumphs of the Mahdi, and the gradual closing of the enemy around Khartoum. Afterwards it was from him we had the graphic and stirring accounts of General Gordon's arrival, of his energetic efforts to establish order and to keep the hostile tribes around him at bay, of his victories and his misfortunes, of the valour of his Bedouin foes and the treachery and cowardice of his Turkish and Egyptian troops. Then, for a long time the curtain fell".² The Globe echoed The Times, when it claimed that it was through his voice that the "English people had learned to trust for an authentic account of affairs at Khartoum".³

There was no doubt that Power's messages to The Times provided the British Government and public with information which otherwise could not have been known.⁴ But this information did not go beyond describing the military situation around Khartoum. Of the intentions and the power of the Mahdi, Power

２. The Times, November 17, 1884.
３. Frank Power, op.cit., p.4. citing The Globe.
knew very little indeed and on this he depended on what he called "the word of mouth";¹ that was to say news whose origin could not be traced. Thus the only source which would have been able to provide the British Government and public with the authentic knowledge of the real nature and progress of the revolution together with a correct picture of the Mahdi's character, intentions and power did not do so. Nobody could have supplied such knowledge unless he was living in the Mahdi's camp and even if he was able to reside there he could hardly provide a comprehensive story of the Mahdi's intentions as, in the words of Stewart, the Mahdi "enshrouds himself and his surroundings in mystery".²

Power was the only British journalist inside Khartoum but there were other newspaper correspondents in the Eastern Sudan. The Times, the Daily News, the Standard and the Daily Telegraph had correspondents who were either residing at Suakin or were in the company of the British troops when they fought their battles against the Ansār in the Eastern Sudan in February and March, 1884. Those correspondents could only provide their papers with descriptions of the battles and the movements of the British troops; but as far as the real character and force of the Mahdist cause in the Eastern Sudan they provided very little to their readers in that direction. Again this was due to the total lack of any sort of contact between the Ansār and these correspondents.

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1. Frank Power, op. cit., p.35.
2. Egypt No.19 (1883) Stewart to Malet, January 12, 1883, enclosed in Malet to Granville, February 2, 1883.
Sir Samuel Baker had often taunted the British Establishment that they failed to understand the "danger and the degree of the insurrection" because of their ignorance of all that pertained to the Sudan and its inhabitants. Sir Samuel Baker was under a misconception that if one had travelled in the country a few years ago and had known its geography and its people this entitled him to a better understanding of the new revolutionary movement which was sweeping the country. The fact was that there was a new factor which had neither been known to those with a previous knowledge of the country nor to the newspaper correspondents in Khartoum and Suakin; this factor was the personality of the Mahdi. To come to an appropriate understanding of the Mahdist revolution the British needed to arrive at an accurate estimate of the Mahdi's character, his views and his intentions. But this was a knowledge which no Briton had completely acquired in the lifetime of the Mahdi. It was a source of complaint to Mr. Gladstone that "we (the Government) know neither his (Mahdi's) disposition nor his power ...". The Fortnightly Review echoed Mr. Gladstone's view when it complained of the "mysterious and distant seclusion" of the Mahdi and the "absence of precise information concerning his person and the extent of his authority ...". Sir Charles Wilson, who was in November 1884 in Dongola, complained not so much of the paucity of information reaching them from the Mahdi's camp

3. Fortnightly Review, No. CCIX, May 1, 1884, p.647.
as of the quality of it, which was all about sickness and as such could never be of help to them in assessing the strength and the intentions of the Mahdi.¹

Throughout the revolution it had been possible for people with a claim to knowledge of the country and its peoples to make predictions that included the extremes of optimism or pessimism. However ignorance, and particularly ignorance of the Mahdi's character, his views, intentions and moves, was clearly responsible for much of the almost universal unreality of everyone's thinking. Because no European could go into the Mahdi's association and then emerge to tell the Western World who on earth was that mysterious figure, no one could have known what was happening in the Mahdi's domains or what he was thinking or planning. In these circumstances anyone could make his choice of what he wanted to believe. Nor was it difficult for a Briton in London, Cairo, or Khartoum to choose an opinion that flattered his ignorance or self-interest.

Nowhere was this more clear than in the interpretations of the causes that led to the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution. These interpretations were mostly based on different kinds of ignorance and genuine self-interest. These attempts at interpreting the origins of the revolution had a profound influence on British future thought and, perhaps, actions.

One idea which was universally held was that the revolution was brought about mainly by the atrocious misgovernment of

¹. P.R.O. 30/57/5  C. Wilson to Kitchener, Dongola, 28 Nov. 1884.
Ottoman rule. The idea loomed largely in Stewart's report; and the general impression given by the report was that the revolt originated mainly due to the venality and oppression of officials.\footnote{Egypt No.19 (1883) No.3 Malet to Granville 20 Jan. 1883 enclosure No.1; also The Times 24 Nov. 1883.} Lord Dufferin in his report came also to the conclusion that the "disturbances were mainly to be attributed to the misgovernment and cruel exactions of the local Egyptian authorities at Khartoum, and that his (the Mahdi's) chief strength was derived from despair and misery of the native population".\footnote{Egypt No.19 (1883) No.39 Dufferin to Granville 2 April, 1883.} Persons who were considered to be the best authorities on the Sudan were firm believers in the idea and did their best to publicize it. Sir Samuel White Baker in his letters to The Times and in his writings in other journals always asserted that the "rebellion" was brought by the maladministration of the Sudan by corrupt and dishonest Governors and unjust taxation.\footnote{The Times 27 Nov. 1883; Samuel White Baker, "Egypt's Proper Frontier", The Nineteenth Century, No.LXXXIX (July 1884), pp.27-46.} Dr. Robert Felkin elaborated on the same theme in his correspondence with the Press and his talks.\footnote{The Scotsman 19 October 1882; Robert W. Felkin, "Egypt Present and to come", Journal of the Society of Arts (March 2, 1883), p.357.} Frank Power in his messages to The Times and his letters to his family emphasized that it was the system of heavy taxation and not the Mahdi that brought about the "rebellion".\footnote{Frank Power, op.cit., p.91.} And lastly nobody was more enthusiastic about the idea than Charles George Gordon. His famous interview with W.T. Stead and later his Journals gave...
the impression that the "rising" was due to nothing but the rotten character of the Ottoman rule.\(^1\) The idea was taken up by nearly every paper and journal that had discussed the revolution. In the two Houses of Parliament the members were tired of hearing it from nearly every speaker who contributed to the discussion on Sudan affairs in 1884-85. It was perhaps the only point, as far as the Sudan was concerned, on which both the Opposition and the Government concurred.\(^2\)

The hypothesis that the Mahdia was due mainly to the tyranny and misgovernment of the Ottoman rule is challenged now by modern historians.\(^3\) But it was not difficult to see how and why it had been too easily and uncritically accepted. It was the most obvious reason and as such was considered the main one for the outbreak of the revolution. Nearly every work on the Sudan during the last ten years had pointed to the evil character of the Ottoman regime. "There can be little doubt", wrote the Earl of Northbrook to the Earl of Granville, "in the minds of anyone who has read Sir Samuel Baker's book, Dr. Hill's account of Colonel Gordon's work in the Sudan and Colonel Stewart's report that the Egyptian rule over the Sudan has been a great evil to the people of the country".\(^4\) It had never occurred to

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2. For example see *Hansard,* 3rd Ser. CCLXXXIV, Cols. 570-759, 12 Feb. 1884.


contemporaries that the picture of Ottoman rule in the Sudan presented to them by European adventurers who had travelled or had taken jobs in the administration of the Sudan was an exaggerated one. It was coloured in that manner in order to suit the selfish ends of those European adventurers, most of whom dreamt of being appointed Governors in the Sudan. They had always maintained that the only way to bring "justice" and "good government" in the Sudan was to appoint European governors or in other words to appoint them as administrators there. However, judged by the administrative standards of its age or by the British administration in Ireland at the time, the Ottoman administration in the Sudan was not much worse.

The prevalence of the idea that the revolution was caused mainly by maladministration and oppressive taxation misled most Britons either to ignore or minimize the religious aspect of the revolution and such a fault led the British into underrating the revolution and its militancy.

It was commonly asserted that the attempts to suppress the slave trade and the difficulties thrown in its way was a potent cause for the outbreak of the revolution. The idea was expressed by Colonel Stewart in his report.1 Gordon went as far as to accuse the Mahdi himself of being a slave-trader and to declare that according to all accounts the Mahdi was most active in slave trading.2 Sir Samuel Baker thought that the

1. Egypt No.19 (1883) No.3 Stewart to Malet 20 Jan. 1883.
"suppression of that traffic" was an "incentive to rebellion".\(^1\) A certain F.L. James who had travelled in the Eastern and Northern Sudan as late as 1878, claimed that the Mahdi was the champion of the slave traders and that they were the force that was pushing him.\(^2\) Robert Felkin thought that the "aim of the False Prophet was to regain the Soudan for the slave-traders".\(^3\)

The idea gained ground in the Press. The revolution was often represented by a large section of the Press as either one which had been engineered and led by slaves or that the Mahdi himself was a slave trader or a tool in the hands of the slave traders. The [Daily News](#) claimed that the whole slaving party in the Sudan had joined the Mahdi; that the slaves and slave holders were with the Mahdi "to a man".\(^4\) The [Times](#) held that the Mahdi was supported mainly by the slave holders and that the Ansār were "fighting in the interests of the great slave-owners and the slave-dealing chiefs".\(^5\) [Blackwood's Magazine](#) gave as its opinion that slavery was one of the greatest motives for the outbreak and spread of the revolution as slavery was "ingrained in the nature of the Arab race"; and lastly claimed that the motives of the leaders of the revolution was to gain immunity from any interference with the profits of the slave

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3. The Times, 30 May, 1882.
5. The Times, 8 Feb. 1883; also 20 Nov. 1883.
The columns of the Anti-Slavery Reporter were full of letters from Dr. Schweinfurth asserting that the revolution was organized by the slave traders and the Doctor's statements were endorsed by this journal which maintained that the success of the Mahdi was due to the support of the slave traders rather than to the religious zeal of his followers.

One idea was that Zubair Pasha Rahama al-Mansur, who was at that time in enforced exile in Egypt and who was considered as the slave trader par excellence, was at the "bottom of the rebellion". This view was upheld by Sir Henry Gordon, General Gordon's brother, and by Lord Wolseley.

In Parliament the view that the Mahdist revolution was the creation and was sustained by the slave dealers was often expressed in particular by the Tory Opposition and the Liberal Imperialists. The two members who were most vehement in uttering the view and who tried, and did succeed, in converting the House of Commons into it were the Liberal Imperialist W.E. Forster and the Tory Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. The House needed no convincing as the idea seemed to be maintained by nearly everybody in it. At least one member, a certain

2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 12 May, 1883; also 19 March, 1884.
4. Ibid., Wolseley to Sir Henry Gordon, 24 July, 1884.
6. Ibid., CXCVIII, col. 1002, 4 Nov. 1884; also Ibid CCLXXVIII, col. 248, 13 May, 1884.
Mr. T.C. Bruce, claimed that if the Ottoman Government in the Sudan had consented to wink at the slave trade the "rebellion" would not have broken out.\(^1\)

It was not easy not to believe the thesis as there had been evidence that "among the Mahdi's first adherents", and for a long time "the backbone of his military strength, were the tough and turbulent northern Sudanese frontiersmen who dominated the slave and ivory country of the Bahr al-Ghazāl".\(^2\) Also among the lieutenants of the Mahdi were such personalities as Uthmān Dīqna and Ilyās Pasha Umm Birayr who were known to be slave traders and who were better known in Britain than the Mahdi himself. The Baqqāra, who composed the backbone of the Mahdi's army were suspected of being slave traders. Also, unlike Urabi, the Mahdi was silent about the slave trade and slavery during this revolutionary period. In 1882 Urabi included in his programme of national reform the complete abolition of slavery in Egypt.\(^3\) The absence of such an item in a Proclamation issued by the Mahdi at the beginning of 1883 prompted the Anti-Slavery Reporter to point this omission out to its readers.\(^4\)

However, it was doubtful, even if the Mahdi had included in one of his proclamations an item against the slave trade and

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slavery, that this would have induced the Anti-Slavery Society and its mouthpiece, the Anti-Slavery Reporter, to change or modify their view that the Mahdist revolution was one of slave traders and holders. For when Urabi and his National Party declared that their programme contained the suppression of the slave trade and slavery, the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, Mr. Allen, "took the cudgels against them" in The Times; it was an unheard-of thing, he said, that a Muslim reformer should dare to strike at the roots of a time-honoured institution.¹ The same charge would have been levelled against the Mahdi if he had dared to come out against the slave trade and slavery.

The fact was that the whole picture of the revolution as that of slave traders was a mistaken one. That one element which formed the Mahdi's revolutionary army had been slavers did not prove the point. It was not shown, and is still to be investigated, whether the slavers who had joined the Mahdi had done so out of a conviction that the Mahdi was going to allow them to continue their nefarious trade or because they believed in the Mahdi's divine mission. Also it has not been shown what percentage of the Mahdi's supporters were slave traders and whether they continued to practise their traffic during the revolutionary period. There was evidence to show that until

the Mahdi's death in June, 1885, everybody who had joined him was engaged in the *jihād* (holy war); and it could hardly be expected that any substantial number of the Ansār was occupied in slave-raiding or trading. These were questions which had not been asked or answered by those who publicized the theory that the Mahdist revolution was a slaver's revolt.

However, it was doubtful, even if these questions and answers were clear, that the idea would die out. The "forward party" represented by the Tories and the Liberal Imperialists were careful that the idea should gain ground because they could, and they did, make the best of it in arguing their case - that the Sudan east of the White Nile should be included in the British sphere of influence. This we hope to investigate in the next chapter.

Closely associated with the above discussed hypothesis was the idea that the Mahdist revolution was essentially destructive and that if the Mahdi was successful a deluge of "barbarism" would necessarily follow his success. The idea was started and continued to be repeated by the anti-Mahdist Press, by the Tories, the Liberal Imperialists and even by the Whigs.

The *Times* thought that the revolution meant "rapine, bloodshed and discord",¹ and that it was "sanguinary and aggressive".² The *Anti-Slavery Reporter* saw the Mahdist

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2. Ibid. 12 Feb. 1885.
revolution as a reign of "anarchy and barbarism". Lastly, the Pall Mall Gazette claimed that the revolution was "degenerating into anarchy".

In the two Houses of Parliament the view was enthusiastically upheld by Tories, Whigs and Liberal Imperialists. To Mr. Goschen, the Leader of the Liberal Imperialists, the revolution meant "anarchy and fanaticism". The Whig, Lord Hartington, portrayed the Mahdia as a "power of barbarism and anarchy". The leader of the Opposition in the Lords, Lord Salisbury, thought that in the actions and character of the Mahdi impersonated barbarian fanaticism. The most energetic and vocal Member of Parliament who lost no opportunity to denounce the revolution as "oppressive" and "barbaric" was the Tory member for Eye, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett.

What evidence did the propounders of that view have to present to the public to prove that this image of the Mahdist revolution was a correct one? They alleged that the Ansār had "massacred" the garrisons at El Obeid, Berber, Sinkāt and Khartoum and "butchered" Hicks's army; and that those horrible and "unparalleled scenes of carnage and ruin" were proofs that the revolution was "barbaric" and "anarchical".

1. Anti-Slavery Reporter, 19 March, 1884.
2. Pall Mall Gazette, 6 May, 1884.
However, this charge was not acceptable to the Radicals who argued that whenever a garrison had surrendered there was no massacre and the soldiers were incorporated by the victors; and that it was only when the British Government sent troops that such massacres took place.¹ Recent research has shown that these alleged "massacres" were exaggerated, that the Mahdi and his lieutenants tried their best, and did succeed to a certain extent, to avoid fighting and bloodshed when it was possible for them to expand the revolution, and that many of the garrisons which were thought to be "massacred" had capitulated, incorporated in the revolutionary army and subsequently played a very important part in the spread of the revolution.²

It was not helpful for the anti-Mahdists to use words like "barbaric". If "massacres" could prove that any people, or a movement, was barbaric, argued Radical contemporaries, the same charge could be laid upon the British army and the British people because their massacre of the Ansār in the Eastern Sudan, was far more "barbaric" than the Ansār's massacre of the Ottoman garrisons. The Radicals, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Henry Labouchere and Mr. Picton, in the Commons and Lord Wentworth in the Lords spoke in that sense.³

¹. Ibid, CCLXXXV, col. 763, 6 March, 1884; also Ibid, col.625, 6 March, 1884.
The Pacifist, Mr. Richard, gave one interpretation of why the Imperialists tried to give a mistaken image of the revolution by realising that "it is our (the British) invariable custom when we invade or attack or wrong any people to blacken or traduce their character as a justification of our own acts."\(^1\)

The image of the revolution as "barbaric" and "anarchical" suited the argument of Imperialists that if the Mahdist revolution was such Britain could not afford to see the Mahdi reigning in the Sudan as this would endanger the security of Egypt.

As a reaction to the image described above there crept into the open a sentiment which represented the Mahdist revolution as a nationalist movement or a popular movement which had as its aim freedom and liberty. Mr. Gladstone's "curious instinct for liberty" in the words of his Radical friend and biographer, John Morley, disclosed to him that the Sudanese were fighting for freedom and liberty.\(^2\) But Mr. Gladstone seemed to have suppressed this instinct for a while until the 12th of May, 1884, when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach provoked him when he demanded that the Mahdi must be put down. Mr. Gladstone retorted that such a war to put down or stem the Mahdi "would be a war of conquest against a people struggling to be free. ("No, no!") Yes; these are people struggling to be free, and they are struggling rightly to be free".\(^3\)

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However, this picture of the revolution as a struggle for national freedom was held only by a minority. Mr. Gladstone's statement on May 12, 1884, found echo only in the ranks of those members "below the Gangway". Such a sentiment had already been expressed by some of them. In Feb. 1884, Sir George Campbell described the Mahdi's movement as a "popular revolution". His colleagues Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Henry Labouchere, John Morley and Mr. Richard had from time to time talked of the revolution as a struggle for liberty. And so did Lords Derby and Wentworth in the Lords. Outside Parliament the Prime Minister's statement could gratify only consistent anti-imperialists like Wilfrid S. Blunt, who noted in his diary that he was "immensely pleased" with it.

But the joy of the Irish Nationalists in Parliament was greater than that of the Radicals. They approved warmly what the Prime Minister had said - that he was not willing to go to war against a people who were fighting for their freedom. A certain Irish Nationalist, Mr. William Redmond, declared that the Irish recognized in the Mahdi and his followers a race fighting to protect their country and faith; and that the people of Ireland wished them every success in their quest for freedom.

It is often said nowadays that the struggle for independence which had been going on in Ireland in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and its success in the

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end had given heart to many African Nationalists; and had indicated to them that if Irish Nationalists could fight and win, what should hold back the Africans? But it was not, and is not, realised that an African Nationalist Movement inspired Irish Nationalists. And perhaps it was this inspiration and the reaction of the Irish Nationalists to it by giving support to the Mahdist revolution that worried The Times and the Liberal Imperialists. It appeared to them as the beginning of the end of the Empire. If the Prime Minister of Britain recognized the autonomy and the right of a "savage" people in "darkest Africa" why should not this right be applied to the more "civilized" Irish.

The Imperialists had always become conditioned to thinking and acting about the revolution in terms of the interests of the Empire. And it was this attitude that drove them to mock and deride Mr. Gladstone's portrait of the Mahdist revolution as one for freedom and liberty. Front-bench spokesmen of the Tory Opposition represented by Mr. A.J. Balfour, Mr. Bourke and Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, ridiculed Mr. Gladstone's sentiment. One of them, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett declared that:

"There never was a purer fiction for a greater effort of imagination than to describe as a war of freedom the movement of the fanatical, savage, cruel, bloodthirsty and barbarous chieftain. The war-like hordes from whom the Mahdi got his

1. Ibid, CCLXXXVIII, col. 100, Mr. A.J. Balfour, 12 May, 1884; also Ibid, CCXCI, col. 111, Mr. Bourke, 23 Oct. 1884.
principal support had been slave-dealers in the Sudan for
generations and General Gordon told us distinctly that this
war of slave dealers, communists, and pillagers against
established order and government was a war of one-third against
two-thirds of whom were terrorized into submission". ¹

The Liberal Imperialist, Mr. Goschen, spoke in the same sense. ²

The Imperialists could not have failed entirely to under¬
stand the Nationalist character of the revolution because they
had from time to time spoken of the evil and tyrannical character
of the Ottoman rule. If they had recognised that fact, the
logical step would have been to acknowledge that the Sudanese
were fighting a struggle for freedom. But such an acknowledge¬
ment would have forced them to shed their imperialist designs
on the Sudan. As we shall see in the next chapter The Times
and the Liberal Imperialists campaigned against the idea of
leaving the peoples of the Sudan to rule themselves and demanded
that at least that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile
should be included in the British sphere of influence. But if
they had admitted that the Sudanese were fighting for freedom
what right had they to go there and fight them, as it was clear
to the Imperialists that their end could only be achieved by war?
It was interesting to see that even Imperialists could not think
of themselves as enemies of freedom and instead of exposing them¬
selves to such a charge they denied and ridiculed the idea that

¹. Ibid., CCLXXXVIII, col. 248, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, 13 May, 1884.
². Ibid., CCLXXXVIII, col. 270, 13 May, 1884.
the Mahdist revolution had a Nationalist character.

The Nationalist character of the revolution has not yet been fully explored. To many modern Sudanese, the Mahdi is "Abūl Istiqal" "The Father of Independence", a Nationalist leader who united the tribes of the Sudan by an Islamic ideology, drove out the alien rulers, and laid the foundation of a nationalist state. But P.M. Holt thinks this is an interpretation of the consequence of his revolt, rather than an appreciation of his motives. When Gladstone and the Radicals thought of the Mahdist revolution as a nationalist movement, they saw that in a narrower sense than modern Sudanese would think now - that was to say a revolt to drive out the Ottoman colonizers and nothing more.

No element of the revolution was more puzzling and incomprehensible to contemporaries than the religious element. It was beginning to be recognized after the defeat of Hicks's army in November 1883 and it was only fully admitted by the majority of those who were interested in the Sudan when Khartoum fell in February, 1885.

A War Office document entitled "The Insurrection of the False Prophet" written in the Intelligence Branch on the 23 November 1883 significantly gave the first cause of the rebellion "as that of the religious fanaticism of the native

tribes of the Sudan". Stewart's report written at the beginning of that year failed to see this element. The War Office document attributed this "religious fanaticism" to the fact that "for many years the creed of Mohammad has been making immense strides in Central Africa, where it seems to have a particular fascination for the native races. The number of converts has been estimated at from eight to twelve millions, and the idea of the regeneration of Islam by force of arms has gained a strong hold among them. On the appearance of the False Prophet in the summer of 1881 thousands flocked to his standard".

This was a clear recognition that at least one of the important motives which drove Muhammad Ahmad to lead a revolt was a religious one. The above described report went further than this; it considered that according to the intentions of the Mahdi as set forth in his various proclamations the movement had a religious character and purpose and that was to establish the thousand years kingdom in Mecca and to convert the whole world.

A certain Consul Zohrab was induced by the Hicks's disaster to write to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. His whole theme was that the Mahdi's movement was a religious one and that his mission was to purify and restore Islam.

The Press was also starting to admit that the revolution was a religious one. In the columns of The Times there was a

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Egypt No.2. (1884) No.15 Consul Zohrab to Granville, 22 Dec. 1883.
discussion concerning whether the Mahdi was a "False Prophet" or not, and how far the Muslims in other parts of the world were willing to accept the Mahdi as a religious leader. In contributing to this discussion Sir Samuel Baker, who before November 1883 always thought of the revolution as an insurrection against corruption and maladministration, was now forced to admit that the movement was "fanatical" and that "fanaticism" was now paramount.

Such discussion of the religious motives and religious aims of the revolution was fully entered into by some of the monthly or quarterly journals. The Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine had an article on "Fanaticism in the Sudan". The whole idea of a Mahdi and the prophecies bearing on it were often discussed and conclusions were arrived at whether the Mahdi was a true Mahdi or a false one.

Before the defeat of Hicks the British Government and public had no means of knowing the religious force of the revolution. And even after this defeat the estimate of the religious element varied between two extremes. One extreme represented by General Gordon who was convinced that it was an entire mistake to regard the Mahdi as in any sense a religious leader and thought that the movement was not religious but an outbreak of despair. This idea was also taken up by W.T. Stead,

1. For example see The Times, 27 Nov. 1883; 30 Nov. 1883 and 5 Dec. 1883.
2. Ibid, 27 Nov. 1883.
4. Pall Mall Gazette, 8 Jan. 1884.
the editor of the Pall Mall Gazette who was very doubtful about the religious enthusiasm of the Mahdi's followers. To him "the Mahdi is the incarnation of a popular objection to the stealing of their cows rather than the precursor of a spiritual reformation". ¹

The other extreme was represented by Wilfrid Blunt and Lord Derby. Blunt saw that the Mahdi "resembles in almost every particular the founder of the Wahabees (Wahhābis) in Arabia". ² Lord Derby maintained that as far as the religious force of the Mahdia "there has been nothing like it, I will not say since the days of the Prophet and his immediate successors, but certainly since the Wahabi movement in Arabia". ³ Later, Lord Derby commented that "the Mahdi is the head of a religious war - a Mohammedan crusade". ⁴

If Wilfrid Blunt and Lord Derby came to appreciate the force of the religious enthusiasm which made the revolution a success, they were not representative of the general trend of thought. Very few persons saw the movement as a revolution for the revival of Islam. ⁵ It was very difficult for the Victorians of the 1880's to conceive of the extent of the devotion and enthusiasm of the Sudanese for their religion at a time when religion was so often a matter of unenthusiastic compliance in Britain. It was also doubtful, even if they had

1. Ibid, 6 May, 1884.
2. Ibid.
5. Ibid, CCXCV, cols. 1129-5, Mr. Picton, Feb. 23, 1885.
come to appreciate the force of religious passion in the Sudan, that they would have admitted it. How could they do this and still preserve their residual contempt for non-European peoples and religions? Ignorance of the religious views of the Mahdi and the religious principles behind the revolution might have contributed to the failure to see the revolution as a movement for the revival of Islam. Interest on the part of another section of the British - the interest being either personal, financial or Imperial - forced them to try to belittle the religious element in the revolution because the public at large was reluctant to acquiesce in the plans of interested groups if the fulfilment of such plan would lead to a religious war which might have wider repercussions in the Muslim world. Britain was ruling in places like India where there lived millions of Muslims.

The recognition of the Mahdi as a religious personage and of a certain religious element in his revolution by the British Government and public was always indicated by the use of the words "fanatic" and "fanaticism". However, the words signified the attitude that the Mahdi as a religious leader and the revolution as a religious revolution were both articles of contempt and even hatred to the British.

The "fanaticism" of the Ansār was an object of hatred by a large section of the British because it meant to them the "propagation of anti-christian fanaticism".1 It was also thought that that "fanaticism" was motivated by the fierce hate

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1. The Times, 27 Nov. 1883.
of the Christians and the desire to exterminate the non-Muslims.\(^1\) The general view was that the Ansār were blood-thirsty and it was their "fanaticism" that bred and fed their desire to shed blood. It was the idea that "fanaticism" had given to the Mahdist revolution its aggressive character for the "propagation by force of arms of their religions views".\(^2\) This "fanaticism" was directed not only against Christianity but also against Western civilization. To some the struggle between Britain and the Mahdia "was a struggle on one side of Western civilization against a wave of very militant Islamism".\(^3\)

However, fear of the Ansār's "fanaticism" was as much as hatred of it. It was feared that the religious fervour of the Ansār was causing great excitement among the Muslims in other parts of the world;\(^4\) that there was danger to the British Empire from this "rebound of Islamism"; and that Britain might be forced to enter into a struggle with "Mohammedan fanaticism". A question which had always been asked was, what was the effect produced upon the Muslim world by the appearance of the Mahdi and what consequences were likely to issue from it?

Varied answers were put to this question. The answers depended not so much on real investigations of the appeal of the Mahdist cause in other Muslim countries as on the

\(^1\) "Fanaticism in the Soudan", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, No. 1249XXIII, May 1884, p.675.
\(^2\) Hansard, 3rd ser., CCXCVIII, col. 693, Lord Derby, 18 May, 1885.
\(^3\) Ibid., CCXCIV, col. 1636, Mr. Cartwright, 26 Feb. 1885.
preconceived idea of how to deal with the revolution. The *Fortnightly Review* who had always taken the line of Mr. Gladstone and the large majority of Liberals, thought that the effects of the revolution in the Sudan in other parts of the world would not prove very dangerous and that the fears were exaggerated.¹ Whereas *The Times* which had continuously and persistently called for the check of the Mahdist revolution, declared that the excitement caused by the advance and success of the Mahdist revolution might prove to be dangerous. Such fears will be dealt with in the next chapter but it is necessary to mention them here because they were produced by what was called the "fanaticism" of the Ansār.

The "fanatical" character of the revolution seemed to have gained the approval of nobody in Britain. Mr. Gladstone disliked it because he thought it generated bloodshed. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt appeared to have believed that the "fanaticism" of the Mahdi and the Ansār had converted them into being reactionaries.² Blunt's view that the revolution was national but reactionary approached the interpretation of the revolution according to Marxist-Leninst methodology. The revolution as described by S.R. Smirnov, the most competent of recent Russian historians of the Sudan, was reactionary in ideology but played a progressive role.³ Both Blunt and Smirnov appear to agree that the reactionary character of the revolution must be attributed

1. Ibid, p.650.
to its religious character and ideology.

There was no doubt that the majority of British thinking people, although they did not fully understand the religious nature and ideology of the revolution, envisaged that it was this factor that gave to the revolution a reactionary, an anti-Christian and an anti-Western character. But these elements were beginning to appear to them only after the annihilation of Hicks's army in November 1883 and were generally upheld after the fall of Khartoum in February 1885. However, the British failed to understand that the religious enthusiasm and ideology of the Ansār to which they had given the name "fanaticism" was the main force that gave to the revolution its militancy and that moved the Ansār to fight with bravery that was recognized by both friends and foes.

Few persons held the view that the revolution was a reaction to the encroachment of Christian Imperialist Europe on Muslim lands. Wilfrid Blunt was a strong advocate of this idea. He argued that the Mahdist revolution like that of Urābi began as the natural rebellion of a people against long misgovernment but took later a religious complexion when Christian Europe had intervened in support of the tyrannical ruler (Tawfīq) against the people.¹ Had the Christian army been withdrawn from Cairo, Blunt argued, "the Mahdi's rebellion would have lost its fanatical raison d'être".² A certain

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1. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, op.cit., p.79.
2. Ibid., p.16.
H. Ganem maintained that one of the causes of the "insurrection" in the Sudan was "the apprehension excited among the Mussulmen by the spectacle of wholesale annexation which they have already witnessed", by Christian Europe. France had occupied Tunis and now England entered into possession of Egypt and the Canal.  

However, this image of the revolution as a reaction against the increasing pressure of Christian Europe on the Islamic world could only be understood by persons, like Blunt, who were well-informed of Islam and Muslim Societies and who were in contact with Muslim Scholars and leaders. This view has been taken up lately in a paper by P.M. Holt, but still more research is required to establish and clarify it.

One other interesting view was put forward by General Gordon, which approached an interpretation put lately by Marxist analysts. Gordon maintained that the revolution was one of the non-property owning masses against property-owning Sudanese. "If the fighting occurs", Gordon informed Sir E. Baring when the former was on his way to Khartoum, "it is the Sudanese Conservatives of their property fighting the Sudanese Communists". Later on Gordon wrote in his Journal: "I do not believe that fanaticism exists as it used to be in the world, judging from what I have seen in this fanatic land.

3. Egypt No. 12 (1884) No. 76, Baring to Granville Feb. 15, 1884, encls. a Memorandum by Gordon (undated but received by Baring on Feb. 4, 1884).
It is far more a question of property and is more like communism under the flag of religion, which serves to excite, and to give colour, to acts which men would otherwise condemn.\(^1\) Gordon must have been influenced in this view by the Greek and Syrian merchants as well as the class of the Ulama; the former class had business in the Sudan and so they rightly saw in the revolution with its principle of the "community of goods"\(^2\) a popular revolution which was going to sweep away the capital and property they had accumulated; while the second class envisaged that the revolution was going to take away the privileges given to them by the Ottoman regime with which they were associated. However this view cannot be reconciled with Gordon's other theme that the revolution was a slave traders' and holders' revolt because the slave traders were one of the richest, if not the richest, class in the Sudan.

One of the main conclusions of S.R. Smirnov's work: Vosstaniye Makhdistov V Sudane (The Mahdist rising in the Sudan Moscow, 1950) was that the Mahdist revolution had an anti-feudal character; as the "masses of the Sudanese were not fighting the alien oppressive regime only but also the slave-owning feudal aristocracy."\(^3\)

Perhaps it is appropriate at the end of this section to refer to some of the images of the Mahdi and the Ansar as printed

by their contemporaries.

The portrait of the character of the Mahdi was not as dark as that which would be ascribed to his successor, the Khalifa Abdullahi. The Mahdi's picture ranged from the favourable to the ugly. The Quarterly Review thought him to be "a man of much natural ability" and "remarkable tact", but was very superstitious; a believer in dreams and omens; in the virtue of charms and amulets. Colonel Stewart described the Mahdi as a man of "great tact". Wilfrid Blunt's image of the Mahdi was that of an individual with high character and sincerity. Sir George Campbell maintained that the Mahdi was a highly respectable gentleman. On the other hand it was common to talk of the Mahdi as a "savage", a "barbarian", a "False Prophet", an "Imposter", a "rebel", a "slave trader", and a "fanatic". "King John and the Mahdi", Gordon considered, "both force men to change their religion, both cut off lips of smokers, both are fanatics and robbers".

The above uncomplimentary names were also attached to the Ansār. One image of the Ansār on which both their enemies and friends agreed was that of their courage and bravery. Mr. Gladstone described them as men who were "courageous by birth and courageous by fanaticism". Sir Wilfrid Lawson

considered that the Ansār in the Eastern Sudan fought the British troops with "a bravery unequalled in ancient or modern history".¹ The Blackwood's Magazine, which had never liked the Ansār and which campaigned for a "forward policy" in the Sudan, asserted that the fighting in the Eastern Sudan in February and March, 1884, "was the most desperate in which British troops have ever been engaged ...".² General Graham, the Commander of the British Expedition to the Eastern Sudan informed the Secretary of State for War that "our men like these blacks who fought so well. At Tamai the wounded continued to fight to the last".³ A certain John Macdonald, who accompanied the British troops in the Eastern Sudan, commented that "the British soldier very soon conceived, and as heartily expressed his admiration for his enemy. In the field of course he did his best to exterminate him; but in camp he often spoke of "the pity of killing such splendid fellows ...".⁴ "It is impossible", argued The Times "not to reflect that if the Arabs of the Eastern Soudan were among the valiant native races we have brought under our rule in India, their subjection would be

3. Hansard, 3rd ser., CCLXXXV, col. 292, Lord Hartington quoting a message to him from General Graham dated March 18, 1884.
followed by the employment of their fighting qualities in the cause of peace and order. Perhaps the time may come when this undisciplined valour and this uncalculating devotion will not be allowed to run to waste". This time would come only if Britain was "prepared to show Osman Digna and his tribesmen that their bravery and their contempt for death can only be wasted in idle and ruinous efforts until they loyally recognise British supremacy". The call for imposing British supremacy over the Eastern Sudan will be the subject of our next section.

2. The Great Debate: The Containment of the Revolution

From November 1882 there was some talk of containing the Mahdist revolution. The idea seemed to have been considered first by the British authorities in Cairo in November 1882. But it was only after the news reached Cairo and London on the 19th November 1883 of the annihilation of Hicks's army on the 5th of November that the question of containing the Mahdist revolution and state fully posed itself; and there ensued a debate in the Cabinet, among the British authorities in Egypt, in the Press and in Parliament. The debate was hot in the period between November, 1883 and March, 1884, and then it began to subside at times and to rise at other times. The central points in the debate were where the tide of the Mahdist

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1. The Times, March 19, 1884.
revolution to be stopped and the Mahdi's writ to be confined? Should this be at a particular limit or place? And how was this to be done? It is hoped in this essay to examine the answers given to these questions by influential persons and groups, official and public, and to investigate the motives that motivated those individuals and groups to advocate one idea or the other.

The idea of confining the Mahdist revolution within a narrow limit seemed to have been conceived first by Colonel Stewart. Colonel Stewart's report written in February 1883 expressed the view that it would be advisable to abandon large portions of the Sudan. His reason for recommending such a course of action was his firm belief that "the Egyptians are quite unfit in every way to undertake such a trust as the Government of so vast a country with a view to its welfare ... The fact of their general incompetence to rule is so generally acknowledged that it is unnecessary to discuss the question". A second reason put forward by Stewart was that it was generally acknowledged that the Sudan was a source of loss financially to the Egyptian Government. He concluded that: "I am not altogether sure if it would not in the end be better for all parties if the Mahdi or some other leader were successful and the Egyptians compelled to restrict their territory to the east bank of the White Nile".¹

¹. *Egypt No. 11* (1883) p.25, Stewart to Malet, Feb. 9, 1883.
While Stewart was travelling inside the Sudan, Lord Dufferin was on a special mission to Egypt which occupied him from November 1882 to February 1883. His correspondence with the Foreign Secretary during this period contemplated the restriction of the revolt to a narrow territory. In his despatch of the 6th February, 1883, Lord Dufferin said: "It would be wise of the Egyptian Government to abandon Darfour and perhaps part of Kordofan, and be content with maintaining her jurisdiction in the Provinces of Khartoum and Senaar". 1

On the first of April Lord Dufferin conveyed these views to Ibrahim Bey, the head of the new Sudan Bureau. "If the Egyptian Government were wise", he told Ibrahim Bey, "it would confine its present efforts to the re-establishment of its authority in Senaar, and would not seek to extend its dominion beyond that province and the bordering river banks. By this modest policy the annual drain on the Egyptian Treasury would be greatly diminished, if it did not altogether cease, and if he (Ibrahim Bey) succeeded in endowing Dongola, Khartoum, Senaar with a just, humane, and beneficent administration, there could be no doubt the ultimate recovery of so much of the abandoned territories as it might be desirable to re-annex would be easily effected at a later period". 2

Sir E. Malet, the British Consul in Cairo, was in favour of Dufferin's views. On the 5th June, 1883, he suggested to

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1. Egypt No. 6 (1883) p.70, Lord Dufferin to Granville, Feb. 6, 1883.
2. Egypt No. 19 (1883) No.39, Dufferin to Granville, April 2, 1883.
Lord Granville that General Hicks should be instructed to confine himself to maintaining the present supremacy of the Khedive in the regions between the Blue and White Niles.¹

Sir E. Malet took the above view in consequence of the growing expense of the war.

It seemed that, although Stewart, Dufferin and Malet put in writing the view that the Western Sudan might be abandoned for the Mahdist cause, they were not quite sure of the soundness of the idea nor they were ready to press the view on the British and the Egyptian Governments. Lord Dufferin who was in a position to put such pressure on both governments confessed to Sir Evelyn Baring later that although he had come to the conclusion that Darfur had better be abandoned and he was inclined to let Kordofan follow, he was so much in the dark in regard to all that region that he did not feel justified in hazarding more than a conjectural opinion; and if the Egyptian Government could prove their capacity to hold and govern Kordofan he would not press to abandon it, for he imagined even Egyptian Government, where it could be maintained under decent conditions, was a shade or two better than the anarchy which would probably be the alternative.²

The Government approved the language of Dufferin to Ibrahim Bey,³ but did not go far beyond this. But his opinion, in the

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¹ Egypt No. 22 (1883) No. 19 Malet to Granville, June 5, 1883.
² F.O. 633/7 Dufferin to Baring, October 22, 1883.
³ Egypt No. 13 (1883) No. 47 Granville to Dufferin, April 20, 1883.
words of Mr. Gladstone was one of an intelligent friend and not a responsible Government for Lord Dufferin did not speak on behalf of the British Government. The reply to Sir E. Malet's suggestion was that the Government accepted no responsibility for the affairs of the Sudan.

After the defeat of Hicks's army the British Government was blamed by the Conservative Opposition and some sections of the Press for not forcing Lord Dufferin's plan upon the Egyptian Government. It was suggested by a critic that had the British Government exerted itself to the utmost in the hope of forcing the Egyptian Government to abandon the useless provinces of Darfur and Kordofan and concentrated its efforts and energies to suppressing the revolt in the Gezira area, "there would have been an end to the revolt".

Lord Dufferin, himself, asserted that Hicks had succeeded in suppressing the revolt in the Gizera area and that had he stopped there "the river would have proved an effectual barrier against any serious annoyance from the Mahdi".

However, the critics of the Government were trying to be wise after the event. It was difficult to see how the British Government could have compelled the Egyptian Government to adopt the view of Lord Dufferin if the latter himself had considered

2. Egypt No. 22 (1883) Nos. 17, 18, 23, 58, 65 and 80.
the view he had given as conjectural and so was not convinced wholly of it. Moreover, there was at this time a tendency to underrate the revolt. Had the seriousness of the revolt been understood the idea of abandoning the Western Sudan would have prevailed and there would have been a good chance of confining the revolt within the Western Sudan; because the Mahdi's victory had greatly enhanced his position and prestige.1 The victory of the Mahdi was a fatal blow to the idea of containment. The Mahdi got hold of cannons, ammunitions and stores and the bulk of the Government's army was destroyed. Nothing now stood between the Mahdi and his advance to capture the capital, Khartoum. And local opinion at Khartoum and all the best military opinion in Cairo was to the effect that they would not be able to hold Khartoum.2 In London the same opinion appeared to be prevalent. Colonel Stewart was very clear that the troops of the Egyptian Government could not hold Khartoum.3 Lord Wolseley maintained that if Khartoum was to be held the Mahdi must be thrashed first.4

The real point at issue was whether the Egyptian Government was to hold Khartoum the valley of the Nile north of Khartoum and the Eastern Sudan, or whether to retire to Wadi Halfa. On this central point the views of the high British authorities, military and civil in Egypt exercised a great influence on the

1. For this point see P.M. Holt, The Mahdist State, pp.65-72.
2. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Northbrook, 22 Nov., 1883.
4. Ibid.
ideas and decisions of the Government at home.

Since the question was considered to be a military one the views of General Stephenson, the Commander of the British Army in Egypt, Sir E. Wood, the Commander of the newly reconstituted Egyptian army, and Valentine Baker, the Commander of the Egyptian Gendarmerie had a considerable weight in London. Sir E. Baring, the British Consul in Cairo had sounded their views and reported that "they were unanimously of opinion that the Egyptian Government will find it impossible, with the forces at its disposal, to hold the Sudan, and that it would eventually be necessary to fall back on Egypt proper after withdrawing the garrisons". 1 Baker, Stephenson and Wood all thought that the whole country south of Wadi Halfa would have to be abandoned. 2

Sir E. Wood had recorded the reasons that led him to think that the Egyptian Government ought to abandon its hold over the Sudan. He believed that Egypt, which could not produce capable and honest men in sufficient numbers to rule Egypt itself, was totally incapable of ruling the Sudan. He considered that the connection had been ruinous to both countries; and thought that England would not be justified in putting down a rebellion in the Sudan, and then leaving the country to be administered by the class now there. 3

Although Baring reported that Valentine Baker concurred in the opinion of Evelyn Wood and Stephenson, it was clear later

1. F.0. 78/3559 Baring to Granville No.553, Nov. 26, 1883.
2. F.0. 633/4 Baring to Northbrook, Nov. 26, 1883.
that either Baring did not report honestly the view of Valentine Baker or the later changed his mind. On the 17th January, 1884, Valentine Baker wrote to Evelyn Baring himself objecting to the decision that the Sudan was to be abandoned. He argued in favour of the retention of the Eastern Sudan. He could see no possible reason why the Egyptian Government should not permanently hold the Eastern Sudan as it was a paying province and its possession would probably prevent any great movement being made upon Lower Egypt. He maintained that the holding of the Eastern Sudan would keep the only line of retreat open until the Sudan garrisons were withdrawn. Valentine Baker must have been influenced in his views by his brother Sir Samuel Baker who, as we shall see later, was campaigning against the policy of abandoning the Sudan east of the White Nile. Valentine Baker had also a personal motive for opposing the abandonment of the Eastern Sudan. His ambition had been twice checked when he was dismissed from the British Army in 1875 and then in 1882 when the offer made to him in Britain to command the newly organized Egyptian army but on his arrival at Cairo this offer was withdrawn and he was given the command of the Gendarmerie. So he was anxious to make up for these two set-backs in his military career and thought that he could do so if he succeeded in stemming the tide of the revolution in the Eastern Sudan. But if it had been decided to give up the Eastern Sudan such a chance would have been lost.

However, the man with strong views which had probably influenced the opinions of the British Military and Civil Authorities in Cairo as well as those of the Cabinet at home was Sir E. Baring. The really essential point at the bottom of the whole question appeared to Baring to be that both "as regards the material force and administrative capacity, the Government of the Sudan is beyond what Egypt of the present day can perform".¹ To him there could be no question of the Egyptian Government reconquering any of the provinces south of Khartoum.² He had consulted all the best authorities and they thought that Khartoum must fall. This, in Evelyn Baring's view would add to the Mahdi's prestige and might very probably rally to him the "fanatical population a long way down the Valley of the Nile".³ In this case he was not sure that within any reasonable time the Egyptian Government would be able to govern even the restricted territory north of Khartoum with any advantage to themselves or the population over whom they rule.⁴ If the Sudan was abandoned the "wretched fallaheen" would no longer be dragged off to the Sudan - an argument to which Evelyn Baring thought the ruling class in Egypt attached no importance.⁵

Sir Evelyn Baring's motive for insisting on complete

2. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, Nov. 22, 1883.
5. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, Jan. 7, 1884.
evacuation and the abandonment of the Sudan for the Mahdi was probably his desire to be virtually responsible for the government of Egypt proper. He had anticipated that the policy of abandonment might serve this supreme object of his. He noted that this policy would give such a blow to the authority of the Khedive as to render it impossible for him to maintain his position for some years to come without the aid of British troops. In this case, he argued, the defence of the frontier wherever it might be would become a much more serious business than heretofore and also the Bedouins all round Egypt would, for some time at all events, be in a great state of excitement. This would certainly, in his view, involve a much longer occupation of Egypt by British troops than had heretofore been contemplated. It would also involve an increase in the British garrison. If the period of occupation was to be prolonged, Baring considered that the British should be virtually responsible for the government of Egypt and they would be almost forced to take more power into their hands. Indeed he thought that the more power he assumed "the better is our chance of getting away at the end". And so the real motive of Sir Evelyn Baring was to assume absolute power in Egypt because this would enable him to fulfil the role he had envisaged for himself as the maker of "modern Egypt". And the "modern Egypt" he dreamt of was a "reorganized" and "reformed" one which he

2. Ibid., also F.O. 633/7 Baring to Granville, Dec. 10, 1883.
would hand over to "a strong native government". In 1908 Baring noted that: "the work of reorganisation and reform in Egypt proper ... could not have been undertaken ... with any prospect of success so long as the Sudan hung like a dead-weight round the necks of Egyptian reformers".¹ This consideration was certainly in his mind in 1883 as he repeatedly mentioned that his efforts were directed to preventing the British Government from being drawn to assume responsibilities out of Egypt proper.² To prevent this he opposed the idea of sending British or Indian troops to the Sudan.³ But he was willing to acquiesce in permitting the Egyptian Government to call in the Sultan because such a step might lead to an increase in the English garrison.⁴ That Sir Evelyn Baring had little objection to the Sultan engaging himself on behalf of the Egyptian Government to suppress the revolt in the Sudan and then hand the country back to the latter, demonstrated that Sir Evelyn Baring was little convinced of his argument that the Egyptian Government was incapable of governing the Sudan - an argument which he made full use of to persuade the British Government to insist on the policy of abandonment.

John Cross, the Under-Secretary of State for India, was in Egypt shortly after the defeat of Hicks. He took the opportunity of sounding the opinions of the British

². F.O. 633/7 Baring to Granville, Dec. 10, 1883.
³. Ibid.
⁴. Ibid.
Establishment in Egypt. John Cross came to the conclusion that the probability of a successful attack upon the British troops in Upper Egypt by the Mahdi was remote, but it should not be placed beyond possibility.\(^1\) As to the effect produced by the Mahdi's success he thought there was no danger of resistance in the Delta, and very little in Upper Egypt, where the inhabitants were more energetic and pugnacious, as long as the English troops remained. From his talks with the high British officials in Cairo he concluded that Sir Evelyn Baring, General Stephenson and Sir Evelyn Wood agreed that the abandonment of the Sudan was the best and only practicable policy. Colonel Watson, who had been with Charles George Gordon in Equatoria in 1874 was of the latter opinion and believed that the inhabitants of the Sudan only wished to be left alone.\(^2\)

John Cross reported that an English engineer by the name of Anderson thought that there was danger of the Nile being diverted from its course to the ruin of Egypt - an idea which Cross believed to be 'chimerical'.\(^3\) Neither Cross nor Granville nor the British Cabinet as a whole could hardly be expected to give a thought to the security of the Nile waters when they were ignorant of the geography of the Sudan.

The Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, in his interview

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1. P.R.O. 30/29/146 John Cross to Granville, January 5, 1884.
3. Ibid.
with John Cross asked him whether it was possible that the abandonment of the Sudan could be unpopular among the masses. John Cross replied in the negative and thought the first prayer of the Egyptian masses was for plenty of water — a point which should have drawn the attention of both the questioner and the informant to the question of the security of the Nile waters; and their second prayer to be saved from being sent to the Sudan. "It was", Cross concluded, "among the influential and political classes that the loss of the Sudan was unpopular".\footnote{Ibid.}

The motives of the senior British officials in Egypt appeared to be mixed. They ranged from the personal — that of acquiring more power for themselves and were using the critical situation in the Sudan to frighten and force a reluctant Liberal Government to assume absolute power in Egypt proper, to a genuine anxiety for the security of Egypt and a determination not to permit the "hordes of savages" from the south to endanger such security, and lastly to avoid any military adventure in the Sudan that might produce bankruptcy in Egypt.

Some of their anxieties and motives were shared by the Ministry in London. However, the Sudan question thrust itself upon the Cabinet at a most unfavourable time. The Ministry was divided over the future of Egypt proper itself. They were also not aware of the interdependence of the Egyptian and Sudanese questions. Baring tried to make them realise this...
vital point.  

However, the first reaction of the Government to Hicks's disaster was to take up the idea of containing the revolution within certain limits. On the knowledge of Hicks's defeat the Foreign Secretary sent a telegram to Sir Evelyn Baring on the 20th November 1883 in which he instructed him: "If consulted recommend abandonment of the Soudan, within certain limits." The last three words might be taken as advocating a partial evacuation. What those limits were, the Cabinet did not know and the Ministers seemed to be waiting for ideas and plans from the military authorities in Cairo and London as the question was felt to be of a military nature.

However, in November and December 1883 Ministers wrote to each other and to Baring trying to find out not only the limit at which they should stop the advance of the Mahdist revolution but also the arguments that would convince themselves and the public of the soundness of any decision they might take.

Mr. Gladstone and his senior ministers realized little the true facts of the situation in the Sudan. This was clearly demonstrated by the working of their minds during the months of November and December 1883. The Times regretted the unpleasant fact that the direction of events in Egypt, after the defeat of Hicks's army did not rest with the British but with the Mahdi.

But this fact was not recognized in the Cabinet and each

1. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, Nov. 22, 1883.
2. Egypt No. 1 (1884) p.93, Granville to Baring, Nov. 20, 1883.
3. The Times, Nov. 24, 1883.
minister formed his own arguments according to his mental process. Mr. Gladstone was one time speaking of negotiations with the Mahdi. "Is it wholly impossible that this Mahdi", he told Lord Granville, "who has no quarrel with us (unless as Christians) might be disposed to accept us as mediators?"¹ A few days later he communicated to the same person the "rough outline" of his ideas. According to his views the British Government should not press at once the Egyptian Government for the abandonment of the Sudan to the Mahdi; the British Government should not oppose the wish of the Egyptian Government to call in the Turks; he thought that the Egyptian Government should fix the geographical limits of the intervention with the Sultan and the former should insist that the Sultan's forces must withdraw when "pacification" was accomplished.²

So while the British civil and military authorities in Egypt were pressing the Cabinet for a decision on the point at which the Mahdist advance should be met, this question appeared to the Ministers as an unimportant detail. Moreover the Ministers seemed to be ignorant of the geography of the Sudan. Gladstone confessed that he was ignorant of the condition of the country between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum, the military position of the former and its civil condition. He complained that he could not even find in any map where Wadi Halfa was.³

Granville was troubled by the fact that he could not spell the

¹ P.R.O. 30/29/127 Gladstone to Granville, Dec. 18, 1883.
² Add. MSS. 44176 Gladstone to Granville, Dec. 24, 1883.
³ P.R.O. 30/29/127 Gladstone to Granville, Dec. 12, 1883.
For Lord Granville the question of abandoning the Sudan was a financial one. In his view the Sudan was not a profitable possession and he considered the Sudan to be "a vast excrescence", and that to hold such a profitless possession was a luxury for Egypt. "It takes away somewhat the position of a man to sell his racers and hunters; but if he cannot afford to keep them, the sooner they go to the Tattersall's the better." He considered that even if the Egyptian Government wanted to keep that part of the Sudan which had not been swamped by the tide of the revolution it was impossible for her: "The refusal of the Egyptian soldiers to go there (to the Sudan) is a striking illustration of the impossibility to keep under their power this vast excrescence."

The theme of the uselessness of the Sudan to Egypt had also struck the mind of Lord Northbrook, another senior member of the Cabinet. "I can understand", wrote Lord Northbrook, "the Turkish rulers of Egypt wishing to keep the Soudan, as a source of profit to themselves; but I do not see what interest the people of Egypt can have in maintaining a dominion which brings no return, but requires the constant sacrifice of many of their lives. The Khedive ought to make himself popular by letting

2. F.O. 633/7 Granville to Baring, Nov. 30, 1883.
4. F.O. 633/7 Granville to Baring, Nov. 30, 1883.
it be known that no more troops will be required for Soudan”.\(^1\)

To his mind it was also impossible for the ruling class in Egypt to hold the Sudan: "The mere fact that the Egyptian Government is at its wits end to find any soldiers, black or white, who can fight, and admits that the natives of Egypt proper cannot, seems to me to be enough to prove that to hold even the eastern Soudan is beyond the strength of Egypt. If she cannot find troops from her own people even for defence, what madness it would be to embark upon foreign conquests".\(^2\)

Northbrook also came to the conclusion that anyone who had read Sir Samuel Baker's books, the reports of Gordon and Stewart could have little doubt in his mind that "the Egyptian rule over the Soudan has been a great evil to the people of that country". He considered that the Mahdi "can hardly be worse than the Egyptian rulers of the Soudan".\(^3\)

Northbrook's motive for advocating the abandonment of the Sudan was, perhaps, not that he "found himself 'greatly troubled' in conscience at the prospect of supporting continued Egyptian rule in the Sudan",\(^4\) but was a financial one. He knew that any adventure in the Sudan would upset the already bankrupt Egyptian Treasury and for this reason he trusted that the British Government "should not allow the Khedive to spend a

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sixpence" on any military adventure in the Sudan. "If we have to pose before Europe", he wrote to Baring, "as having lost the Soudan and produced bankruptcy in Egypt we shall be pretty well abused, but the former is a mere trifle compared to the latter, for a reduction of interest would touch the pockets of a lot of French and other holders, and we shall rouse a violent feeling against us". It was the dread of such violent feeling that persuaded Lord Northbrook to advocate the abandonment of the Sudan and to believe that "if the revolt can be confined to the Sudan, I do not know if it will eventually be any real loss to Egypt".

It was by no means the view of the whole Cabinet that if the revolt could be restricted to the Sudan this would not be any real loss to Egypt. At least one senior Minister, Lord Hartington, appeared to sympathize with the idea which was strongly advocated by some sections of the Press and some high military authorities that the Egyptian Government ought to retain that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile and leave the Western Sudan to the Mahdist cause. Lord Hartington seemed to be influenced in this view by Lord Wolseley who was a champion of the above mentioned idea.

Lord Wolseley, the Adjutant-General, sent a memorandum to Lord Hartington, on the 23rd November 1883, in which he said:

2. F.O. 633/4 Northbrook to Baring, Nov. 23, 1883.
"Egypt will never voluntarily consent to give up the provinces east of the White Nile, which she has held for over sixty years, and I don't think she should be asked to do so; but to give up the Provinces of Kordofan, Darfour, and Fashoda to the west of that river would be a very reasonable measure, making peace, if it be possible, with the Mahdi on those terms, the district included in the great bend made by the Nile from Khartoum to Dabba should be retained as part of Egyptian territory, although it is to the west of the Nile".¹

The motives which drove Lord Wolseley to urge such a plan was not difficult to see. They could be gleaned from the memorandum itself. He thought that the great victory the Mahdi had gained over Hicks would have a considerable effect upon the "present Khedive's position as Ruler of Egypt". He was worried about the "moral effect" that the victory would have upon "the minds of a most ignorant people, easily excited by such news ... and the uneasiness of the feeling that the Mahdi's success may occasion all over Egypt ...".²

With such mixed, confused and uninformed feelings among the senior members of the Cabinet and the high military authorities in Cairo and London, the Cabinet decided finally on 4 January, 1884, on the so-called policy of the abandonment of the Sudan at Aswan or Wadi Halfa. This decision meant that the British Government had decided to stand against the advance of the

1. F.R.O. 30/29/127 Hastings to Granville, Nov. 23, 1883. enclosed a memorandum by Wolseley, dated Nov. 23, 1883; also F.O. 633/9 No. 244 Memorandum by Wolseley, Nov. 23, 1883.
2. Ibid.
Mahdist revolution at one of these places. The arguments in favour of such a decision was laid on February 11, 1884, in a memorandum for the use of the Cabinet as follows:

"1. That the Soudan could not be held without the assistance of England, and that it is not a British interest to hold the Soudan.
2. That the Egyptian Government was bad, and also a foreign Government.
3. That the cost of the Soudan was one of the causes which ruined the Egyptian Treasury." ¹

The fact was that the Cabinet was reluctant to take the decision. For nearly six weeks a dialogue ensued between Cairo and London, another one between London and Constantinople and a third in the "Establishment" in London, all were going on with the one object: to arrive at a decision other than that decided on in January 4, 1884.² The British Government would have preferred not to alienate the Khedive and the ruling clique in Egypt by forcing such a decision upon them. The hard search for a formula, which would have pleased the Khedive and his party, to allow the Sultan to use his troops to keep at least the riverain Sudan for the ruling class in Egypt, failed because it clashed with British interests in Egypt proper. British official attitude and policy were motivated by British interests; and British interests at this time demanded two things: the security of Egypt proper and securing the Red Sea communications.

¹ CAB. 37/12 Memorandum printed for the use of the Cabinet, 11 Feb. 1884.
by making sure that the Red Sea ports should not fall into the hands of the Mahdists or any other rival power.¹

As far as any danger to Egypt proper from the Mahdist revolution the general view was that the possibility of the Mahdi invading Upper Egypt was remote although it could not be discounted; this was the opinion of the military authorities in Cairo and London. Lord Wolseley spoke of the "great physical difficulties that would have to be overcome before such an army as that under the Mahdi" could traverse the country between Khartoum and Aswān; he considered that "those difficulties are so enormous that it may be accepted as certain that Egypt proper is in no immediate danger of any such invasion".² Lord Northbrook was also of the same opinion and did not anticipate an advance by the Mahdi on Egypt proper.³ It was believed that even if the Mahdi advanced on Egypt proper, there would be no difficulty in the newly organized Egyptian army, with some British troops to support it, of disposing of the attack.⁴

When the British Government and its agents in Cairo talked of the danger to the security of Egypt; they had in view not only an outside danger but also an internal danger. The British Government had suppressed the Urābīst revolution which is now considered as "a recognisably modern nationalist

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¹ P.R.O. 30/29/43 Granville to the Queen, Jan. 1, 1884.
² P.R.O. 30/29/127 Hartington to Granville, Nov. 23, 1883, enclosed a memorandum by Wolseley, dated Nov. 23, 1883.
⁴ Ibid.
movement",¹ but which did not appear so to the British Government in 1882. However, the British Government was not unaware of the fact that she was supporting an alien Khedive and ruling class whose regime was resented by the majority of Egyptians; and the British Government had always in mind that the Khedive's regime was unlikely to remain immune from internal upheaval. Some members of the 'Establishment' feared that the success of the Mahdi at Shaykān might have a moral effect on the Egyptians.² But it was difficult for them to estimate the degree of such an effect. Others thought there was no danger from any moral effect that might be caused in Egypt proper by the Mahdi's success at Shaykān.³

However, this danger was in the minds of the policy makers. The withdrawal of the British troops from Cairo which was decided on a few days before the news reached of the disaster which befell Hicks's army had been cancelled and Sir Evelyn Baring's telegrams warned Whitehall that a considerable increase of British forces in Egypt might be required.

It was this awareness of the danger from the spread of the Mahdist revolution and ideas that had partly motivated the British Government to commit itself to protect the Red Sea ports of the Sudan, particularly Suakin. It is, and rightly, believed that the above decision was taken in order to protect the route

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² P.R.O. 30/29/127 Hartington to Granville, Nov. 23, 1883. enclosed a memorandum by Wolseley, dated Nov. 23, 1883.
to India; and that in the Sudan, as in Egypt, the first thought of Britain's military strategists was of securing communication eastward.\textsuperscript{1} But there was evidence to show that the desire to check the propagation of Mahdist ideas and revolution into Hijaz was also in the mind of the policy makers when they took that decision. It was thought by Northbrook that the Sultan was afraid of the Mahdi and of his influence passing over to Arabia but that the possession of African ports by Britain would give the Sultan the best available protection.\textsuperscript{2} Mr. Gladstone spoke in March 1884 of the strong political sympathy between those who were taking part in the movement headed by the Mahdi in the Sudan and a large number of tribes in Arabia, and that the decision to stop the Ansar from taking Suakin was taken with the view of preventing communications between "the tribes in arms in the Sudan and the tribes who, according to the best judgment ... are but too likely ready to take up arms in Arabia,".\textsuperscript{3} But it might be asked what interest had Britain in Arabia? The answer was that Britain was still committed to the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, in spite of the fact that she had set an example, which if followed by other powers might lead to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, by its occupation of Egypt which was part of that Empire. And so Britain wanted to contain the Mahdist revolution within the Sudan as its spread or example might lead

\textsuperscript{1} R.E. Robinson and J. Gallagher with Alice Denny, \textit{Africa and the Victorians} (London, 1961), p.133.

\textsuperscript{2} F.O. 633/4 Northbrook to Baring, Jan. 4, 1884.

\textsuperscript{3} Hansard, 3rd series, CCLXXV, col.379, March 3, 1884.
to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

The decision of the British Government to force the Egyptian Government to abandon the Sudan was, in the words of the Solicitor General, the best course open to the British Government.\(^1\) It was, as Baring said, the best of which the circumstances admitted.\(^2\) However, it gave rise to a strong wave of criticism from sections of the Press, the public and Parliament and as the year 1884 wore on an influential body of papers and Parliamentarians campaigned vigorously against the decision producing counter-arguments and motives to those put forward by the Government and its supporters.

The decision of the Government was unpopular among the group of British travellers and administrators who had had connection with the Sudan either through administering part of it, travelling in it or reporting on it. Among those, of this group, who opposed it were General Gordon, Sir Samuel White Baker, Lord Dufferin and Dr. Robert Felkin.

Lord Dufferin regretted the abandonment of such a commanding point as Khartoum. He maintained that it would either become a Negro pandemonium or the rallying point of European adventures, principally Frenchmen, who would give a deal of trouble to Britain. "Under our superintendence", Lord Dufferin continued, "Egypt will undoubtedly become more or less a civilizing Power, and if a good administration were

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2. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, Dec. 17, 1883.
established in the Soudan proper, with a railway from Suakin to Berber, a good deal of light could be let in the 'dark continent'": 1 Lord Dufferin would not agree to the abandonment of the Central, Eastern and Northern Sudan because "even the Egyptian Government where it can be maintained under decent conditions, is a shade or two better than the anarchy which would probably be the alternative". 2

The policy of abandonment had been frequently the subject of severe attacks from Sir Samuel Baker. Before the policy was decided on, Sir S. Baker was ready to give advice to the Government and to draw the attention of the public to the Sudan question and the revolution through his letters to The Times and his articles in several journals. Immediately after the news of Hicks's defeat was received, Sir Samuel Baker alleged that Hicks had acted in direct opposition to the advice given by himself when he assisted his brother Valentine Baker in arranging a plan of operations for Sinnār in Hicks's presence when the latter was in Cairo. According to this advice Hicks was to act upon the east bank of the White Nile while; the Governor-General Abd al-Qādir Pasha should attack the "rebels" in Sinnār from the Blue Nile. Sir Samuel Baker alleged that he had, at that time, recommended that Kordofan together with Darfur be abandoned until perhaps at some future time the Mahdi's followers would have quarrelled among themselves in the absence of a common enemy. Samuel Baker claimed that had his advice

1. F.O. 633/7 Dufferin to Baring, Dec. 10, 1883.
2. Ibid, Dufferin to Baring, October 22, 1883.
been followed by Hicks the revolution would have been kept within narrow limits until it would be dealt with later.¹

Sir Samuel was still, after the defeat of Hicks, of the opinion that the Sudan east of the White Nile should not be allowed to fall into the hands of the Ansār. He considered that Khartoum must be held as the key position and capital of the Sudan. He advocated the despatch of Indian troops to Dongola; and wondered why the British Government hesitated to use Indian troops. A few regiments of Gurkhas and Sikhs sent up to Dongola, together with some Sudanese soldiers would, in his opinion, have a great effect as the news would travel throughout the Sudan with exaggeration. Such an action would result in the holding of Khartoum. ²

Sir Samuel Baker had underrated the Mahdist revolution and the difficulties involved in trying to keep Khartoum for the Egyptian Government after November 1883. This misconception had led him to argue that it was an easy task to check the expansion of the Mahdist revolution in the Eastern, Central and Northern Sudan. He strongly and vehemently argued against the abandonment of these parts of the Sudan to the Mahdist cause. It was his opinion that if the Sudan was abandoned, it would become a pandemonium of the slave trade. Slave hunting would be revived in ten-fold horrors.³

1. F.O. 633/7 Samuel Baker to E. Baring, Nov. 25, 1883; also The Times, 26 and 27 Nov. 1883.

2. F.O. 633/7 Samuel Baker to E. Baring, Nov. 25, 1883; also The Times, Nov. 27, 1883.

If the Sudan was abandoned, Sir Samuel Baker maintained, that would endanger the existence of Lower Egypt. The entire Sudan, which was inhabited by many and various tribes, would relapse into complete anarchy and savagedom. A constant civil war would be waged; cultivation would be interrupted and trade would cease.

This anarchy would call upon the scene the power of Abyssinia. The latter could march to Khartoum; and a portion of the Sudan would certainly be annexed by Abyssinia. Other portions after long civil conflict would have determined themselves into little kingdoms, and the whole would be hostile forces beyond the Egyptian frontier. The state of tension would entail the necessity of a military force in Egypt that would be a crushing burden upon her revenue.

Should the Sudan be lost to Egypt, the control of the river, claimed Sir Samuel Baker, would have ceased. There would be no scope for future extension of cultivation in Egypt as the Nilometer established at Khartoum could no longer be used. The custom was that every day throughout the year the height of the Nile was telegraphed to Cairo, and during the period of threatened inundation the Government at Lower Egypt was kept informed of the approaching flood which was hurrying towards the Delta. Twenty or twenty-four days ought to elapse

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., also The Times, Nov. 27, 1883; also Samuel White Baker, "Egypt's Proper Frontier", The Nineteenth Century, No. LXXXIX (July 1884), p.41.
before the volume of Sudan water could reach Egypt, and thus
time was allowed for the strengthening of embankments to
resist an invasion which had formerly arrived without warning,
and devastated the most fertile provinces of Egypt.¹ Sir Samuel
concluded that "not only will this inestimable result of modern
science (the Nilometer at Khartoum) be lost by the abandonment
of Khartoum, but should a civilised, or even a semi-civilised
enemy be in possession of that point, the water of the Rahad,
Dinder, Blue Nile, and the Atbara rivers could be diverted from
their course, and dispersed throughout the deserts, to the
utter ruin and complete destruction of Egypt Proper".²

Sir Samuel Baker thought that both the Blue Nile and the
Atbara rivers, which he considered the cause of the annual
inundation in Lower Egypt, could be easily diverted from their
channels by a dam thrown across the bed. The water would
accordingly disperse in all directions and would eventually
become absorbed in the desert. Both the Blue Nile and the
Atbara river were peculiarly adapted for such an attempt of
hostile engineering. If powerful dams were constructed at
favourable localities across the channels of the two rivers,
Egypt would be deprived of the water upon which her existence
as a country must depend. Sir Samuel Baker had little doubt
that the seven years of famine that afflicted Egypt in Biblical
description were occasioned by some interruption of the

¹. Ibid.
Ethiopian Tributaries, as the Ethiopians were the constant enemies of the lower country, and it was quite possible that they might have diverted the Atbara from its channel. He considered that this fact should alone be sufficient to deter England from exerting her influence to compel the Khedive to abandon the Eastern and Central Sudan.¹

Sir Samuel Baker, to do him justice, had clearly appreciated the fact that Egypt depended upon the Nile waters for her very existence and that Britain, as the guardian of Egypt, would hardly have remained indifferent to any action that might threaten to tamper with Egypt's share of the Nile waters. However, Sir Samuel Baker saw the danger to Egypt consisted in the interference with the water of the Blue Nile and Atbara river which appeared to him to be the main contributors of the bulk of the water that went to Egypt. This was a misconception. This misconception had led him to the other misconception that if Khartoum, the Central and Eastern Sudan were held by the Egyptian Government there was no danger to Egypt's proper share of the Nile waters. However, the danger to Egypt lay in interference during the low season; and here the White Nile was of critical importance.² The White Nile contributes the bulk of the water during this season and its

1. Ibid., p.42.
upper course lies in a region which Baker did not think it was necessary for Egypt to hold in order to guarantee the supply of water for itself. Nor did Sir Samuel Baker think that the loss of the southern part of the Sudan to the Egyptian Government would make Egypt vulnerable to interference with her supply of water.

One argument of Sir Samuel Baker against the policy of abandonment was that if Khartoum was abandoned the French or the Germans would manage to walk in by establishing missionary or trading stations or anti-slave hunting safeguards or some other pretence that would eventually give them possession. If Khartoum should be abandoned by the orders of the British Government, "Egypt will have abdicated her right, and the country will become an easy prey to the first adventurer. If I were a Frenchman I should not neglect the opportunity. French officers might assist the King of Abyssinia in the organisation of his army for the conquest of Khartoum and the fertile provinces of Sanaar, Kadarifs and Taka ... By degrees the embryo of a French settlement would be established, and, in less time than many people would believe, we should discover a rival colony firmly rooted at Khartoum".¹

Samuel Baker was also worried that a retreat in the face of an expanding and militant Mahdist revolution would be injuring to the prestige of Britain. "The success of a

¹ Samuel White Baker, "Egypt's Proper Frontier", p.41; also G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Baker to Gordon, January 19, 1885.
southern insurrection", he thought, "will be a dangerous example for the northern provinces (Egypt proper) and for the Arab tribes from Syria to Arabia. No Government can afford to lose a province through insurrection; it is the first wrench which precedes a general dislocation".¹

It was ironical that Sir Samuel White Baker who, with General Gordon, had done more than anybody else to convert British official and public opinion to the view which saw in the Ottoman rule in the Sudan nothing but oppression, cruelty and inefficiency, should now admit that the Ottoman regime had done something worth preserving. He considered that if the whole of the Sudan was abandoned, "The work of sixty years since the conquest of the Soudan by Mehemet Ali Pasha would have been utterly destroyed, and the Soudan would relapse into the frightful barbarism described by Bruce a hundred years ago. It is ridiculous to suppose that any Soudan races are capable of self-government. If we refuse this to Ireland, how can we expect a better result from ignorant barbarians, who extinguish all progress by a chronic inter-tribal strife?"²

Samuel Baker lived to see most of his prophesies collapsing. Instead of Ethiopia invading Khartoum, the Sudanese invaded successfully Gondar, the ancient Ethiopian capital. Baker had also lived to see the "ignorant barbarians" making a determined, but an unsuccessful attempt, to invade

Egypt itself. He lived to see the Mahdist State, in spite of the struggle for power among the heterogenous elements which contributed to the success of the revolution, in control of the Northern, Central, Eastern and Western Sudan, and unsuccessfully tried to control the Southern Sudan; all this had been achieved without the "chronic inter-tribal strife" which Samuel Baker had prophesied to be the outcome if the Sudan had been abandoned. Whether Samuel Baker had believed in his arguments or not it is hard to determine; but it was certain that he used the arguments because he thought those were the kinds of argument that would appeal to those whose support he wanted.

He wanted this support for his plan which envisaged both Egypt proper together with that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile as a part of the British sphere of influence in the sense that Britain should "maintain a permanent military occupation of Egypt and the administration in that part of the Sudan' he marked as being necessary to form part of Egypt to be run by English governors.\textsuperscript{1} Sir Samuel Baker's article, "Egypt's Proper Frontier", in the Nineteenth Century was an attempt to demarcate new frontiers to Egypt which would include that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile. He suggested that Egypt should be divided into Upper and Lower: "strike a line at north latitude 13°. Let the White Nile become the western frontier, and abandon Dārfür and Kordofan. Khartoum will remain the capital of Upper Egypt. The Atbara river will be the

\textsuperscript{1} G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Samuel Baker to Gordon, Jan. 19, 1885.
Abyssinian boundary; Gallabat the frontier town ... Cassala will remain the capital of Taka province. Boghos will be restored to Abyssinia.¹ In other words Samuel Baker wanted to get rid of the word "Sudan", to annex what is now Northern, Central and Eastern Sudan to Egypt to form what he called Upper Egypt and to confine the Mahdist revolution in what is now the Western Sudan. Britain should have a preponderating influence in the newly reconstituted Egypt; in Lower Egypt by maintaining permanently its military occupation and in Upper Egypt by appointing British administrators in key administrative jobs.

Sir Samuel Baker's motives were not difficult to see. He was a forerunner of late nineteenth century "imperialists". One of the motives of Samuel Baker was personal. Samuel Baker had a personal interest in desiring to see most of the Sudan as part of the British sphere of influence. If this took place Samuel Baker was sure that his dream of becoming Governor-General of the Sudan would be fulfilled. European administrators who took service in the Sudan during the Ottoman rule were very highly paid. Samuel Baker himself had been paid at the extravagant rate of £10,000 a year exclusive of all expenses and he had left the Sudan at the end of his contract with a solid sum of £40,000. This fact was considered by some of his contemporaries as a motive for his desire to go back to the Sudan in an administrative capacity.² Lord Granville

remarked to Mr. Gladstone that Baker was civil till they refused to send him back to the Sudan when he had become very abusive. Sir Samuel Baker's letters to The Times had the object of trying to persuade the public and the Government that he was the man to nip the Mahdist revolution in the bud only if he was appointed British High Commissioner for the Sudan.

Sir Samuel Baker had also been motivated by an economic motivation to desire the riverain Sudan to be part of the British sphere of influence. He had a strong belief in the economic capabilities of the Central and Eastern Sudan and he laughed at the idea that this part of the Sudan was a worthless possession. He would not regret the abandonment of Kordofan and Dārfūr to the Mahdist cause because they were not capable of agricultural development as they were mainly desert. However, he was convinced that the Eastern and Central Sudan were capable of vast agricultural development because the soil and climate of those regions were favourable for such development. He thought that the development of those regions should be carried out by Britain in order to supply herself with two important commodities required by Britain - cotton and wheat. He considered that the whole of the territory from Qallābāt, throughout the course of the Rahad, Dinder and the Blue Nile could be converted into a vast field of cotton, sugar, wheat, flax and "other most" valuable productions. Thus the

Eastern and Central Sudan "would become the granary for the
supply of England, and cotton of the finest quality would be
produced in quantities that would render us (the British)
independent of other countries". ¹ He advocated that an
English company should make a railway from Suakin to the Nile
in order to bring the produce from the interior to the sea.²

The economic motive was often given by the class of
travellers, traders and administrators who were in the Sudan.
Dr. Robert Felkin considered that the Sudan should be retained
because he was convinced that it had great capabilities which
only required "an outlet to the sea to enable its vast resources
to be utilised by the civilised world,". And this utilization
could be accomplished if a railway was established between
Suakin and Berber or Shendi.³

Mr. A.B. Wylde who had been established in business at
Suakin for many years objected to the abandonment of the Sudan
to the Mahdist revolution because he saw that there was a great
future in store for British trade in Central Africa and the Nile
valley as soon as the Nile Valley had been connected with the
Red Sea by a railroad. Mr. Wylde thought that the Eastern and
Central Sudan would supply the British markets with grain and
concluded that "so far from despairing of the Sudan I think that
with the railway and a decent government instead of being an

¹. Samuel White Baker, "Egypt's Proper Frontiers", p.43.
². G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51305 Baker to Gordon, Jan. 19, 1885; also
³. Robert W. Felkin, "The Egyptian Sudan", The Scottish
incumbrance, it may become a great mart for English merchandise and a source of wealth to the Government which rules it". ¹

General Gordon dissented from the opinion expressed by Sir Samuel Baker, Robert Felkin and Mr. A.B. Wylde which believed that the Eastern and Central Sudan could be of economic value to Britain. In January 1884, Gordon remarked that: "the Soudan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so. Larger than Germany, France and Spain together and mostly barren ... No one who has ever lived in the Sudan can escape the reflection, 'what a useless possession is this land.' Few men also can stand its fearful monotony and deadly climate".² Gordon's judgments on economic and financial questions were not as striking as that of Sir Samuel Baker who had a mind of a business-man. Moreover, the memorandum of which the above quoted statement formed a part did not represent the real views of the General. Sir Evelyn Baring realized that Gordon was afterwards "rather sorry that he had written it".³

However, Gordon was in favour of the retention of Khartoum and the Eastern Sudan. As early as December, 1882, he insisted on the retention of Khartoum as a necessity for Egypt in connection with the Nile water supply, and as an outpost to be held politically.⁴ Gordon elaborated on this view in his interview with W.T. Stead in January 1884. In that famous

1. Pall Mall Gazette, March 14, 1885; also Anti-Slavery Reporter April 20, 1885.
3. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, Jan. 28, 1884.
4. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, op. cit., p.13. (Blunt was recording a talk with Gordon on Dec. 8, 1882).
interview Gordon deprecated the policy of abandonment. He was against handing the Eastern Sudan to the Mahdi because it was indispensable to Egypt. He calculated that it would cost the British more to retain their hold upon Egypt proper if they abandoned their hold of the Eastern Sudan to the Mahdi or the Turks; and that the Eastern Sudan could be held by the aid of such material as it had existed in the provinces. General Gordon predicted that if in a moment of panic orders were issued for the abandonment of the whole of the Eastern Sudan a blow would be struck against the security of Egypt and the peace of the East which might have fatal consequences.

One of the motives which persuaded General Gordon to advocate the retention of the Eastern Sudan was his belief that the revolt might spread to Egypt and Hijāz. If Mahdism as "a conquering Mohammadan Power" was established close to Egypt's frontiers this fact might exercise some influence upon the population which the British governed. In all the cities of Egypt, it would be felt that what the Mahdi had done they might do; and as he had driven out the "intruder" and the "infidel" they might do the same. Gordon claimed that the success of the Mahdi had already excited "dangerous fanaticism" in Arabia and Syria. And so if the whole of the Eastern Sudan was surrendered to the Mahdi, the Arab tribes on both sides of the Red Sea would rise. In this way he thought that the whole of the Eastern Question might be re-opened by the triumph of the Mahdi.  

1. Pall Mall Gazette. Jan. 9, 1884; the same views were expressed in a letter to The Times of Jan. 14, 1884.
It is claimed that when Gordon uttered these views he did not know that abandonment had been settled on by the Government; and on the other hand, it was claimed that in spite of Gordon's contradictory utterances, there was no doubt that he entertained opinions in favour of evacuation when he started on his mission. There was evidence in the correspondence between General Gordon and Sir Evelyn Baring between January 28, 1884 and Feb. 28, 1884, to show that Gordon was in agreement with the British Government's policy of evacuating the troops of the Egyptian Government in the Sudan. But there was no evidence to show that Gordon had accepted the policy of the British Government to abandon the Sudan south of Wadi Halfa and let it stew in its own juice. When Gordon accepted the policy of evacuation he must have thought that once the Sudanese got rid of the hated "Turks" they would be willing to accept British protection. That Gordon hoped to persuade the Sudanese to apply for British protection was demonstrated by the fact that at El Dâmer on 14 February, 1884, Gordon suggested to a local chief that after the evacuation the Sudanese might apply to the British Government for protection.

Gordon's thoughts in the period between leaving London on

2. F.O. 633/6 Cromer to John Morley, August 26, 1902; also Cromer, *op.cit.*, vol.I., pp.442-6.
3. F.O. 633/7 Gordon to Baring, Jan. 28, 1884; also the same to the same Jan. 30, 1884; Gordon to Baring Feb. 8, 1884.
4. F.O. 78/3668; Stewart's diary; also P.M. Holt, *The Mahdist State*, *op.cit.*, p.87.
the evening of 18th January, 1884 and Feb. 28, appeared to be directed towards handing over the power which was exercised by the Ottoman administration to Sudanese chiefs in the hope that those chiefs would accept the supremacy of Britain in the same way that the Khedive was under such British sovereignty. Gordon seemed to have thought that such a Government composed of chiefs would act as a barrier between Egypt proper and the Mahdist State which he envisaged to embrace Kordofan. In fact Gordon offered the Sultanate of Kordofan to the Mahdi in the hope that the Mahdi would give up his religious cause. However, Gordon's opinions were based on ignorance of the revolution. He did not understand the full political and religious position acquired by the Mahdi since the fall of El Obeid, and more particularly after Shaykān, when the Mahdi became the master of half the Sudan and hundreds of thousands came to believe in his religious mission. When Gordon reached Khartoum he began to realise the formidable power of the Mahdi and the revolution and it became clear to him that all the plans he conceived before his arrival at Khartoum of confining the Mahdist revolution to Kordofan were unlikely to be realised because the Mahdi was a determined foe. And so the whole thinking of Gordon was shifted from the idea of containing the Mahdi in Kordofan to that of "smashing up the Mahdi" - an idea which we are going to consider in the next Section.

Gordon seemed to have a personal reason for desiring to restrict the Mahdist cause. He hoped that after the evacuation the Sultans and chiefs whom he was going to instal might accept
him as their sovereign. Sir Samuel Baker had repeatedly appealed to the British Government to appoint Gordon as a British High Commissioner in the Sudan east of the White Nile; and the same request was embodied in a pamphlet issued at the beginning of January 1884 by a certain Charles John Burnett, a businessman in Aberdeen, who thought that Gordon might be appointed Khedive of the Sudan. If such an idea had crossed the minds of others, it could hardly be supposed that it was not entertained by the General himself who had always been anxious to go back to the Sudan in official capacity.

Sir Henry Gordon, General Gordon's brother, and the Rev. R.W. Barnes one of the General's best friends provided an interesting reason for protesting against the policy of abandoning Khartoum and the Sudan east of the White Nile to the Mahdi. They thought that the Nile was confined up in the southern Sudan; and that the "Sudd" had to be cleared every year. They considered that the Nile might take a different line altogether if the "Sudd" was not cleared yearly and such a prospect would endanger the very existence of Egypt which depended on the Nile waters. Sir Henry Gordon and the Rev. Barnes might have taken this view from General Gordon


although the General himself did not state that the "Sudd" ought to be annually cleared to ensure a proper inundation in Lower Egypt.

It is hoped that it has been shown that nearly every individual Briton who had travelled, traded or joined the administration in the Sudan before the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution, was against the policy of the British Government to abandon the whole of the Sudan, with the exception of the port of Suakin, to the Mahdi. They all had no objection to giving up Kordofan and Darfur to the Mahdist cause because the two provinces were worthless. They objected vehemently to handing over that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile to the Mahdi. Their motives were three-fold. They saw that with the establishment of the Mahdist regime they could hardly expect the advantages and privileges which they held under the Ottoman Regime of taking jobs in the administration to which were attached large salaries, or travelling comfortably using all the facilities of the state without paying for the services of such facilities or trading in the Sudan without having to pay taxes. Their second motive was economic. Rightly or wrongly they considered that if the Eastern, Northern and Central Sudan were definitely recognized to be part of the British sphere of influence, Britain could benefit from this economically, the newly reconstituted Sudan would supply Britain with raw materials like cotton and wheat and form a market for British goods especially Manchester goods. And lastly, they thought that Britain should have the same supremacy over the Northern, Eastern
and Central Sudan as that it had over Egypt proper because it was only through such supremacy that Egypt proper was secure.

The views of this class influenced considerable sections of the Press, the public and Parliament. The opinions of Sir Samuel Baker, General Gordon and Dr. Robert Pelkin were often quoted in influential papers like *The Times* and *Pall Mall Gazette* as well as in Parliament. Their views were naturally embraced by the above mentioned papers, which, although for different motives, advocated the same policy as that of Baker and Gordon, and by the "imperialists" in Parliament because every statement or opinion on the authority of Baker, Gordon or Pelkin was more likely to appeal to the public as they were then recognized by the public, who was generally ignorant and ill-informed, as the reliable authorities on the Sudan and the revolution.

No paper had made fuller utilization of Gordon's, Baker's, and Felkin's views than *The Times* which was from the outset anti-Mahdist. As early as January 1883 *The Times* objected to the abandonment of the Sudan. It appeared to it that there were "very strong considerations" against the adoption of such a course. "In the first place, the withdrawal of Egyptian authority would mean the triumph of the slave-holding class in particular, and the prospects of abolishing slavery in this extensive region would be proportionally darkened ... Of one thing there can be no doubt, and that is that the final suppression of the slave trade was more likely to be retarded than accelerated by the success of the Mahdi. Again, it is
not at all probable that a successful semi-military, semi-religious confederacy in the Sudan would be content to maintain a passive attitude towards its neighbours; and the tranquility of Lower Egypt would be continually disturbed by the aggressive acts or threats of those who even now have a full belief to vanquish any number of the Effendina's (Khedive's) soldiers". ¹

The Times was even more opposed to the policy of abandonment after the annihilation of Hicks's army. The leading article of November 30 declared that British interests required that Khartoum should be held and quoted Sir Samuel Baker's opinion that it could be held.² The view of The Times was that "unless Khartoum is defended, and authority is maintained in Senaar, the Soudan will either be filled with European adventurers or will relapse into native anarchy, constituting a standing menace to Egypt".³ In a number of leading articles in the months of December 1883 and January 1884 The Times argued vigorously against the policy of giving up Khartoum to the Mahdist cause.⁴ Even after this policy was decided upon and General Gordon went on his supposed mission of carrying out the policy of abandonment, The Times went on its vigorous campaign to persuade the Government to retreat from that policy. The leading article of January 19, 1884, requested the Government to reconsider its policy of abandonment. As Suakin and the seaboard of the Red Sea were to be retained

¹. The Times, January 9, 1883.
². Ibid. November, 30, 1883.
by the Egyptian Government, the paper thought that there were weighty reasons "why Khartoum and the portion of the valley of the Nile intervening between that place and Wadi Halfa should be included within the recognised territory of Egypt". The Times reproduced the arguments used by Sir Samuel Baker that the prosperity and even the very existence of Egypt depended upon the overflow of the Nile, and Khartoum, which was connected with the rise of the river could best be observed in time to take the measures indispensable for its efficient distribution in the Delta. Much of the agrarian distress in Egypt, the paper alleged, was known to be due to the improvidence and lack of intelligence with which the irrigation works were conducted and it would certainly be undesirable, now that the administration of public works was in English hands to throw away the advantage that would be secured by regular observation of the Nilometer established at Khartoum.¹ The Times concluded that if Khartoum was relieved the time would then come for the Government to reconsider the question whether the definite frontier for Egypt to be fixed in the Valley of the Nile.²

Two days later The Times developed its argument by claiming that the British Government would find in the long run that Egypt could not be arbitrarily limited to the Delta. The paper advanced its argument a step further by alleging that

1. The Times, January 19, 1884.
2. Ibid.
Khartoum commanded "the fertile country beyond the desert", and that Khartoum was capable of becoming the centre of an active and healthy commerce. The Times was indirectly hinting that Britain should take into its possession Khartoum together with the country to the east and north of it. If Khartoum was not held by a "just and wise government", which it could not be the old Ottoman Government or the new Sudanese theocracy - The Times judged that "it must become a den of thieves and a centre for all the infamous transactions of slave driving". The Times had no doubt that the Sudanese could not rule themselves. It maintained that Britain which exercised paramount influence in Cairo should exercise the same supremacy in Khartoum.  

The Times was not that independent organ that expressed what it really thought would be for the national interest of Britain. It was known that at this time The Times was in financial difficulties - a problem which "menaced the very existence" of the paper. In such a position the paper could not alienate the house of Rothschild on whom the paper depended for finance. And so The Times had to be the obedient organ of that house. It happened that the house of Rothschild was one of the major investors in Egypt. The aim of British bondholders and investors at the time was to force the Gladstone Government to annex or at least to declare Egypt as a British

1. The Times, January 21, 1884.
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Therefore, The Times took this view because

opinion of its masters

-

the house of Rothschild.

argument of The Times that the establishment of the Mahdist

State

in the

riverain Sudan would

trade and slavery was

such

give

impulse to the slave

convictions, only because

argument would appeal to the general public and would

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The Times "because

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And

to

cloak the

real motive of the paper

which was to be

If

mouthpiece of the bondholders and investors in Egypt.

the paper

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really cared about the slave trade in the Sudan, and

conviction that

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present, it could hardly be expected that the paper would
consent to

the abandonment of the Upper Nile,

and the Nuba

Bahr al-Ghazal

Mountains, which had been known, to The Times

itself to be the

principal hunting-grounds during the period

of the Ottoman administration.
The

Pall Mall

Gazette

was

also for the policy

of

containing the Mahdist revolution in the Western Sudan.
editor of the paper,
was

The

Mr. W.T. Stead, thought that the revolution

"degenerating into anarchy;

and tinder these circumstances",


he would like "to see General Gordon reigning as an independent ruler at Khartoum".\textsuperscript{1} There was also some doubt as to the claim of the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} to absolute independence of inspiration from other quarters as far as its views on Egypt and the Sudan were concerned. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt gave it as his idea that the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} "became avowedly the organ of that section of the Cabinet which was working for the intervention in the Sudan, if necessary by force of arms".\textsuperscript{2}

So Blunt believed that the \textit{Pall Mall Gazette} was under the influence of Lord Hartington and the War Office who were at this time for a "forward policy" in the Sudan.

Most of the monthly and quarterly journals were also avowed enemies of the policy of abandoning the whole of the Sudan to the Mahdi. The \textit{Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine} point of view was that an English officer of military authority and administrative experience ought to have been placed in charge of the Sudan; to be supported at Khartoum by a small force of Indian cavalry and infantry until he had consolidated that portion of the Sudan which was desirable that Egypt should retain; that this officer to be allowed to demarcate frontiers, establish treaties with the tribes beyond and to raise levies to enable the Indian force to be dispensed with in time.\textsuperscript{3}

The \textit{Quarterly Review} considered that the Sudan was absolutely necessary to the existence of Egypt. Därfür and

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Pall Mall Gazette}, May 6, 1884.
\textsuperscript{2} Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.165-6.
\textsuperscript{3} "Mr. Gladstone's Bad Paper", \textit{Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine}, No. DCCCXXII, (April, 1884), pp.559-60.
Kordofan might be neglected because they were not very productive; but Egypt can never give up the control of the great river to which she owed her existence; and the power that held the destinies of Egypt in her hands could never allow the Sudan to be occupied by a European power hostile to her interests, or the formation of a barbarous slave state under the influence of European adventurers in the fertile districts which were formerly ruled by the kings of Sinnar. The Quarterly Review considered that "Egypt under English tutelage should become the paramount power in the Soudan".¹

The Nineteenth Century was of the opinion that if the abandonment had been confined to Dārfūr, Kordofan and the Equatorial Provinces, no objection would have been raised. But what Egypt was bidden to do was to give up Khartoum, the centre and headquarters of her trade with Central Africa and to permit the establishment of a powerful and hostile state in the vicinity of her own defenceless frontiers and in command of the river on which she depended for her existence.²

The Fortnightly Review opened its pages for both points of view - the one which was for abandonment and the other for some sort of British control over the riverain Sudan. A certain E.A. DE Cosson argued the case for the latter theme. He considered that if the Sudan was abandoned it would either relapse again into anarchy or the reins of power would have had


to be placed in the grasp of some iron-handed tyrant like Zubair. He maintained that there was no reason why Britain should allow the Sudan to sink back to barbarism: "Common humanity, the interests of civilization, indeed our own interest, which is great, in the future commercial development of Africa, and the lives that have been and may yet be sacrificed in the Sudan, all demand something more than a march up to Khartoum with a mighty force and then a march back again should be accomplished". To this writer the most satisfactory arrangement would be for the territory east of the White Nile to be "rendered independent and governed by native chiefs under British protection". He had no doubt that the principal Arab tribes would be willing to place themselves under such protection, the road would thus be kept clear to the regions of the Upper Nile and a "door left open for the advance of civilization. It would be a noble thing indeed if this British expedition (the Gordon Relief Expedition) to save one man were to become the turning-point in the development of that great continent which is destined to be one of the great granaries of Europe ...".¹

It was this economic motive that was sneered at by another writer in the same journal. H. Ganem thought that the case for the "forward party" lay in its argument that industry was suffering, that manufactures were at a standstill and that the remedy for these evils was to open new outlets for

the British commerce. "Our interests demand it", is the cry of the present generation. May it only escape the disappointments and tribulations which fell to the lot of its forefathers in the East".1

The Anti-Slavery Reporter continually repeated its belief that giving up the whole of the Sudan to the Mahdist revolution meant handing it over to barbarism and slave trading.2 The Anti-Slavery Reporter was speaking for the Anti-Slavery Society. The Society drew the attention of the British Government "to the probability of an increased activity in the slave trade in the Soudan in consequence of the withdrawal of the authority of the Egyptian Government from that country".3 The Society complained to Lord Granville that if the British Government gave up the whole of the Sudan that meant that the British Government had given up the whole of the question of slavery in the Sudan altogether.4

The Anti-Slavery Society would have liked to see the Mahdist revolution confined to the Western Sudan. But the Society could not say so in so many words. The Chairman of the Society went as far as to draw a memorandum in which he called upon the British Government not to abandon the Eastern Sudan, but this document was outvoted by the pacifists in the

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2. Anti-Slavery Reporter, January 17, 1884; also Ibid., March 19, 1884.
3. Ibid., January 4, 1884.
4. Egypt No. 12 (1884) p. 147, Mr. Sturge to Lord Granville, March 10, 1884.
Committee.\(^1\) It appeared that the sympathies of the Society were with a "forward policy" in the Eastern Sudan; however the reason that prevented it from coming openly in favour of such a policy was the pacifist inclination of its Quaker members. In spite of this fact a certain Professor Newman criticised the Society for its support of a war and "forward policy" in the Sudan.\(^2\) The anti-imperialist, Wilfrid Blunt, complained that the Society had fallen under the spell of nineteenth century adventurers mainly Baker, Stanley, Gordon and Schweinfurth who had converted the Society to the view that only European penetration and rule in the Sudan could stop the slave trade in that country; and thus the demand for British Supremacy in the Sudan was pushed by the Society as a duty of humanity.\(^3\)

It is hoped that the above survey of the views of a large section of the Press would tend to show that the idea of containing the Mahdist revolution in the Western Sudan was popular among the Press while the policy of the Government (that of abandoning the Sudan south of Wadi Halfa) was unpopular among the same source. If the Press really represented public opinion it could hardly be doubted that public opinion was in favour of establishing some sort of British supremacy in that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile. Lord Northbrook informed Sir Evelyn Baring to discount the opinions of the

1. G. MSS. Add. MSS. 51300, Allen to Miss Gordon, June 9, 1885.
Press because he did not believe they were the opinions of the country.\(^1\) The views expressed by the Press if translated into policies would have been in direct contradiction of Mr. Gladstone's express declarations; in contravention of the principles on which the Victory of 1880 was won; and there was no doubt that, in spite of the declining fortunes of Mr. Gladstone in the years 1884-5, the majority of Liberals in the country and in Parliament were behind Mr. Gladstone's anti-imperialist policies. The interpretation for this attitude of the Press was provided by Wilfrid Blunt who noted that the Press was largely in the hands of capitalists and City financiers.\(^2\) Thus the Press embraced the views of this section of the community to the exclusion of the opinion of the majority of people in the country who were against a "forward policy" in the Sudan. And the object of the large section of the Press was to serve the interests of capitalists, bondholders and financiers whose motives were financial. It was clear from the arguments given by a considerable section of the Press that their strongest argument for advocating the imposition of British supremacy over the riverain Sudan was economic - that was to say the desire to trade with the Sudanese, to sell British goods in the Sudan as well as to make the fertile lands of the Sudan supply Britain with raw materials, particularly cotton.

\(^1\) F.O. 633/4 Northbrook to Baring, April 11, 1884.
A pamphlet issued at the beginning of January 1884 by an Aberdonian businessman, Charles John Burnett, of Kennay Co., Aberdeen, neatly put the case of those who campaigned for the inclusion of at least the riverain Sudan in the British sphere of influence. The writer thought that Britain's rights to impose its sovereignty over the Sudan was established by the "part her own brave sons have taken in opening up and discovery of the great lake regions of Central Africa and in the suppression of the slave trade there and elsewhere".¹

Mr. Burnett considered that the Sudan was fertile, rich and populous and that if Britain meant to take her "hand from the plough" she might depend on it that Germany, on the lookout for outlets for her enterprise and colonisation, would not be very willing to let her chance slip, nor yet Italy similarly disposed and jealous of France's recent acquisition of Tunis, nor, if unchecked by combined Germany, Italy and France would turn their ships and armies to establishing a central African dominion, with its outlets on the Red Sea. If such power or powers succeeded in annexing for itself or themselves the Sudan and the Central African regions, they would take out of the British hands the management of, and all future interference with the destinies of Egypt itself and its highway to India. For these reasons the writer thought that the imposition of British supremacy in the Sudan in this case was dictated in the first instance in regard to the interests of Britain,

Europe and civilization. It was the duty of Britain to act up to the mark of her manifest heaven-offered destiny and high calling to prevent the Sudan from re-riveting to chaos.¹

The plan of the writer by which Britain would assume paramountcy in the Sudan was that the British Government should ask the Porte to appoint General Gordon as Khedive in the Sudan,² and he was to be supplied by Britain and Turkey with sufficient "resources in men, arms and money to enable him to undertake the necessary preliminary task of pricking the pseudo-theological fanatical wind-bag, by killing or capturing the would-be prophet ...". When the "Khedive" Gordon had got rid of the "rebel" Muḥammad Aḥmad he would bring the Sudan under his paternal rule helped with other British officers and administrators.³

In the two Houses of Parliament three points of view prevailed. There was the idea of containing the Mahdist revolution south of Wadi Halfa in the north and west of the Red Sea Coast in the east. This was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone and the majority of Liberal members of Parliament who followed him. The second point of view was upheld by the Tory Opposition and Liberal Imperialists led by the Liberal ex-Minister, Goschen and W.E. Forster. It argued in favour of confining the Mahdist revolution to the Western Sudan and checking its tide in that part of the Sudan east of

1. Ibid., p.14.
2. Ibid., p.8.
3. Ibid., p.11.
the White Nile. A third group, the Radicals, led by John Morley, Henry Labouchere and Sir Wilfrid Lawson argued strongly against any action against the Mahdist revolution. Some of this class was willing to go as far as welcoming the spread of the Mahdist revolution into Egypt proper itself and Arabia.

Perhaps it is appropriate to start by surveying and discussing the ideas of the Conservative Opposition and Liberal Imperialists as the arguments of Mr. Gladstone and the Radicals were directed toward refuting the "Imperialist's" arguments. The idea of the Conservative Opposition and Liberal Imperialists was the setting up of a British paramountcy in the riverain Sudan centred on Khartoum in the same way as such British sovereignty had been set up in Zanzibar and lately Egypt proper itself. They wished that part of the Sudan to be part of what is now called by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson the "informal Empire" of Britain. This they envisaged could be done by "informal means" rather than direct rule. General Gordon or Sir Samuel Baker or any other British administrator would be appointed Governor-General of the riverain Sudan. The newly appointed Governor-General would be assisted by other British administrators who would fill the key administrative jobs.

The British administrators would have under their control the

"native" chiefs who would be puppets in the same way as Khedive Tawfiq had been under Sir E. Baring and the Sultan of Zanzibar under Consul Kirk. The idea of the Tories was expressed neatly by a journal which had imperialist tendencies; when that journal forecasted that if a Conservative Ministry were in power, it would most likely place an English officer of military authority and administrative experience, such as was readily to be found in the Indian service, in charge of the Sudan, support him at Khartoum by a small force of Indian cavalry and infantry until he had consolidated that portion of the Sudan which was desirable that Egypt should still retain, let him demarcate frontiers, establish treaties with the tribes beyond and raise local levies which would secure the future peace of the country and enable the Indian force to be dispersed in time. The anti-imperialist Wilfrid Blunt thought that what the imperialists were aiming at "was not perhaps a full acquisition by England of the Soudan, but certainly a reign ruled by Englishmen in English interests, what Stead called 'Sarawaking the Soudan' after the model of Rajah Brooke's government in Borneo."

The arguments used by the Conservatives and the Liberal Imperialists to convince the British Government and public to their idea were varied. Their arguments coincided closely with the image which they formed of the Mahdist revolution and

2. 'Mr. Gladstone's Bad Paper' Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine No. DCCCXXII (April 1884), pp. 559-60.
rule and which we investigated in the first section of this chapter.

One of the strongest arguments of the Tory Opposition was that the retreat in face of the growing tide of the Mahdist revolution would be a great and serious danger to Egypt proper and that this danger would be increased if Khartoum and that part of the Sudan east of the White Nile was abandoned to the Mahdi. Lord Salisbury described Khartoum as the key to Egypt.1 The Leader of the Opposition in the Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote, claimed that the defence of Lower Egypt depended to a very great extent upon the proper management of the Sudan, and the defence of Lower Egypt, if the Sudan were left to become a prey to "these wild tribes and their fanatical leader", would be both very difficult and extremely expensive.2

It was argued that the abandonment of the Sudan east of the White Nile might affect the security of Egypt in three ways. It was alleged that if the whole of the Sudan was left to the Mahdi chaos would certainly prevail and this steady downwards movement towards chaos might spread into Egypt proper.3 Secondly, it was said that Egypt was a very long and narrow country flanked on both sides by deserts which regular troops could not cross, but which could be crossed by

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2. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 695, Feb. 12, 1884.
3. Hansard, 3rd ser., CCLXXXV, cols. 1654-5, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, March 15, 1884.
undefended frontier which they should guard. The effect of the abandonment of the Sudan would be to bring the "savage tribes" of the Sudan into "immediate direct contact with the Egyptian Frontier" and thus largely increase the difficulties of protecting Egypt.¹ Thirdly, it was argued that it was in the ability of a Power established at Khartoum to absolutely ruin Egypt. A leading member of the Opposition, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, claimed that he had it on the authority of Sir Samuel Baker, whom he regarded to know the Sudan better than anyone else, except General Gordon, that any Government could dam the Nile at Khartoum, divert its channel, and thereby make Egypt absolutely sterile. This would ruin Egypt because Egypt was the Nile.²

Conservative Opposition Front Bench Spokesmen in both Houses made it evident that they considered it incompatible with the principle of preserving the security of Egypt to abandon that part of the Sudan to the north and east of Khartoum. Lord Salisbury maintained that this country was of vital importance to the defence of Egypt and that if Britain was going to stay in Egypt to support the Khedive and to make itself permanently responsible for the safety of Egypt, that part of the Sudan must not be given up to the Mahdist revolution.³ Mr. Bourke spoke in the same sense in the House of Commons; and added that if the British Government desired

¹. Ibid., col. 1388, Mr. T.C. Bruce, Feb. 19, 1884.
². Ibid., CCXCI, cols. 1005-6, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Nov. 5, 1884.
³. Ibid., CCXCI, col. 181, Lord Salisbury, October 23, 1884.
permanent prosperity in Egypt, the peaceful condition of the Sudan was absolutely necessary.¹

The Tory Opposition was the champion of the idea that if the Sudan was abandoned to the Mahdi that amounted to abandoning it to anarchy and barbarism. It was stated by many members of the Opposition at different occasions that it was a wishful thinking to consider the Sudanese as capable of ruling themselves. The consequences of giving up the Sudan to the Mahdi, they alleged, would be "rampant anarchy, usury, outrage, plunder ... a reign of desolation as desperate and as devastating as ever afflicted a long-suffering people".² And such a situation would be disastrous to Egypt proper.

One of the strongest arguments of the Tories and the Liberal Imperialists was that to abandon the Sudan to the Mahdi meant abandoning it to slave trading and slavery. Lord Salisbury declared that "it must be confessed that if you once withdraw your hold from the Upper Nile, you take away from yourself the last chance of crushing the Slave Trade which supplies Egypt, Arabia and Asia Minor ... If you give up the control of the Nile, you give up the attempt to suppress the Slave Trade".³ The Leader of the Opposition in the Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote, spoke in the same tone.⁴ The Liberal

1. Ibid., col. 111, Mr. Bourke, October 23, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXVIII, cols. 252-4, Mr. Joseph Cowen, May 13, 1884; also Ibid., CCLXXXV, cols. 1654-61, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, March 15, 1884.
3. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 275, Lord Salisbury, Feb. 12, 1884.
4. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 699, Sir Stafford Northcote, Feb. 12, 1884.
Imperialist W.E. Forster had maintained the same view as the two leaders of the Opposition and implored the Government to "relieve the House of Commons" from its anxiety about the Slave Trade in the Soudan”. ¹  Mr. Goschen, the other prominent Liberal Imperialist, was also of the opinion that the abandonment of the Sudan would result in a revival of the slave trade and slavery in the Sudan. ²

Some of the Opposition members argued that to abandon the whole of the Sudan to the Mahdi was to "give an impulse to Mohammedanism"; ³ "and to run the risk of the fanatical movement of the Mahdi spreading throughout Arabia, Syria and Northern Africa. This last danger would, probably be the beginning of the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire - an event which every philanthropist and statesman must regard with grave apprehensions". ⁴ Another member of the Opposition thought that the spread of the revolution would open up the great Eastern Question - a question which for his country he conceived to be whether they were or not to maintain their hold on their great dependency of India. If once the flag of the Prophet, continued the same member, should be unfurled, Britain would see a religious war such as this generation had never heard of.⁵

Perhaps the strongest argument put against the policy of the abandonment of the whole of the Sudan to the Mahdi was

1. Ibid, CCLXXXV, col. 1693, March 15, 1884.
2. Ibid, CCXXXIV, col. 1257, Feb. 24, 1885.
5. Ibid, CCLXXV, cols. 758-9, Mr. Finch-Halton, March 6, 1884.
the economic one. Sir Stafford Northcote considered that if the whole of the Sudan was given up the loss to Britain might be serious, because this would result in "the closing of the great trade route from the Equatorial lakes". It was argued that "Khartoum was the great commercial entrepot of Central Africa; it stood at the junction of the two Niles" and as such was in a position of rare value with regard to commerce. Khartoum, alleged a member of the Opposition, was the point in which all the Equatorial trade "must ever centre". Thus the argument ran that there was a future for British trade and commerce by the channel of the Nile from Khartoum to the Equatorial regions; and that by giving up Khartoum and the riverain Sudan to the Mahdi such a prospect would be lost.

One part of the economic argument of the Opposition was that the riverain Sudan was fertile and its soil was rich; and because of its richness, it would be inexpensive to retain. The member for Lancashire thought that the "true policy" of Britain was "to intervene" because he believed that his constituency had a material interest in Egypt and other parts of Africa: "They draw a large proportion of the raw material that is used in their industry from Egypt, and they look forward to Egypt and other parts of Africa as a future market for their goods."

1. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 699, Feb. 12, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXV, col. 1659, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, March 15, 1884.
3. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1086, Mr. Guy Dawnay, Feb. 15, 1884.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1366, Mr. Houldsworth, Feb. 19, 1884.
The sum argument on the part of the Opposition was put forward by Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett on November 6, 1884, when he criticized the policy of the Government in the following terms: "... it means that Khartoum is to be abandoned to a fanatical and aggressive barbarian. It means that a great commercial emporium and military position of the first importance for Egypt and the countries beyond, is to be given up to the Mahdi's hordes and to ruin. It means that the great trading interests of Egypt in the Soudan, the prospect of opening up and civilizing the vast regions between the Red Sea and the Nyanza Lakes is to be abandoned. It means that for the first time in our history, under the blighting influence of a craven English Ministry, civilization and order are to recede before anarchy and barbarism; that millions of suffering people are to be given over to black superstition, and to the cruelest form of slavery. Give up Khartoum to the False Prophet and to anarchy, and you will be forced to send expeditions up the Nile every few years in order to defend Egypt."

The arguments of Mr. Gladstone and the majority of Liberal members of Parliament were directed towards combating and challenging the above expressed views and policy of the Tory Opposition and Liberal Imperialists. To Mr. Gladstone and his followers in Parliament it was out of the question to impose British supremacy on the Sudanese. "Four years ago the

1. Ibid., CCXCIII, col. 1005, November 5, 1884.
country decided in an unmistakable manner in favour of the views of the present Prime Minister against those of the late Lord Beaconsfield. It declared that consistently with the maintenance of national honour and British interests, this country was to pursue a peaceful policy.¹ That was the view of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Gladstone was certainly unfaithful to the principles on which he won his victory in 1880 when his Government occupied Egypt in 1882. Mr. Gladstone might have repented his intervention in Egypt and was anxious not to commit a second violation of his principles. However, to some of his consistent supporters the case of the Sudan was different from that of Egypt. They believed that Britain had not the slightest interest in the Sudan. Lord Granville thought that the Sudan had no interest for England or India; and that it was their duty as a Government to be most economical of the blood of their countrymen and soldiers unless great interests were at stake. He, therefore, thought that it would be unwise to send a British army to reconquer the Sudan or any portion of it.² The Lord Chancellor declared that European interests were not involved in the Government of the Sudan in the way in which they were involved in the government of Egypt.³ Even Lord Hartington, the Secretary for War, whose views on the question of the Sudan were not completely in harmony with those of Mr. Gladstone,

1. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1052, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Feb. 15, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, cols. 594-5, Feb. 12, 1884.
3. Ibid., col. 614, Feb. 12, 1884.
declared that Britain had no British interests in the Sudan; that there were no European interests in the Sudan adequate enough to justify the employment of British Forces or the expenditure of British resources to restore the Khedive's authority over the Sudan.\(^1\)

If Mr. Gladstone and his followers believed that there were no adequate British or European interests to justify their intervention by force of arms in the Sudan, they had also other reasons which would dissuade them from considering the other alternative - that of constructing a military system and giving material help for the Khedive's Government to keep or regain any part of the Sudan it desired. It was believed by the Gladstonian Group that they were not justified either in the "interests of the Sudanese or of the Egyptians",\(^2\) to assist the Egyptian Government in any adventure she might like to take in the Sudan.

It was a common belief among them that the occupation of the Sudan by the Egyptian Government had not conferred any benefit either upon the people of the Sudan or the people of Egypt. The Sudan had been an everlasting strain upon the resources of Egypt. It had never been any benefit as a source of revenue to Egypt, but, on the contrary, a perpetual burden to the Egyptian Exchequer. The only persons who profited by the Egyptian Government's occupation of the Sudan

1. Ibid., col. 1434, Feb. 19, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1210, Sir John Lubbock, Feb. 18, 1884.
were the army of officials who were quartered in that country. The occupation of the Sudan involved the maintenance of a standing army of more than 30,000 men. The mortality amongst the troops were very great; and the conscription necessary to keep up the numbers was most exhausting. Perhaps the most cruel of the burdens which the unfortunate peasantry of Egypt had to bear was the conscription, because they lived in constant dread of being dragged in chains to serve in the Sudan. They regarded the condemnation to serve in the Sudan as equivalent to a sentence of death. Egypt itself suffered a heavy loss by the fact of labourers being drawn in such large numbers from the cultivation of the land. For these reasons it was believed that if the Egyptian people were consulted, there was no doubt they would concur in the decision of the British Government. Mr. Gladstone himself concluded that if the Egyptian Government continued the struggle in the Sudan "it would suck the life blood from the heart of Egypt".1

The majority of Liberal members argued that the Ottoman administration in the Sudan had conferred no benefit upon the Sudanese. Lord Hartington summed this sentiment in the following words:

"... if it could be shown that the Egyptian occupation had ever really done anything to repress Slavery or the Slave

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1. For the points in the above paragraph see: Hansard, 3rd ser., CCLXXXIV, cols. 7150-18 Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 17, 1884; Ibid., cols. 1434-5, Lord Hartington, Feb. 19, 1884; Ibid., cols. 638-40 Lord Derby, Feb. 12, 1884; Ibid., cols. 1042-3 Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Feb. 15, 1884; Ibid., CCLXXXV, col. 751, Mr. Villiers Stuart, March 6, 1884.
Trade, or the horrors of these slave hunts by which the slave trade is supported, then the advice which we have given, and which we have insisted on, may be wrong. General Gordon has told us, Colonel Stewart has told us, almost every authority, I think, who has written on the Soudan, has told us that the Egyptian domination in the Soudan Provinces has never brought anything but misery and disorder. Thus one of the strongest arguments of the Liberals in justifying their enforcing the policy of abandonment on the Egyptian Government was the financial one. If they could get rid of the financial burden caused by the Egyptian Government's occupation of the Sudan they would "have some chances of establishing a stable Government in Egypt Proper".

The Liberals challenged the view put forward by the Tory Opposition claiming that the Sudan east of the White Nile could be of economic advantages to Britain and Egypt. Mr. Gladstone quoted General Gordon to the effect that the Sudan was a vast and desert country; with a deadly climate inhabited thinly by sparse and warlike tribes. Lord Derby thought that there was no prospect for British trade in the Sudan because the distance from all markets and from all "civilized" parts of the earth was so great that the trade to it could never be of any value. A Liberal Member denied

1. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1438, Lord Hartington, Feb. 19, 1884.
2. Ibid., col. 1091, Mr. J.K. Cross, Feb. 15, 1884.
3. Ibid., col. 715, Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 12, 1884.
4. Ibid., col. 639, Lord Derby, Feb. 12, 1884.
that there was "much trade to be done in the Deserts of the Soudan". The Under-Secretary for India did not doubt that parts of the Sudan "were extremely fertile" but thought they were far away to get to them.

However the Liberals were rather apologetic in trying to defend themselves against the Opposition charge that by abandoning the Sudan to the Mahdi they had abandoned the anti-slavery cause. Lord Granville considered that the anti-slavery cause was a question of humanity and to him "in the case of humanity, like private charity, you must a little consider whether the humane object you have in view does not clash with some larger humane views which you may have in the same direction". The Liberals, moreover, claimed that they were convinced that the British Government could do far more to kill slavery and the slave trade by acting in the Red Sea and in Egypt proper than it was possible to accomplish in the interior of the Sudan. The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs claimed that measures of a most extensive character were being taken on the whole of the East Coast of Africa in order to stop the slave trade and the Government believed that these measures, taken in connection with the suppression of the slave markets in Egypt, would do more to put down that traffic than all the expeditions to the Sudan.

1. Ibid., CCXCIV, col. 1124, Mr. Picton, Feb. 23, 1885.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 1093, Mr. J.K. Cross, Feb. 15, 1884.
3. Ibid., CCLXXXIV, col. 595, Lord Granville, Feb. 12, 1884.
4. Ibid., cols. 1074-5, Mr. Arthur Arnold, Feb. 15, 1884.
5. Ibid., cols. 1050-1, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Feb. 15, 1884.
Mr. Gladstone and Sir Charles Dilke claimed that the British Government had now a stronger hold on the Red Sea coast than ever because they recognized their responsibility to prevent the slave trade from seeking a vent across the Red Sea to Arabia; and that they would not abandon the port of Suakin without making provisions for the prevention of the slave trade.¹

Some Liberal members were of the opinion that the Ottoman administration in the Sudan was mainly responsible for the slave trade which had been "created and supported" by that rule, and so they considered that "the first and greatest step" they could take towards the suppression of the slave trade was "the withdrawal of the Egyptian influence from the Soudan". To one of the Liberal members the slave trade had been fostered by the Khedive and the Pashas and that it could not be conducted by the tribes of the Sudan unaided. Mr. Slagg concluded that the handing over of the Government of the Sudan to the Sudanese would strike the most serious blow to the slave trade.²

As to the danger to the security of Egypt the Liberals were of the conviction that there was no such danger. There was no danger to the Egyptian frontier. Lord Derby was of the view that no state existed which was better protected by nature than Egypt proper; and he could hardly conceive anything

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². Ibid, cols. 1243-4, Mr. Slagg, Feb. 18, 1884.
more improbable than a serious attack from "the South by tribes which have never yet combined for any length of time, across a frontier defended by the Nubian Desert, and when having gained their independence they have nothing left to fight for".¹

The Liberals did not appreciate the danger to Egypt proper from a militant Mahdist State and had scarcely given a thought for the security of the Nile waters. On this point the conservatives were more advanced in their thinking. One could hardly expect the Liberals to give thoughts to long term projects like the need to secure the Nile waters for Egypt when they were anxious at that time to evacuate Egypt as soon as was possible for them. However, Mr. Gladstone was not unaware of the danger not only to Egypt but to the Ottoman Empire from the spread of the Mahdist revolution, and although he was most reluctant to take any action against the Mahdist regime in the Sudan he was anxious to prevent the expansion of the Mahdist revolution. He gave it as a reason for the British Government's decision to hold Suakin, its desire to prevent the extension of the Mahdist revolution to Arabia.²

Mr. Gladstone and some of his Liberal supporters would have wished not to interfere with the Mahdist revolution as long as it contained itself in the Sudan. In February, 1884, Mr. Gladstone claimed that his motive for desiring the

¹. Ibid., col. 640, Lord Derby, Feb. 12. 1884.
². Ibid., CCLXXXV, cols. 378-9, Mr. Gladstone, March 3, 1884.
abandonment of the Sudan by the Egyptian Government was his leaning towards self-government. He claimed that during all his political life he had never opened his lips in favour of a domination such as that exercised by certain countries upon other countries and he, therefore, declined to become a party to maintain the possession of the Sudan by the Khedive's Government.\(^1\) When Mr. Gladstone uttered such a claim he had forgotten that he was actually at that time supporting and maintaining in Egypt a foreign ruling class against the wishes of the indigenous Egyptian population. Mr. Gladstone was certainly inconsistent in his hatred and his desire to fight foreign domination of one country by another. He would adopt a "bag and baggage" policy only if that policy did not prejudice any British interests. He was willing to adopt it in the Balkans and the Sudan because no British interests were involved. But he would not apply it in Egypt and Arabia because its application would lead to results that might injure some British interests.

However, if Mr. Gladstone and some of his Liberal followers were inconsistent in their hatred of the domination of one country by another and in their anti-imperialism - that is to say opposing the acquisition of one country by another - the Radicals were far more consistent in their anti-imperialism. The Radicals in Parliament led by John Morley, Henry Labouchere,\(^1\) Ibid, CCLXXXIV, cols. 715-16, Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 12, 1884.
Sir George Campbell and Sir Wilfrid Lawson loudly and consistently urged that the Sudanese should be left alone to work out their own political salvation. The Radicals objected to Britain holding any part of the Sudan. They protested against the Government's intention of holding Suakin permanently; Mr. Labouchere could not make out why the British should remain there. He believed that Suakin was a port of the Sudan, and if it were desirable to bring the Mahdi into contact with "civilization", the British ought rather to give him a port than deprive him of one.¹ All the arguments given by the Government as justifications for the holding of the Red Sea ports were not convincing to the Radicals.²

It was the conviction of the Radicals that Britain had no quarrel with the Mahdi and that the Sudanese had never done the British any harm. If Britain was to be true to the "great principles of peace and of justice" it must keep out of the Sudan and such a course if followed would secure for Britain the respect, esteem and friendship of other nations.³ The strong desire of the Radicals was that the British Government should wash its hands from the Sudan and should not contemplate even the partial possession of any part of the interior or even the Red Sea coast. The Radicals suspected that General Gordon wished the British Government to maintain

1. Ibid., col. 1892, Mr. Labouchere, Feb. 25, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCLXXXV, cols. 1662-5, Mr. Labouchere, March 15, 1884.
himself in the Sudan and enable him to establish some sort of government which would be supported by the British Government.

The sympathy of the Radicals to the Mahdist cause was derived from their conviction that the Mahdist revolution was a national movement and that the Sudanese were justified in launching their popular movement because they had been "the worst treated people on the face of the earth". The Sudanese were doing nothing more than defending their homes and their country. The British Government had committed an error when it crushed out "the Nationalist movement which had Arabi at its head and which represented the real feeling" of the Egyptians; the British Government should not commit this error again by intervening in the Sudan to destroy the Nationalist movement there. Moreover, "nobody would suffer from the abandonment of the Soudan except a few rascally Pashas, who were the greatest scoundrels to be found anywhere in the world"; and who if compared with the Arabs would be found that "the worst Arab of the desert was probably superior to the very best Pasha who ever lived in Cairo or Constantinople".

Some of the Radicals were not only anxious that the Mahdist revolution should not be molested in its expansion

5. Ibid, col. 909, Mr. Labouchere, Feb. 14, 1884.
within the Sudan but were even pleased to welcome the prospect of the revolution spreading to Arabia. To Henry Labouchere the revolution was a national movement against "Turkish rule" and it was his firm conviction that the less there was "Turkish rule" the better it would be for the whole world. And so he would be pleased if the revolution spread to embrace Arabia and relieve it from "Turkish rule".¹

The Times described the Radicals as "self opinionated doctrinaires"; and Radicalism as "a fanatical and pedantic creed, which if logically applied would dissolve the British Empire".² Perhaps The Times was right in its description of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Labouchere and their Radical colleagues. The Radicals were also called the peace-at-any-price party. They were certainly men whose consciences were very strong upon matters of peace and their consciences were against any British military or expansionist adventure in the Sudan. However, they gave economic reasons for opposing the imperialist tendencies shown by the Tory Opposition and Liberal Imperialists. Henry Labouchere did not see why the British who had so many poor people among themselves should spend money either to sustain the Egyptian Government or to maintain Gordon in the Sudan.³ Sir Wilfrid Lawson declared that the monied classes and financiers were at the bottom of all the designs to intervene in the Nile

¹ Ibid, CCLXXXV, col. 716, Mr. Labouchere, March 6, 1884.
² The Times, Feb. 11, 1884.
³ Hansard, 3rd Ser., CCXCVIII, col. 110, Mr. Labouchere, October 23, 1884.
Valley and was convinced that any "forward policy" in the Sudan was not in the national interest because it could only serve the interests of those classes. Such expansionist policy would also mean waste of money which could be used to wipe out poverty in Britain itself. For this reason the Radicals thought that until the British had altered and amended everything which required alteration and amendment at home, they ought not to undertake unnecessary responsibilities abroad.

Thus it is evident that both those who wanted to contain the Mahdia in the Western Sudan and constitute a regime under British influence in the riverain Sudan as well as those who wished the abandonment of the Sudan to the Mahdist cause often gave an economic construction to their motives. From all points of view the Sudan was looked upon through financial spectacles. Most of the Tories thought that the Sudan east of the White Nile could be a financial gain to Britain because it was capable of being the granary of the world, and Khartoum would be the richest commercial city in Africa; and that if this part was in the hands of Britain, she would be independent of America for corn supplies and cotton. There was no doubt that the Tories believed in this argument and so economic motivation was present with them. On the other hand the Liberals and the Radicals provided an economic interpretation for opposing any adventure which would result in making a large

1. Ibid., CCLXXXV, col. 375, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, March 3, 1884.
2. Ibid., CCXCVI, col. 1393, Earl of Harrowby, Feb. 26, 1885.
part of the Sudan part of the British "informal" Empire. Their economic interpretation was that the Sudan was desert and that there was no financial gain in acquiring a worthless desert or that the money spent on acquiring supremacy over the Sudan could better be used inside Britain.

It was often argued by the Tories, the Liberal Imperialists, some sections of the Press, Sir Samuel Baker, and the Anti-Slavery Society that their opposition to the abandonment of the whole of the Sudan to the Mahdi was motivated by their conviction that such a course would lead to the revival of the slave trade and slavery. On the face of it, this argument might seem to provide a "humanitarian" motivation. But this was not necessarily so. Sometimes, this argument was used as a veil for expansionist aims. It was not without irrelevance or evidence that Wilfrid Blunt stated that "the slave trade question" was a "mere pretext of the annexationists". A Tory member of Parliament claimed that the object of the anti-slavery movement in Britain was to put down the slave trade "by the annexation of the slave-trading countries". That those who claimed that they were motivated by a "humanitarian" motive when they opposed the abandonment of the Sudan to the Mahdi should object strongly

2. Hansard, 3rd ser., CCLXXXIV, col. 1086, Mr. Guy Dawnay, Feb. 15, 1884.
to giving up the riverain Sudan to the Mahdi while they acquiesced in abandoning the Western Sudan and the Southern Sudan - the two regions of the Sudan where slave hunting had been mainly carried out - was incomprehensible. Also an individual like General Gordon issued a Proclamation sanctioning slavery while, on the other hand, he strongly opposed the abandonment of the Sudan to the Mahdi on the ground that the consequence would be a revival in the slave trade. It was also reported that the British Admiral in the Red Sea, Admiral Hewett, issued another Proclamation which sanctioned the possession of slaves and which gave a direct stimulus to slave dealing.¹ One gathers peoples' convictions not by their cries and writings but by their acts. And the acts of General Gordon and Admiral Hewett acclaimed that they were not sincerely motivated by a "humanitarian" sentiment, but by what they considered to be their own and the British interests. And this was what all this great debate on the Mahdist revolution was centred round. It was the different interpretations of British interests by different groups, parties and individuals that produced the different attitudes surveyed in this section and that would produce the sentiment of "smash the Mahdi" - the subject of our next section.

3. "Smash up the Mahdi"

On February 5, 1885, the cry to "Smash up the Mahdi" was on the lips of nearly every Briton. The sentiment was repeated by the Liberals, Conservatives as well as all sections of the Press in scarcely distinguishable tones. The almost unanimous and whole-hearted public adoption of the sentiment forced the Government to transform it into being the official policy. But both the cry and the consequent policy it produced were short-lived as by the middle of April a majority of the public had given up the cry and for this reason, as well as others, the Government consequently abandoned its policy of "smashing up the Mahdi". It is the purpose of this essay to investigate how this cry to "smash up the Mahdi" had generally come to be accepted, what the policy of "smashing up the Mahdi" meant and why it was abandoned.

It has been shown in the last section that the majority of the British people were in 1884 either for a Mahdist state in the whole of the Sudan or in the Western Sudan. This implied that they thought there would be some sort of co-existence between a Mahdist authority and Britain as the protector of Egypt and that part of the Sudan they thought necessary for the safety of Egypt. However, very few individuals were, even before February 1885, of the opinion that the Mahdi's power ought to be crushed.

1. The Annual Register, 1885, p.22.
Among this very small group was Queen Victoria. As early as November 1882 the Queen urged the Government to "act against the rebels". In February 1884, the Queen was even more convinced that a "blow must be struck or we shall never be able to convince the Mohammedans that they have not beaten us". She thought that the defeat of the Egyptian Government's troops commanded by the British Generals, Hicks and Valentine Baker, "must lower us in the eyes of the world and most particularly of India". The Queen asked its cabinet to make "a demonstration of strength and to show determination".

It was General Gordon who coined the phrase "smash up the Mahdi". A week after his arrival at Khartoum, General Gordon startled Sir Evelyn Baring and the British Government when he bluntly told them:-

"... If Egypt is to be kept quiet, Mahdi must be smashed up ... Remember that once Khartoum belongs to the Mahdi, the task will be far more difficult; yet you will, for the safety of Egypt execute it. If you decide on smashing Mahdi, then send up another 100,000 l. and 200 Indian troops to Wadi Halfa, and send officer up to Dongola under pretence to look out quarters for troops ... Evacuation is possible, but you will feel effect in Egypt, and will be forced to enter into a far more serious affair in order to guard Egypt. At present, it

3. Ibid.
would be comparatively easy to destroy Mahdi".

From that time on Gordon was consistent and very determined in his mind that the Mahdi and the revolution ought to be crushed. Gordon might have been motivated in this desire by what he alleged to be his anxiety for the safety of Egypt. However, his correspondence with Evelyn Baring before and after his above-mentioned telegram testified that he thought little of any danger from a Mahdist advance to Egypt. It appears that Gordon's strongest motive for wishing the "smashing up of the Mahdi" was a personal one. When he left London and then Cairo for Khartoum he had no doubt that he would reach an accommodation with the Mahdi on terms which he had thought would be satisfactory to all parties. He would give up Kordofan to the Mahdi, Equatoria and Bahr al-Ghazal would be included in King Leopold's Congolese Empire with Gordon himself as Governor of both provinces and the Sudan east of the White Nile to be ruled by "native rulers" who ought to accept British protection and sovereignty. But when Gordon arrived at Khartoum it was evident to him that his above programme could not be realised and the only obstacle appeared to Gordon to be the character of the Mahdi. If the Mahdi could be crushed all would be right, and Gordon would be able to succeed in his mission.

Moreover, Gordon seemed to be determined to avenge a personal


2. F.O. 633/7 Gordon to Baring, January 30, 1884; also Egypt No.2 (1884) No.8,Gordon to Baring, Feb. 12, 1884.
insult he had received from the Mahdi when he had nominated him Sultan of Kordofan but the latter refused such an offer and sent a reply to Gordon which "had an arrogant dignity". From that refusal on, Gordon seemed to have considered the struggle that was going on in the Sudan as a duel between him and the Mahdi. And he was determined to win this duel even if this would cost him his life.

But Gordon knew that he could not win this duel unless he was supported by the British Government. He thus formed his simple plan of "smashing up the Mahdi" which would cost the British Government no more than £100,000 and 200 Indian troops. He also tried to convince the British Government that his motive in advocating such a plan to destroy the Mahdi was his conviction that "the smashing up of the Mahdi" was necessary for the security and quietness of Egypt because he knew perfectly well that the main anxiety of the British Government was to secure the safety of Egypt and to protect her from any outside danger.

Unfortunately for the General it appeared to the British Government that "General Gordon had somewhat overrated the danger to be apprehended in Egypt from the Mahdi, and the insurrection of which he was the head". The Mahdi had not, in the opinion of the Secretary for War, exhibited a pre-eminent military capacity to be a danger to Egypt.

The Government appeared also to be convinced that Gordon

had underrated the strength of the Mahdi. It could hardly be believed that a force of 200 Indian troops could crush the Mahdi when he had just annihilated a force of nearly ten thousands. Gordon must have known that the British Government was determined not to undertake any military adventure in the Sudan but he hoped that if he could convince them to send this Indian force he might drag them into a situation from which they would have no alternative but to go the whole way. If the Indian troops were defeated and some of them were taken prisoners the British Government would have no option but to mount a gigantic expedition to rescue them.

It was ironical that it was the death of Gordon which converted the British Government and the majority of the British people to his cry of "smashing up the Mahdi". The death of Gordon and the fall of Khartoum, news of which reached London on February 5, 1885, stirred in the British people from Queen Victoria downwards, emotions of humiliation and anger. These passions could be attributed to two reasons. Gordon's personality had so taken hold of the imagination of the British people since his China days that it could hardly be expected that his death would have stirred less passion and panic than it did. Even if the Briton who was going to be rescued by the slow advancing Relief Expedition was not Gordon who was the "pride of England to have produced, and her thrice bitter destiny to have so early lost", but another

1. The Times, February 13, 1885.
less popular Briton, there was reason to suppose such passions of anger and humiliation would not have been less dominant than they were. This was due to the fact that the death of the Briton, whether he was Gordon or someone else, would have come at a moment when everybody was expecting the news of the relief of the missionary and the capture of Khartoum by British troops. The news of the victories of the Desert Column at Abu Tulayh and al-Qubba on 17 January and 19 January consecutively left no doubt in the minds of thinking people in Britain that such objects would soon be realized. The Times declared on January 29, 1885, that as a result of the two battles "Lord Wolseley now has hold of Khartoum itself and the military object of the expedition is practically attained". Moreover, these "series of rapid and hard fought battles in the Sudan desert stimulated the warlike instincts of a large body of the English people", and it was exactly this body that raised the cry "smash up the Mahdi".

So, it was hardly surprising that on February 6, this cry was all but universal. The leading organs of public opinion and the majority of leading British statesmen and politicians were carried away by what Sir George Campbell called "Maelstrom Jingoism". This Jingoism appeared to be the Gospel of the day. The Press was leading and promoting this wave of "Jingoism". The Times led when it summed up the feelings of the Press and the British people by saying that the shock caused by the news of the fall of Khartoum had no parallel in the experience of that generation. It described the public sentiments as those

1. The Times, January 29, 1885.
2. The Annual Register, 1885, p.9.
of "mingled feelings of dismay, consternation and indignant disgust", and "of profound shame and sorrow". The loss of Khartoum was instinctively felt to mean to The Times much more than the loss of a battle, a collapse of a garrison, or even the loss of a heroic soldier who had so long maintained the honour of his country against tremendous odds. It was a disaster not only pregnant with instant dangers to the scattered British troops, but carrying with it dangerous possibilities of disturbance in the remotest parts of the Empire. This defeat would reverberate through every bazaar from Cairo to Calcutta. The East was not dominated by institutions and phrases but by men, and that solitary figure holding aloft the flag of England in face of the hordes of Islam counted far more in maintaining the prestige of Britain than experienced Parliamentary tacticians could easily conceive. For these reasons The Times thought that to retreat was not to be thought of for a single instance, and even to seem to retreat, if it was only reculer pour mieux sauter, was dangerous. The Times concluded that the British prestige which she thought had been so seriously damaged ought to be restored, General Gordon ought to be saved or avenged and "the honour of Britain ought to be vindicated no matter what the difficulties".\(^1\)

The Standard and the Daily Telegraph expressed views in like sense. The Pall Mall Gazette judged that England dared not retreat. The provincial papers were not less vehement in

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1. The Times, Feb. 6, 1885.
their demand for energetic action against the Mahdi. The Birmingham Post, Mr. Chamberlain's unofficial organ declared: "One thing we know by instinct - that whatever can be done by power, the energy and wealth of England must be done and will be done without delay and without stint. If Gordon can be saved by human means, he must be saved, cost what it may". The Manchester Guardian expressed its conviction that "the country will grudge no sacrifice which may be needed to save our military credit to complete the necessary task of pushing back the tide of invasion, and, if possible to secure the great and gallant soldier ...". The Leeds Mercury wrote: "Ministers must not be left in doubt as to the resolve of the nation that there shall be no more half-measures in dealing with the Egyptian business ... Berber, and not Khartoum, will become the objective point of Lord Wolseley's operations. We, too, can show the world that we are made of the same stuff as the heroes of the Nile, and that having undertaken a task which came to us in the path of duty, neither discouragements nor dangers nor any sordid consideration for self will induce us to turn back, leaving the task unaccomplished".¹

If the abstract analysis of editorials was worth much as an evaluation of public opinion, there was no doubt of the warlike spirit that swept Britain soon after the arrival of the news of the fall of Khartoum. Among public figures the Queen was among the first to express views which were identical to

¹. This analysis of the Press is quoted from The Annual Register, 1885, pp.20-2.
those in the Press. Her famous and often quoted *en clair*
telegram to Mr. Gladstone on February 5, and similar ones *en clair*
also to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington expressed emotions
of anger, shock and humiliation.¹ The most important
question that had arisen because of the fall of Khartoum,
Queen Victoria thought, was that the British troops ought not
to retire without making the British power felt. "If we
merely turn *straight back again*," the Queen told her Secretary
Henry Ponsonby, "... our power in the East will be *ruined*; and
we shall *never* be able to hold our heads up again ... we are
bound to *show* a bold front. Tame submission would *oblige* us
very likely to fight in some other direction in *Egypt* soon
again. Such an ending as this would be fatal."²

Much of the anger of the Press, the Queen and the public
was directed against the Mahdi. But the latter was far away
and so no small amount of this wrath was vented upon the
"Establishment". The Cabinet was accused of indecision and
vacillation; or of being *guided* only by the expediency of the
hour, putting off from day to day its consent to any relief
expedition; the War Office had stinted men and materials, and
at the last moment Lord Wolseley, goaded to make an effort to
save Gordon from the treachery by which he was menaced,
despatched an *inadequate* force across a *trackless* desert,

². Ibid., Queen Victoria to Sir Henry Ponsonby, Feb. 5, 1885,
p.598.
swarming with hostile Arabs.¹

The Cabinet was aware of these facts. Mr. Gladstone told the Queen that abundant wrath and indignation would be poured out upon them but claimed that a partial consolation to the Cabinet might be found in reflecting that neither aggressive policy, nor military disaster, nor any gross error in the application of means to ends had marked the proceedings of the Relief Expedition.²

So it was clear that the Government had to face the displeasure of the Queen and public opinion who became hysterically jingo. It was said that there were crowds in Downing Street and outside the House of Commons, ready to hoot at Gladstone on every possible occasion; and he was execrated in innumerable music halls as the murderer of Gordon.³ So the circumstances were trying for the Cabinet.

There was a possibility that the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon might put an end to the Gladstone Government. And so to avoid this end the Cabinet had to satisfy the hysterical passion of Jingoism for avenging Gordon and an injured pride by "smashing up the Mahdi".

So when the Cabinet met on February 6, to consider Lord Wolseley's telegram of the day before, asking for new instructions in the changed conditions of the case, there

1. The Annual Register, 1885, p.20.
2. Letters of Queen Victoria, second series, vol. III, Mr. Gladstone to Queen Victoria, Feb. 5, 1885, p.599.
seemed to be no great differences within the Cabinet. The fall of Khartoum seemed to have moved the Ministers as much as the Queen and the public. Even Sir William Harcourt who consistently and persistently objected to any forward policy in the Sudan during the past year, had now modified his views and insisted on the need of Lord Wolseley going forward to "destroy the Mahdi's power at Khartoum." The decision of the Cabinet could not have been other than trying to save the life of Gordon, whose fate was not yet certain, and it was assumed that he was alive till there was certainty of his death; and to check the advance of the Mahdi "in districts now undisturbed". The Cabinet considered that, from a political point of view, there would be disadvantage in a retrograde movement unconnected with military concentration.

On the next day the Cabinet advanced its decision to respond to the public cry of destroying the Mahdi when it told Lord Wolseley that his military policy was to be based on the necessity which it recognized on the state of facts now before Britain that the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum ought to be overthrown. The Cabinet had left to Lord Wolseley the discretion to decide the military measures best calculated to obtain this object and whether the advance should be made this season or next.

2. W.O. 33/44 Secretary of State for War to Lord Wolseley, Feb. 6, 1885.
3. Ibid., Secretary of State for War to Lord Wolseley, Feb. 7, 1885.
The decision of the Cabinet to destroy the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum was in fact a response to the public cry and so it was "generally approved by the public". The Times thought that this would satisfy the public and rebuked the Cabinet for coming at last to appreciate the statement made long ago by General Gordon that they would have to "smash the Mahdi" before they could have peace in Egypt. The paper was definite as to what she thought General Gordon meant when he used the words "smash up the Mahdi" and what she was now proposing. It considered that the smashing of the Mahdi meant that Khartoum should be retaken, fortified and adequately garrisoned, that the Mahdi should be sufficiently punished to make him anxious to put a neutral zone between the British troops and any territory which he might pretend to rule and that the whole country north of Khartoum and between the Nile and the Red Sea should be reduced to perfect order.

Almost alone among politicians the rationalist Radical John Morley and his fellow Radical Mr. Leonard Courtney stood out against the general line of approval for the British Government's decision to destroy the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. Speaking in Glasgow on February 10, Mr. John Morley uttered a strong protest against the Government's policy of waging war upon the Sudanese. From the beginning Mr. Morley had consistently written and spoken against the occupation of

1. The Annual Register, 1885, p. 22.
2. The Times, Feb. 9, 1885.
3. Ibid.
Egypt and the consequent involvement in the Sudan which followed that occupation. So it was not surprising—commented The Times—to see him, at this critical moment, turning all the force of his rhetoric against the idea that it was not necessary either to avenge Gordon or to establish British power at Khartoum. If Gordon was still alive, said Mr. Morley, he ought to be rescued, if not Lord Wolseley ought to be ordered to take no further offensive measures. Such action would be foolish because there was nothing to merit it. It was no interest to the British to make themselves responsible for the Sudan. He was under no illusion that once the Government sanctioned extended operations for the purpose of revenge, and sent army after an army, and at last—after a vast effort and possibly an appalling destruction of human life—the British might finally break up the power of the Mahdi. This, however, would result only in saddling the British with the burden of a permanent responsibility of which he would only say that a more fruitless, thankless and desperate responsibility was never imposed on the people of Britain. If we remained in the Sudan, continued Mr. Morley, one day or one hour longer than was necessary for the safety of the expedition, we would remain in the Sudan for ever.

Mr. Morley declared his conviction that though war in the Sudan was a great evil in itself, even without further responsibility and though annexation even without war would be a greater evil still, yet to have a bloody war followed by a burdensome annexation would be the very direst accumulation of mischief
that the mind and the imagination could picture. Morley then gave an economic reason for his protest against the occupation of the Sudan by British troops. He thought the Sudan was a region as big as Europe, broken up by vast stretches of desert and forest, thinly peopled and certain not to bring any return to those who ruled it. The cost of such an occupation would be endless.

Speaking in complete accord with Mr. Morley, Mr. Leonard Courtney on February 10, at Torpoint said: "Remember what Mr. Gladstone himself said - that these men (the Sudanese) are fighting for their liberties. If they are fighting for their liberties, are we, the lovers of freedom, we, the champions of free nationalities all the world over, we who have rejoiced as nation after nation in Europe has been able to assert for itself the dignity and privileges of self-government - are we to go on fighting these Arabs who are fighting for their liberties? Are we to try to put down this "rebellion" as it is called - a rebellion which is simply assertion on their part of their right to be free? What justification is there, except the justification of the heathen nation that we must have force to rule all over the world and to enslave other people? - a justification which I shall be very slow to believe that any English Government will at all lay its hands upon, and which I should be the slowest of all to believe that an

1. The Times, Feb. 11, 1885; also The Annual Register, 1885, p.23.
English Government with Mr. Gladstone at its head could give any countenance ... if I stood alone, I would protest against the notion of waging war against the Mahdi, supposing Gordon to be dead, simply for the purpose of showing our might, as one wholly inconsistent with the duty of a nation, wholly inconsistent with even heathen morality, and wholly inconsistent with the lowest and basest measure of our own self-interest". Mr. Courtney concluded that if Britain crushed the Mahdi it would destroy the only power in the Sudan and should be obliged to undertake the Government of a region stretching illimitably into the heart of Africa.¹

Among the intellectuals the lonely voice that was raised in protest against the policy of crushing the Mahdi was that of Mr. R. Bosworth Smith. In a letter to The Times, he argued forcibly against a war of vengeance to be conducted by an expedition to Khartoum followed by an immediate retreat involving a waste of English blood and English treasure, and an objectless destruction of "native" lives. He warned that "in the wild cry for vengeance, we may forget exactly what it is that we have to avenge, on whom we have to avenge it, and what is to come afterwards; in a word, that, mistaking violence for vigour, and passion for policy, we may find ourselves doing in Gordon's honour what Gordon himself would have been the first to deprecate and to condemn". Mr. R.

¹ G.P. Gooch, The Life of Lord Courtney, (London, 1920), pp.221-2; also The Times, Feb. 11, and 12, 1885; also the Annual Register, 1885, pp.22-3.
Bosworth Smith thought that the object of an advance to Khartoum could only be one of two things, and of neither of these, he ventured to think would the "awakened conscience and the sound sense of the country ultimately approve". The one was the natural but the despicable and the wholly indefensible object of mere revenge. It was to meet fanaticism by counter-fanaticism; to avenge at an enormous cost of men and money. He thought that such an expedition to destroy the Mahdi would be directed towards a people whose chief crime it had been that, spurred on by the "enthusiasm of an always dying but always reviving creed", they had tried to rid themselves of a detestable and a detested yoke. The result of the destruction of the Mahdi's power could only be that, as the British did in Egypt, they would shatter the one possible Government of the Sudan and they would once more justly incur the reproach of having put nothing in its place. The only other alternative appeared to the writer to be that the British Government might revert to a discredited policy and after all think "of establishing Egypt in power over the Sudan". This, to him, was an impossible policy; it was foredoomed to failure. It was to put a feeble over a vigorous, and a less noble over a nobler race.¹

The fight which the two Radical figures - Morley and Courtney, were making against what a fellow Radical, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, called "the madness of the British nation

¹ The Times, Feb. 13, 1885.
and its rulers had the aim of forming a powerful party that would ultimately force the Government to modify its policy of destroying the Mahdist power at Khartoum. Mr. Morley and Mr. Courtney were men who remained true to their principles and who had the courage to declare to the British people and Government that by waging war in the Sudan they were being false to principle, religion and morality. But arguments based on principles, morality and religion could hardly appeal to the majority of British Press and people who viewed the whole question not from the religious and moral point of view but from whether there were British interests at stake or not.

For this reason the two Radicals were abused for expressing dissident views. *The Times* thought that it was to Mr. Morley and people of his way of thinking that were due in great measure the difficult position in which the British now found themselves. *The Times* pointed to the British interests that were at stake which in her view justified the British in crushing the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. It considered that if the British troops withdrew after the slaughter of the man in whom was personified to the Muslim mind throughout North-Eastern Africa the energy and integrity of England, that would mean the triumph of the Mahdi, the general recognition of his claims, the dangerous spread of excitement among all the Muslims, and the discredit of the

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British name in every country where the Imperial dominion of England was directly or indirectly established. The Times judged that: "If we do not "smash the Mahdi" he will convulse the civilized world by the exertion of the strength we have rashly allowed him to acquire ... The difference would be that in the former case the Mahdi would be discredited like many other Mussulman pretender to prophetic dignity, by his defeat; while if we leave him to establish his sovereignty at Khartoum, his victory will be visibly proclaimed to all the Moslems of the world, Nubia and Egypt". The Times dispelled any illusion entertained by the Radicals that the British troops would withdraw as soon as they had destroyed the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. When the Mahdi was crushed Britain ought to govern the region between the Nile and the Red Sea. Within these limits it would be necessary to establish a permanent Government under British influence with its capital at Khartoum and the maintenance of communications with the Red Sea which were essential for the Eastern Sudan, and the sooner this fact was recognized the better would it be for the security and the happiness of England.

The Liberal Imperialist, Mr. Goschen speaking at Liverpool on February 11, protested as much as The Times against the ideas put forward by the two Radicals Morley and Courtney.

1. The Times, Feb. 12, 1884.
2. The Times, Feb. 13, 1885.
3. Ibid., Feb. 17, 1885.
"We should not go forward", he said "in simple fanatical spirit, or with a haughty wish to win; but we should be inspired by a feeling that no great nation with subject races under it can, in the interests of these subject races themselves retire beaten and foiled. We should remember that in the interests of Western civilization we have a duty to perform to a country we have engaged to protect".  

The Conservatives, on the other hand, were aware that the stand taken by the two Radical figures had the object of forcing the Government to modify its policy of destroying the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. The Tories also recognized the fact that the protests of the two Radical leaders could not pass by without having some influence on Mr. Gladstone and some quarters of the public. A certain friend of Courtney wrote to him expressing the view that his speeches had seriously stemmed the war fever. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was also gratified that the people appeared to him to have agreed with the views of Courtney and Morley. And so the Tories must have realised that there had been some response to the ideas of Morley and Courtney. Moreover, their public dissent might encourage other dissident silent voices to come to the open as it was thought that even in the first weeks of tense excitement there had been more opposition than was revealed by the Press.

Having these facts in mind the Conservatives tried to

1. The Annual Register, 1885, p.24.
3. Ibid., p.223, citing Wilfrid Lawson to Courtney, Feb.15, 1885.
4. Ibid., p.222 quoting from the Journal of Mrs. Courtney.
keep alive the current public mood, which was distinctly for crushing the Mahdi's power, at least until Parliament re-assembled on February 19. With this object in view, the Tories seemed to have initiated and promoted two public meetings in London. On February 16, there had been a public meeting at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly, which was overcrowded, and at which Lord Randolph Churchill, who was the principal speaker moved: "That in the opinion of this meeting, Her Majesty's Government are solely responsible for the anarchy which prevails in Egypt and the bloodshed which has occurred and which is imminent in the Sudan and that the vacillating pusillanimous policy of the Ministers deserves the severest censures of the country".1

This motion was carried unanimously. In consequence of signed petitions presented to the Lord Mayor he summoned a meeting at the Guildhall under his Chairmanship which passed similar resolutions condemning the policy of the Government in Egypt and the Sudan before the fall of Khartoum.2 This was a warning to the Government not to revert to its old policy of the abandonment of the Sudan.

However, until the meeting of Parliament on February 19, there was no evidence that the Government was falling behind the prevalent "jingoistic" spirit.

Their statement of their intention to overthrow the power

2. The Times, Feb. 16, 1885; also L.A. Fabummi, op.,cit., p.43.
of the Mahdi at Khartoum as communicated to Lord Wolseley was explicit. This explicit statement of policy on the part of the Government delighted and amazed Lord Wolseley. To Hartington, he wrote that the decision had astounded him. It astounded him because he thought that the Government had frequently announced its determination to clear out of the Sudan.¹ Had the General been aware of the state of public opinion the decision of the Government would not have astounded him. It delighted him because as he wrote to Lord Hartington the Mahdi's power was incompatible with peace or good government in Egypt;² and to his wife that "for England's sake, for Egypt's sake, indeed for the sake of suffering humanity" he was happy that "our weak-kneed Cabinet have at last determined upon an energetic policy for the Sudan".³ So Wolseley felt justified to write to Kashm-el-Muse, a Sudanese Chief, that:

"We mean to destroy the power of Mohammed Achmet at Khartoum, no matter how long it may take us to do so; you know Gordon Pasha's countrymen are not likely to turn back from any enterprise they have begun until it has been fully accomplished".⁴

Wolseley's conviction of the determination of the British Government to destroy the Mahdi was reinforced by the prompt

2. W.O. 33/44, Wolseley to Secretary of State for War, Feb. 8, 1885.
instructions given to the General Officer Commanding the British troops at Cairo, at the urgent request of Wolseley himself, to send an expedition at once to crush 'Uthmān Digna and his followers in the Eastern Sudan. To carry its policy of the destruction of the Mahdi's power the Government had also contemplated the need to call out a portion of the reserves.2

However, it was not long before some members of the Cabinet, after second thoughts and after the temper of the public cry to "smash up the Mahdi" was beginning to decrease, began to doubt the soundness and the feasibility of the policy to overthrow the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. But before this change on the part of some ministers and large sections of the public was complete, Parliament re-assembled on 19th February. The Conservative Opposition and the Liberal Imperialists used Parliament in an attempt to keep up the war spirit in the country and to warn the Government against any modification or retreat from its policy of destroying the Mahdi's regime in Khartoum.

When Parliament met, Mr. Gladstone in the Commons and Lord Granville in the Lords delivered a Ministerial Statement which for the first time embodied the substance and effect of the decision to overthrow the Mahdi's power and the motives

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1. W.O. 33/44, Secretary of State for War to the General Officer Commanding at Cairo, Feb. 9, 1885.
2. CAB. 41/19, Mr. Gladstone to the Queen, Feb. 9, 1885.
which prompted it. In Mr. Gladstone's statement in the House of Commons, he said that after the fall of Khartoum the Government had arrived at certain "strictly military decisions". The most important of these decisions, which Mr. Gladstone described as "the basis of the whole", was that the British army was to be used "for the purpose of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum". This decision was arrived at because of the change in the position and influence of the Mahdi after the fall of Khartoum. The Mahdi outside Khartoum, a repository of arms and stores, was a different person in point of power and influence, as well as of what was called moral effect, from the same Mahdi in Khartoum in possession of the place and in possession of the arms and stores which it contained, as well as being reinforced by men he found within the walls.

Mr. Gladstone then went on to put before the House the reasons which had led the Government to the decision opposite to that of deciding that no effort was to be made to overthrow the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. He considered that there were certain objects which the Government and Parliament deemed very fit for consideration so far as circumstances might allow. One of those objects was with reference to the case of those persons in Khartoum to whom General Gordon held himself bound in honour, and for whose safety he was pledged. The second object was the possibility - what Mr. Gladstone regarded as a possibility - an object most desirable to attain, if it could be done - of "establishing some orderly Government
in Khartoum". The third was a point of very considerable importance. The military operations and the condition of the Sudan had, Mr. Gladstone thought, for the time being afforded an effectual check, and a very powerful check, on the slave trade carried out in the Sudan; and the question of the slave trade was one which the Government could not wholly exclude from its views. The last object was the question of the "Egyptian Garrisons" in the Sudan, in respect of which the Government entered under no obligation whatever; but, at the same time, with regard to one or more of those garrisons, it might be, under the circumstances, a fit subject of consideration. These were the objects which the Government, as Mr. Gladstone said, had all along kept in view. The Government was convinced that, had they arrived at a negative decision as to the British Forces being used to overthrow the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum, the effect, Mr. Gladstone declared, would have been at once to involve the abandonment of the whole of these objects. But it was not merely objects in the Sudan, continued Mr. Gladstone, which they had to consider. Their concern in the Sudan depended upon their concern and obligations for the safety and defence of Egypt. They had to look at matters beyond the Sudan as well as within the Sudan; and it was the belief of the Government that such a negative decision, as Mr. Gladstone described, would have had most important and serious consequences with respect to whatever "dangers there might exist, either proximate
or remote, in Egypt or in the East, from the position of the Mahdi at Khartoum, momentarily triumphant, and that these dangers were of a character hardly in their nature the subject of precise estimate, but in the view of many, far-reaching, and possibly very grave. These considerations the Government took into view when it considered the question whether it was possible for it to arrive at what it considered a very important military decision.

Mr. Gladstone's statement concluded by giving it as the opinion of the Cabinet that the present circumstances did not allow of their making any overtures to the Mahdi with any prospect of success. On the contrary, Mr. Gladstone believed that such overtures "however benevolently and philanthropically intended would tend to defeat their own object, and make more remote the prospect of that settlement" which it was the object of the Government to obtain. However, the Government thought it right to convey an instruction through Sir Evelyn Baring that any communication which might proceed from the Mahdi should be referred home for the consideration of the Government.¹

Mr. Gladstone's statement was regarded as the official exposition of the policy of the Government. A similar statement giving the reasons and objects behind the decision

¹ Handard, 3rd ser. CCXCV, cols. 373-8, Ministerial Statement, Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 19, 1885.
to overthrow the Mahdi's power in Khartoum was read to the Lords by Lord Granville.\footnote{Ibid, cols. 849-53, Ministerial Statement, Earl Granville, Feb. 19, 1885.} However, Mr. Gladstone's statement seemed to have left many of the questions involved in the decision to "smash up the Mahdi" at Khartoum unanswered; and the opposite motions put forward by the Opposition and the Radicals had the object of forcing the Government to give explicit answers to these questions.

In Parliament the case for "smashing up the Mahdi" was put more strongly not by the Government but by the Conservative Opposition and the right-wing Liberal Imperialists headed by Forster and Goschen. On 23rd February the Leader of the Opposition in the Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote, moved a vote of censure upon the Government's record in the Sudan which said that the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government in respect to the affairs of Egypt and the Sudan, had involved a great sacrifice of valuable lives and a heavy expenditure without any beneficial result and had rendered it imperatively necessary in the interests of the British Empire and of the Egyptian people that Her Majesty's Government should distinctly recognize and take decided measures to fulfil the special responsibility now incumbent on them to assume a good and stable Government to Egypt and to those portions of the Sudan which were necessary to its security.\footnote{Hansard, 3rd ser., CCCXIV, col. 1053, Feb. 23, 1885.}

The real aim of Sir S. Northcote's motion, although it
did not say so in so many words, was that the destruction of the power of the Mahdi ought to be followed by the establishment of a Government at Khartoum under British Control. The motion did not define those parts necessary for the security of Egypt. It was rather vague but did not appear to contemporaries to be as vague as it appears now. Mr. Gladstone did not find difficulty in interpreting the motion of the leader of the Opposition as meaning that the British Government had not only to destroy the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum but to engage by its power "to establish a good and stable Government in Khartoum, and all that lies to the East of Khartoum".  

The motion of the leader of the Opposition in the Lords on 26th February was as vague as that of the Conservative leader in the Commons. It protested that the policy of abandoning the whole of the Sudan after the conclusion of military operations would be dangerous to Egypt and inconsistent with the interests of the Empire. But the speech of Lord Salisbury was explicit in demanding that the military operations in the Sudan should not be confined to the destruction of the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum only, but should also have the political object of establishing a Government in that part of the Sudan to the east and north of Khartoum under British control. 

The general impression among the Conservatives was that

1. Ibid., col. 1096, Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 23, 1885.
2. Ibid., col. 1311, Marquess of Salisbury, Feb. 26, 1885.
the Government's policy of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi was rather vague. It was believed by the Opposition that the Government by its statement on 19th February had pledged itself to break the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum but nothing more. So the arguments of the Conservatives and the Liberal Imperialists were directed towards forcing the Government to pledge itself not only to destroy the Mahdi at Khartoum but also to extend the "informal" British Empire to that place. The Opposition believed that when the British troops succeeded in crushing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum they would have done so with the sacrifice of British lives and money and the Opposition did not think that Britain would allow her lives and her treasure to be spent for nothing. For this sacrifice Britain ought to retain the control of the Nile Valley as far as Khartoum, and she ought to see that there was established at Khartoum a Government subject to its influence in close connection with the Government of Egypt, "ruling with a due regard to the habits and customs of the people, promoting trade with the interior of Africa by the channel of the Nile and using its power at the most vulnerable point for the extinction of the slave trade".  

Many reasons were given by the Conservatives for advocating such a line. Their old friend prestige had been put forward again and again and by nearly every speaker from the Benches of the Conservative Opposition. Lord Salisbury

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1. Ibid, col. 1637, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Feb. 27, 1885; also Ibid, col. 1228, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Feb. 24, 1885.
thought that a policy of retreat, without establishing British control over that part of the Sudan east and north of Khartoum would be damaging to the prestige of Britain. To preserve such a prestige, he believed, the policy of the Government must be based on the fact that: "We have to assure our friends that we shall stand by them; we have to assure our enemies that we are permanently to be feared; and it is only on the conditions on which our enemies dread us and our friends trust us that we can be successful in dealing with our enemies". ¹ Lord Salisbury thought that the recent events had lowered the prestige of Britain and that if such misfortunes and disasters went on much longer Europe would insist on interfering in Egypt and the Sudan on the ground that Britain was too weak and her prestige too broken to justify her in undertaking the task of governing Egypt.²

Other Conservative speakers said a great deal about the moral effect that would be produced by a policy of retreat even after the destruction of the Mahdi's regime in Khartoum. Such a retreat, they alleged, would have a bad moral effect on British rule in India and might inflict a lasting danger upon it.³

One of the main arguments of the Opposition was that the establishment of a Government at Khartoum under British control

2. Ibid., col. 1327, Lord Salisbury, Feb. 26, 1885.  
3. Ibid., col. 1106, Baron Henry De Worms, Feb. 23, 1885; also Ibid., col. 1201, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Feb. 24, 1885.
after the Mahdi was smashed was necessary for the safety of Egypt and for stemming the tide of the revolution which might spread, if not checked, to Egypt, Arabia and North-Africa. A wide conflagration might easily be kindled. The echoes of Islamic revival were already reverberating throughout the East and the British would have to pay in India for abnegation of duty in Egypt and the Sudan. 1

Lord Salisbury considered that British influence in Egypt was threatened by the "forces of fanatical barbarism let loose upon the south of Egypt". If the Ansār reached the northern part of Egypt, it would not be so much by their military force as by the moral power of their example that they would threaten the existing state of things in Egypt. "But unless we intend", Lord Salisbury went on, "to give over Egypt to barbarism and anarchy, unless we intend to sacrifice all the advantages for civilization that we have won there, and all the value of the services which that country may render to British interests as its path to the East, we must contrive to check this inroad of barbarian fanaticism which is impersonated in the actions and character of the Mahdi ... We have, therefore, to check - it is absolutely necessary that we should check - this advance of the Mahdi's power". 2

Lord Salisbury maintained that the only dyke that they could erect to keep out what he called "this inundation of barbarism

1. Ibid, col. 1227, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Feb. 24, 1884.
and fanatical force", was to establish a Government under British influence at Khartoum which would have the power to stem the forces that the Mahdi had set in motion.¹

Some Conservative speakers gave an economic excuse for their demand that the Government should not stop short of the destruction of the Mahdi's power at Khartoum and the founding of a Government there under British influence. These members thought that British influence should be exercised at Khartoum for the sake of trade. "The establishment of a civilized and stable Government", contended a certain Mr. Marriott, "would not only be a great blessing to Egypt and the Sudan, but it would also be the means of opening up an enormous trade with Liverpool, Manchester, and the manufacturing districts ...".²

Several Liberal Imperialists argued for a "forward policy" and supported strongly the arguments of the Conservatives. Goschen accused the Cabinet of deciding "to go to Khartoum to please the Whigs", and "to retire from Khartoum to please the Radicals". He thought that the suppression of the slave trade in the Sudan was a motive strong enough to justify the British troops in going to Khartoum. He also attached great importance to the argument that the British ought to break the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum in order to influence the East generally with regard to the omnipotence of their arms. Goschen was against retiring from Khartoum after the destruction of the power of the Mahdi there.

¹. Ibid.
². Ibid., cols. 1510-1, Mr. Marriott, Feb. 26, 1885.
He declared that the British ought to stand by those who had stood by them and therefore they ought to consider the position of the Province of Dongola and the inhabitants in that neighbourhood who had assisted the British; and he considered that any scheme for the settlement of the Sudan which did not afford some security to those who had assisted the British troops would be unsatisfactory in the highest degree. Goschen thought that it would be a better policy for the British to put their grip on the Nile by holding Berber and the railway from that place to Suakin than to march forward and break the power of the Mahdi and then retreat. He considered that Berber ought to be held as "the outpost of Western civilization on the Nile, and not in any selfish interest of England alone, but as signifying that civilization was not to be driven out of the Sudan". Mr. Goschen demanded that the Government should pledge itself to something more than the breaking of the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum - by which he meant that the Government ought to pledge itself to the establishment of a Government which would be under British influence.1

The other leader of the right-wing Liberal Imperialists, W.E. Forster spoke also strongly in favour not only of "smashing up the Mahdi" at Khartoum but in favour of establishing a Government under British sovereignty in that place.2

1. Ibid, cols. 1251-63, Mr. Goschen, Feb. 24, 1885.
2. Ibid, cols. 1690-9, Mr. W.E. Forster, Feb. 27, 1885.
While the Conservatives and the Liberal Imperialists were attacking the Government on the ground that if it pledged itself to the crushing of the Mahdi's power at Khartoum only and not to the establishing of a Government at Khartoum, it was doing too little, the Radicals and left-wing Liberals were saying that the Government would be doing too much even if it went on to "smash up the Mahdi" at Khartoum. An amendment to the Vote of Censure was moved by the Radical leader John Morley regretting "the decision of the Government to employ the forces of the crown for the overthrow of the power of the Mahdi".¹ Sir John Lubbock moved another amendment supporting the Government's policy in any steps which it might find necessary to take to protect Egypt from attack by the Mahdi at Wadi Halfa, but condemned the extension of military operations beyond the permanent frontier of Egypt.²

The case for the Radicals was put forward by John Morley, Sir George Campbell, Henry Labouchere and Leonard Courtney. John Morley feared that in deciding to "smash up the Mahdi", the Government's policy towards the Sudan had undergone a drastic change. He contended that the instructions that had been sent to Lord Wolseley opened "a new programme of Sudan policy". John Morley argued that the destruction of the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum was unnecessary for the defence of Egypt. He considered that it had not been demonstrated that it was essential to destroy the power of the Mahdi. He

¹. Ibid, col. 1071, Mr. John Morley, Feb. 23, 1885.
believed that it might be perfectly possible to come to terms with the Mahdi; and feared that the chance of negotiating with the Mahdi would be nil, if he heard that it had been announced that the cardinal object of the British policy was to destroy his power at Khartoum. Mr. Morley then argued that even if it could be shown that it was indispensable to destroy the power of the Mahdi, it had not been shown that the power of the Mahdi could be most effectually destroyed at Khartoum. John Morley maintained that the best policy was to wait for the Mahdi at the Egyptian frontier; otherwise the British Government would be committing "exactly the same error that destroyed the Grand Army of Napoleon". That army was destroyed by snow, and frost, and climate. It was not the Mahdi and his forces that the British had to fear, but it was the burning climate, the rainless deserts and the illimitable distances.

John Morley declared that by its decision to destroy the power of the Mahdi the Government was going back on the policy of withdrawal. It was clear to him that for so remarkable a change of policy, necessitating an enterprise of such enormous magnitude there ought to be very good reasons and he did not doubt that the Government had great and considerable objects in mind. But the objects given by members of the Government and the Opposition as reasons for the crushing of the Mahdi's regime at Khartoum did not seem to him to be enough to justify the end. He regretted that the idea of looking to the possibility of setting up an
orderly Government in Khartoum was to be recognized by Her Majesty’s Ministers as one of their objects. He could not see in the least what obligation was imposed upon the British to give the Sudanese "a stable and orderly Government". He thought that a Government set up at Khartoum by the Mahdi or a successful competitor of his would be a cruel and fierce Government; but he believed that such Government, although cruel, fierce and violent, under it the people would enjoy a degree of contentment and satisfaction which they never could "derive from booms conferred upon them by the cast-iron benevolence of foreigners and aliens".

John Morley thought that, if the time came and the opportunity offered, the Government should consent to open negotiations with the Mahdi; and if that could not be done, it should drop the announcement that the power of the Mahdi ought to be destroyed at Khartoum. The Sudan should be left to its own people to work out their own deliverance in their own fashion. John Morley concluded by declaring that it would not be very hard to show that, on grounds of morality and justice, to carry on a sanguinary war without any beneficial aim was not only a political blunder, but a very hideous moral misdemeanour. Such a war would be a waste unredeemed by any good object, either to the people of the Sudan or the British.1

Sir George Campbell contended that the intention of the

1. Ibid., cols. 1071-9, Mr. John Morley, Feb. 23, 1885.
Government to "smash the Mahdi" would result in conquering a great Empire in the heart of Africa. He did not believe that the rule of the Mahdi would necessarily be a hard and a cruel rule; the Mahdi was a religious man and his rule might be a good one. He questioned why, if the Sudanese were to have a Government of some kind, should they not be permitted to have the Government which, as far as he knew, they had chosen themselves - namely the Government of the Mahdi?¹

Mr. Henry Labouchere denounced the Jingo policy of annexation and war. He demanded that the British troops ought to withdraw from the Sudan as soon as possible.²

Mr. Courtney delivered a very powerful speech in which he attacked the decision of the Government to overthrow the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. He thought that there was no military necessity requiring that decision. He demanded that the British troops should abstain from any further aggressive movements and that they should withdraw. He objected to the construction of the Suakin-Berber railway on the ground that if that railway were made the British would be permanently lodged in the Sudan. He was against the idea of destroying the power of the Mahdi because even if they succeeded in achieving this object, which he doubted, they would have an African Empire to add to the responsibilities of

¹. Ibid., cols. 1110-2, Sir George Campbell, Feb. 23, 1885.
². Ibid., cols. 1677-82, Mr. Labouchere, Feb. 27, 1885.
the British Empire in India; and he opposed the founding of a British Empire in Africa.¹

There were others who sympathized with the views of the Radicals. Sir John Lubbock was one of them. He contended that the new policy of war against the Mahdi would involve Britain in a terrible loss of life and immense expenditure without either any necessity or any possible advantage to Britain. He argued that if the British troops were going to retire from Khartoum after they had destroyed the Mahdi, he saw no point in going there. As to the assertion that it was desirable to go to Khartoum to put down the slave trade, he thought that this would not be effected merely by going to Khartoum. To do this the British ought not to go there but stay there. He was in favour of negotiations with the Mahdi.²

A certain Mr. Picton protested against the great deal about prestige which he heard in some of the speeches in the House. He thought that prestige was a French word and that it expressed a very un-English idea. "It might be proper for a people who, under the malignant influence of Imperialism, had been trained up to think far more of glory than of truth and right"; but if, by prestige, the speakers meant reputation, he would ask whether, in this ancient kingdom, we had much need to be nervous about our reputation? If it was a reputation for fighting qualities that we were anxious about,

1. Ibid., cols. 1639-52, Mr. Courtney, Feb. 27, 1885.
2. Ibid., cols. 1194-8, Sir John Lubbock, Feb. 24, 1885.
he wished to ask why, after more than 1,000 years of fighting, and generally fighting of a victorious character, we should be so timid upon the subject now? Nor could it be said that this very campaign had lowered our prestige in this respect. Had there been any real defeat? ... he held that never had British troops given more direct proof of their heroic qualities than they had done in the campaign in the Soudan.\footnote{Ibid, cols. 1192-3, Mr. Picton, Feb. 23, 1885.}

A divided Liberal Parliamentary Party was reflected in the Cabinet itself. It was evident from the Vote of Censure that there were differences in the Cabinet as to what the decision to overthrow the power of the Mahdi meant, what were the objects behind it and how far members of the Cabinet were aware of the consequences that might follow the execution of such a policy.

Lord Hartington's speech which was ostensibly the winding-up speech for the Government clearly showed that his ideas were more in harmony with those of Goschen and Forster. He stated that he was against the policy of retreat advocated by the Radicals. He considered that a lesson ought to be taught to the people of Africa. Besides this object he thought that: "We owe something to the people of Egypt, for whose affairs we are responsible; and can it be supposed that so great an encouragement could be given to the forces of anarchy which are opposed to civilization as it exists in Egypt, without inflicting a heavy blow upon all the prospects of regeneration of that country? ... We owe something to our Mahommedan
subjects. We owe something to our Indian Empire. What would the Mahommedans of that Empire think if they beheld the spectacle of British civilization retiring before a barbarous form of Mahommedan fanaticism? Then, we owe something to every one of our own Colonies which are brought into contact with savage races; and we owe something to every Colony in the world to which the name, the credit and the honour of England are dear.

Lord Hartington maintained that the decision of the Cabinet to overthrow the power of the Mahdi was a political decision, in the sense that it was a decision between retreat and maintaining their position. He considered that they had no alternative but to take that decision. The objects which motivated them to take such a decision were the security of Egypt, the protection of the tribes who had been friendly to them, the suppression of the slave trade and the establishment of "an orderly Government" at Khartoum. For these objects they intended to break the power of the Mahdi. Hartington tried to placate Forster, Goschen and other right-wing Liberals by asserting that they were still true to these objects which had been embodied in the Ministerial Statement of 19 February and by arguing that there was no reason to suppose that the establishment of "an orderly Government" would be difficult or impossible to attain after the military power of the Mahdi had been broken. Lord Hartington spoke of the "civilizing influences" that would be brought about by the construction of Suakin-Berber railway, which the Government
intended to construct.\(^1\)

In the House of Lords, the Earl of Northbrook who opened up the debate on the Vote of Censure for the Government was rather in agreement with the views of the leader of the Opposition, Lord Salisbury, than some of his colleagues in both houses. The Earl of Northbrook made no bones of his opposition to a policy of retreat which he thought might bring a military disaster and affect most seriously the safety and prosperity of Egypt. He maintained that retiring before the Mahdi would endanger the safety of Egypt. He claimed that Her Majesty's Government desired to see a settled Government established in the Sudan. He thought that the Mudir of Dongola might be placed in authority at Dongola and possibly also at Khartoum. Lord Northbrook concluded this speech by saying that: "As far as the Government are concerned, our policy is a clear one; we should hold our own in that country for the present, and arrange its government, so far as we are able, for the benefit and advantage of the people".\(^2\)

The last statement of Earl of Northbrook amounted to saying that British rule was going to be established in Khartoum after the Mahdi was crushed; but this was not the idea of all the members of the Cabinet. In the House of Lords itself, Lord Derby spoke against the view which demanded the establishment of British control in the Sudan. Lord Derby

\(^1\) Ibid., cols. 1699-1716, Lord Hartington, Feb. 27, 1885.
\(^2\) Ibid., cols. 1331-44, The Earl of Northbrook, Feb. 26, 1885.
thought that the Government was determined to confine themselves to "the attempt to rescue the garrison at Khartoum". He considered that the policy of the Government was still that of "Rescue and retire". It meant that the Government would not endeavour to extend or maintain "Egyptian control" over the Sudan. He had fair ground for expecting that the Mahdi would be content with the evacuation of his country by foreign troops and that he would remain on good terms with Egypt.

Lord Derby declared that the Government had taken on itself the duty of protecting Egypt from attack while they occupy it; but he claimed that they did not propose to occupy it permanently. He considered that there was no need for that policy of indefinite occupation of Khartoum which had been pressed upon the Government and which he had always disclaimed. Once they broke the power of the "military fanatical" leader; "the local tribes and chiefs" would want very little assistance and very little support, whether from Britain or Egypt, to enable them to hold their own.¹

Similar views were uttered by the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, in the Commons. He maintained that for the safety of Egypt it was absolutely necessary to break the military power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. But he objected strongly to any British occupation of any part of the Sudan;

because this would create new responsibilities of enormous dimensions. He did not believe that the country approved the policy enunciated by Mr. Goschen and others that the British ought to hold the route from Suakin to Berber and from Berber to Cairo. He was certain that such a policy would be "swept away like chaff before the wind of public opinion" of Britain. He still adhered firmly to the declarations which the Government made when they first entered Egypt - namely, that they did not go there for the purpose of permanently occupying the country and of maintaining an exclusively English power and influence. If the House of Commons had changed their minds upon the subject, and if the House was inclined to adopt another policy which meant nothing less than the annexation of Egypt and the Sudan, he would resist it.¹

The speech of the Prime Minister himself was in tone with those of Lord Derby and Sir William Harcourt rather than with those of Lords Hartington and Northbrook, in spite of the fact that he "dressed his thoughts in ambiguity appealing to Radical and Whig in turn".² The Prime Minister attacked the motion of the leader of the Opposition in the Commons on the ground that it stipulated the establishment "of a good and stable Government at Khartoum and all that lies to the East of Khartoum". "But would that be a resolution", he said,

"compatible with common prudence to be taken by the House of Commons. It means the establishment of a British Government over aliens, it means the establishment of Christian Government over Mahommedans, it means committing your gallant Army to a struggle from year to year in a tropical climate with people who are courageous by birth and courageous by fanaticism. It means a despotic Government to be established and upheld by British hands against those who hate it". For these reasons Mr. Gladstone thought himself justified in not giving a pledge to the Opposition of establishing a Government at Khartoum. "In the teeth of common prudence", he continued, "in the teeth of every reasonable calculation that is possible to make, in the teeth of all the forces of Nature arrayed against you, I will say the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Stafford Northcote) might as well, when he speaks of thus placing a permanent yoke on the neck of these people to be maintained by British authority and power - he might as well speak of chaining the sands of the desert when the tempest is howling over it".

With such strong words Mr. Gladstone dispelled the illusions of the Conservative Opposition and the Liberal Imperialists who entertained the establishment of British rule at Khartoum after the crushing of the power of the Mahdi. However, Mr. Gladstone claimed that considerations connected with the Sudan itself appeared to the Government to prevent the adoption of any resolution in the present juncture other
than that at which they arrived to - namely, the overthrow of the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. Those who listened to the speech of the Prime Minister did not recognize in it the same ring that had characterized the Ministerial Statement of 19 February, or the speeches of some members of the Government, mainly Lords Hartington and Northbrook. He did not refer again to the objects which induced the Cabinet to take the decision of destroying the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum and he entirely declined to give any positive compact on any of them. As to the establishment of a Government at Khartoum he declared that all that he would say was that he was not prepared at the present moment to say that there was no obligation on them to use, according to circumstances, reasonable efforts, if they went there, to leave behind them an orderly Government.¹

What emerged from this long debate was that there was still a large preponderance for the idea of "smashing up the Mahdi". This was shown by the fact that the motion of the Radicals who called for no further military operations against the Mahdi and the withdrawal of British troops from the Sudan got only 112 votes. It was evident that the majority of Liberals and Conservatives were against the idea of an immediate retreat from the Sudan before the destruction of the Mahdi's regime at Khartoum. In this the House of Commons might still have been guided by the public outcry that called

¹. Ibid., cols. 1089-1100, Mr. Gladstone, Feb. 23, 1885.  
Ibid., col. 1725.
for the revenge of a killed "hero" and an injured pride. However, this was as far as the majority of the House of Commons agreed upon. When it came to discussing what would be the next step after the crushing of the Mahdi's power at Khartoum, there were two distinct policies.

The Conservative Opposition joined by the Liberal right-wing and at least two Cabinet Ministers, Hartington and Northbrook, desired that the policy of "smashing up the Mahdi" should not stop short of establishing a régime at Khartoum which would be under British control. This was a strong combination; and at the end of the debate the school which demanded that the Eastern and Northern Sudan ought to be part of the British "informal" Empire was at its highest point of influence since the Sudan Question had started to be discussed in Parliament. The motion of the Leader of the Opposition in the Commons got more votes than any of the two motions of censure concerning the Sudan and Egypt which had been put forward by the Opposition in 1884. The motion was defeated by only fourteen votes. Moreover, the Conservative speakers and Liberal Imperialist leaders were less vague than in the two previous motions in their demand for a régime to be established at Khartoum under British sovereignty. Lord Salisbury in the Lords and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in the Commons gave clear speeches on this point. On the other hand the Liberal Imperialists did not only vote with the Conservative Opposition for the first time; but their two leaders, Goschen
and Forster, spoke clearly of the necessity to impose British rule at least on the Eastern Sudan.

Nevertheless, Mr. Gladstone, and behind him the majority of the Liberal rank and file, was still true to his pledge not to impose a foreign rule or influence on the Sudanese. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, as his speech in the debate demonstrated, was still of the opinion that the Mahdi's power at Khartoum should be destroyed. Having taken this step of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi, how could he shrink from the consequences? Mr. Gladstone went to Egypt to destroy the Government of Urabi but found that in order to keep the Khedive in power, British troops had to stay there to support him and Egypt became part of the "informal" British Empire. If the British troops were successful in overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum would not such a situation arise? If Mr. Gladstone was determined not to be a party to the imposition of any foreign rule, whether British or Ottoman, on the Sudanese, would it be logical for him to destroy the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum? It could hardly be supposed that Mr. Gladstone was unaware of this contradiction in his attitude.

Even before the debate ended it looked as if the whole issue of whether the British troops should go on with their campaign to destroy the Mahdi's power at Khartoum or not depended upon one man - Mr. Gladstone. The Radical, Mr. Courtney, observed this fact when he said that the issue depended upon the decision of one man. "A whisper from him", Mr. Courtney
continued, "a change of tone, a single utterance, the nation would be found rising to condemn what is now sullenly acquiesced in. The increase of our responsibility which had now arisen depended upon the utterance of one man". 1 Another Radical leader, Mr. Henry Labouchere, claimed that if the Prime Minister reverted to his Midlothian policy and frankly declared that he was opposed to the policy of aggression, annexation and war in the Sudan, the Radical and the Liberal party throughout the country would rally to him and he would find no difficulty in carrying with him the majority of the British people against the policy of war advocated by the Conservative Opposition, Liberal Imperialists and the Whigs. 2

It appeared that Mr. Gladstone was sensitive to the reproaches of his Radical friends and the working of his mind was not wholly incompatible with the thinking of the Radicals. The only difference between Mr. Gladstone and the Radicals was that he still hung to the decision of the Cabinet to overthrow the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. But Mr. Gladstone could not throw off this policy of "smashing up the Mahdi" unless, under altered circumstances, he felt safe in renouncing it and going back to his former policy of abandoning the Sudan to the Mahdi.

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was careful not to be pushed into taking steps that might force him to go beyond the policy of the

1. Ibid., col. 1652, Mr. Courtney, Feb. 27, 1885.
2. Ibid., cols. 1680-1, Mr. Labouchere, Feb. 27, 1885.
overthrow of the Mahdi's power. One example of this was his
total rejection of Baring's and Wolseley's suggestion,
supported by the Queen herself, that Wolseley be appointed
Governor-General of the Sudan. Such a request, Gladstone
thought would accentuate a "new policy". In fact in the
correspondence of Sir Evelyn Baring with Lord Granville and
that of Lord Wolseley with Lord Hartington in March and April,
1885, there was evidence to show that both Baring and Wolseley
tried to commit the Cabinet to a "new policy" by urging upon
them the establishment of a "settled form of Government in the
Eastern Soudan and along the Valley of the Nile up to Khartoum".

From the point of view of Gladstone, who was eager to
escape from the Sudan, the Russian attack on Penjenteh was a
godsend. As early as 12 March the Cabinet found it necessary
to consider the menacing look of things on the Afghan frontier.
Military necessities in India, as Mr. Gladstone described them
to the Queen, what were in the mind of her Ministers, and they
"might conceivably at this juncture come to overrule the present
intentions as to the Soudan as part of them, and it would
consequently be imprudent to do anything which could
practically extend our obligations in that quarter, as it is
the entanglement of the British forces in Soudanese operations.

1. F.O. 78/3813 Tel.No.171, Baring to Granville, March 22, 1885;
also Philip Guedalla, The Queen and Mr. Gladstone, (London,
1933) No.1193, p.341.

2. Add. MSS. 44199, Memorandum on the proposal to name
Wolseley, Governor-General of the Sudan, by Mr. Gladstone,
March 2, 1885.

3. F.O. 633/6, Baring to Granville, April 3, 1885; also
W.O. 33/44, Wolseley to Secretary of State for War,
March 9, 1885.
which would most powerfully tempt Russia to adopt aggressive measures.¹

At last three Cabinets were held on three successive days (April 13-15). On the evening of April 13, Mr. Gladstone sent a telegram to the Queen, who was then abroad, informing her that in the existing state of foreign affairs, the Cabinet felt bound to examine the question of the abandonment of offensive operations in the Sudan and the evacuation of the territory "subject to some considerations of detail and opportunity, and without prejudice to the obligation incumbent for the defence of Egypt". The final decision of the question was not taken on that day, Mr. Gladstone went on to tell the Queen, on account of the doubts which pressed on the mind of one or more among the Cabinet Members and so was postponed until tomorrow.² On April 14, the matter was again discussed and lastly on 15th April the decision was finally taken to retreat from the Sudan. The reason given for such a momentous decision was that the Government felt that it was necessary to hold all the resources of the Empire as far as possible, and inclusive of the force in the Sudan, available for service wheresoever they might be required. Under these circumstances the Vote for which the Ministry were asking did not include any provision for further offensive operations in the Sudan or for military preparations for an early advance on Khartoum.³

2. Ibid, Mr. Gladstone to the Queen, 13 April, 1885, p.635.
3. Ibid, Mr. Gladstone to Queen Victoria, April 15, 1885, p.636.
It might be reasonably assumed that Mr. Gladstone had taken it on himself to drown the doubts which were in the minds of some of his colleagues as far as such a change of policy was concerned. Mr. Gladstone had taken the trouble of drawing a long memorandum dated 9 April which was circulated to members of the Cabinet before the question came to it for final consideration. That Mr. Gladstone needed to convince some of his colleagues was clear from this memorandum. It was well-argued and went into full length to discuss the whole issue of the war in the Sudan. It was also significant in that it represented the views of Mr. Gladstone himself and the motives which prompted him to throw off the policy of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. It also showed that Mr. Gladstone’s mind was made up to renounce that policy even if there was no crisis between Britain and Russia.

The Memorandum started by arguing that when the decision to overthrow the Mahdi was taken, the objects they had immediately in view were to ascertain the fate of Gordon, to make every effort on his behalf and to prevent the extension of the area of disturbance. The Memorandum went on to state the motives which contributed to that decision and which were embodied in the Ministerial Statement of 19th of February. Then Mr. Gladstone argued that the two months which had passed since that decision was taken, had thrown some light upon the several points brought into view on the 19th February. First, they had now no sufficient reason to assume that any of the population of Khartoum felt themselves bound to Gordon, or to
have suffered on his account; or even that any large numbers of men in arms perished in the betrayal of the town, or took his part after the enemy were admitted into it. Secondly, they had had no tidings of anarchy at Khartoum, and they did not know that it was governed worse, or that the population was suffering more, than it would be under a "Turkish or Egyptian ruler". Thirdly, it was not believed that the possession of Khartoum was of any great value as regards the slave trade.

The larger question of eventual consequences in Egypt or in the East from the Mahdi's success at Khartoum, Mr. Gladstone claimed, was open to many views. But he observed that, first, the Mahdi made a trial of marching down the Nile and speedily abandoned it, even in the first flush of his success. Secondly, the cessation of operations in the Sudan did not at that moment mean British military inaction in the East. Thirdly, the question was one of conflict, not with the army of an enemy, but with nature in respect of climate and supply.

Mr. Gladstone then continued to argue that the future of more extended operations seemed dark. In at least one of his telegrams, Wolseley had expressed a very keen desire to get the British army out of the Sudan. He had made very large demands for the autumn expenditure, which, judging from previous experience and from general likelihood, were almost likely to grow larger, as he came more closely to confront the very formidable task before him; while in his letter to
Lord Hartington he described the affair to be "the greatest since 1815", and expressed his hope that all the members of the Cabinet would clearly understand this to be the case.

Lord Wolseley, Gladstone said, named a period of between two or three years for the completion of the railway, while he expressed an absolute confidence in the power and resources of Britain with vast effort to insure success. Mr. Gladstone was of the opinion that Wolseley meant military success; but, as far as political success was concerned, this appeared to Mr. Gladstone to be much more problematical.

The last question considered by Mr. Gladstone in his Memorandum was the moral basis of the "projected military operations". He had from the first "regarded the rising of the Soudanese against Egypt as a justifiable and honourable revolt". The Cabinet had, he thought, never taken an opposite view. So it appeared to Mr. Gladstone that there was a most grave question whether they could demonstrate a necessity (nothing less would suffice) "for making war on a people who are struggling against a foreign and armed yoke, not for the rescue of our own countrymen, not for the rescue so far as we know of an Egyptian population, but with very heavy cost of British life as well as treasure, with a serious strain on our military resources at a most critical time and with the most serious fear that if we persist, we shall find ourselves engaged in an odious work of subjugation".¹

Thus with a tremendous memorandum, with skilful arguments based on morality and the seriousness of undertaking military operations in the Sudan, the Grand Old Man drowned the doubts of his colleagues. It had been said that some of his colleagues were later indignant at the way in which he had persuaded them to reverse the policy of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. They alleged that he had used the Russian scare to deceive them into such a line. It was said that between the middle of April and middle of May more than half of his colleagues threatened resignation; however, only three of them could not completely stomach the deception of their Chief and so they resigned.

He used the same arguments that were embodied in his Memorandum of 9 April to explain to the House of Commons why the Cabinet had reversed its policy of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. But on this occasion he refrained from questioning "the moral basis of the projected military operations" because he knew that this would not appeal to some sections of the House. However, under the stress of the Russian war scare nobody tried to enter into a discussion or to challenge Mr. Gladstone's arguments and the House acquiesced in the decision of the Cabinet to retreat from the Sudan without a word of criticism. So Mr. Gladstone carried with him the House of Commons.

1. Hansard, 3rd Ser. CCXCVIII, cols. 855-60, Mr. Gladstone, April 27, 1885.
However, this task was made easier for him by the fact that the public outcry, which was universal on February 6, to avenge Gordon by "smashing up the Mahdi" appeared to have died down by the middle of April. The change in public mood was slow. But as the first impressions produced by Gordon's death wore off, the military and political difficulties of undertaking such a tremendous task as the capture of Khartoum was realized. Moreover, the anti-Mahdist feeling in Britain seemed to have been superseded by the wave of anti-Russian sentiment which convulsed Britain as a result of the Penjete incident.

A few, but influential, voices were raised in protest against the Cabinet's decision to reverse its policy of "smashing up the Mahdi". The Queen headed this protest, only to confirm Mr. Gladstone's opinion that Her Majesty was the "greatest Jingo of them all". It was also said that Lord Wolseley's immediate reaction was to resign but that his wife persuaded him against this course. The General, then, did not press the case for destroying the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum, but tried, in vain, to persuade the Government to hold on to Dongola province. As to Sir Evelyn Baring, he had already given it as his opinion, even before the decision to evacuate the Sudan was reached, that it was of

1. Letters of Queen Victoria, second series, Third Volume, Queen Victoria to Mr. Gladstone, April 14, 1885, p.
3. W.O. 33/44, Wolseley to Secretary of State for War, April 15, 1885.
great importance to Britain to "establish a settled form of Government in the Eastern Soudan and along the Valley of the Nile up to Khartoum", which in effect meant that Britain had to carry on its policy of overthrowing the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. High military authorities in Egypt and the Sudan, namely Buller, Wilson and Kitchener, also recorded their protest against the new "scuttling" policy of the Government and argued that if Khartoum was to be abandoned to the Mahdi at least Dongola ought to be held by British troops. In the House of Lords, on May 18, 1885, a certain Earl of Wemyss moved a resolution against the Government's policy to withdraw from the Eastern Sudan but his resolution did not find support even from the Conservatives and so he had to withdraw his motion and to content himself only with the debate.

However, Gladstone's main care was always for the electors and the public at large. Gladstone always wrote and spoke for them rather than for politicians and soldiers. This factor must have been foremost in Gladstone's mind on February 6, when a decision had to be taken. He knew that not only the existence of his Government but also his popularity and political career, were at stake unless he would satisfy the public appetite for revenge. And so the decision of February 6, to overthrow the Mahdi's power at Khartoum, was taken.

1. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Granville, April 3, 1885.
2. Bernard Holland, *op.cit.*, vol. II, pp. 32-7; also P.R.O. 30/57/5 Wilson to Kitchener, May 10, 1885.
But Mr. Gladstone must have been shocked by the absurdity and irrationality of that public outcry.

That it was absurd and irrational, there was no doubt. It was so because it was a consequence of the prevalence of the sentiment called prestige. The public outcry was motivated by a desire to amend and avenge an injured prestige which it was thought was caused by the death of a "hero" and the fall of Khartoum. But there appeared to be something un-English in thinking in terms of prestige. And so the sentiment was weak and short-lived. It was weak because it demanded nothing more than the "smashing up of the Mahdi". Unlike the French version of prestige\(^1\) it did not require much to satisfy it. It was short-lived because it continued only for a few weeks when some sections of the Press and some groups who had an interest in exploiting it continued to foster it. And because the sentiment of prestige was short-lived, the cry to "smash up the Mahdi" disappeared as rapidly as it had risen.

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CHAPTER IV
OPINIONS ON THE MAHDIST STATE,
1886-1896

1. Portrait of the Khalifa's Régime

The first four years of the Mahdist revolution produced an extensive literary output in English concerning the Sudan. In contrast, the intervening decade of the Khalifa's rule, from June 1885, when the Mahdi died, to March 1896, when the British Government authorised an advance south of Wadi Halfa, was a period of low productivity in English literature on the Sudan. However, a large portion of this literature was devoted to the description and criticism of the Khalifa Abdullahi's rule. It is from this literature that an attempt is to be made in this section to explore, examine and criticise the contemporary British views on the Khalifa's régime.

This period saw the appearance of six popular books on the Sudan. The authors of these books were concerned directly or indirectly with Sudanese affairs. Two of them were written by individuals, A.B. Wylde¹ and Henry Russell,² who had had trading connections with the Sudan. One other, Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan, published in 1891, was the product of the pen of Major F.R. Wingate, who was at that time the chief of the Intelligence Department in the Egyptian Army. Alfred Milner's, England in Egypt, which appeared in 1892, became classical. Nevertheless, the two books generally accepted as

authoritative were the memoirs of two European captives who had escaped from the Sudan. It is now generally accepted that Major Wingate was associated with the production of both. The first of these two books of memoirs told the story of the captivity of a certain Austrian missionary, Father Joseph Ohrwalder. It was followed in 1896 by the narrative of another fellow captive who had made his escape at the beginning of the year before.

The information from which Wingate's book, *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan*, was composed, had been derived from two main sources. The first source was the reports of refugees, prisoners, traders and paid spies. The other source was a manuscript book containing some of the letters and decrees of the Mahdi and the Khalifa which was found on the field after the battle of Tushki in August 1889. The book was, therefore, constructed largely from hearsay; and as such, in spite of the author's claim that his object was to give a true record of facts and a faithful history of events, the book is liable to many criticisms. The "oral evidence" deduced from refugees, prisoners, traders and paid agents of the Intelligence Department was, and is, open to the common charge that it was unreliable. Refugees and prisoners were usually hostile to the Mahdist regime and so their tales of the conditions inside the Sudan were distorted. The accounts of paid spies and traders

were usually given with the object of gaining some material or other profit from the authorities and were, therefore, coloured by the informants to suit the taste and mind of the recipient. Then it remained for Wingate himself to select the information which would serve any object he had in mind and to present it to the public. There was no doubt that Wingate wrote his book when the question of the re-conquest of the Sudan was firmly in his mind as his following remark clearly indicated: "That a new and better Sudan will be raised up over the ashes of Gordon and all those brave officers and men who have perished in the loyal performance of their duty is the fervent hope of every well-wisher for the prosperity of Egypt". ¹

The method of selection was also used by the Major as far as the documentary evidence was concerned. The translations were made by the Syrian employees of the Intelligence Department whose knowledge of English was imperfect and whose grasp of Mahdist terminology was frequently at fault. Wingate's selection of this evidence was arbitrary. ²

The narratives of Father Ohrwalder and Slatin suffered from the same defects as those of Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan because the hand of Wingate had played with them. They, therefore, could not be relied upon as independent authorities. It was doubtful that, even if Major Wingate had had nothing to do with the two books, they would have given an accurate and

honest description of the Khalifa's rule. The tellers were both captives under the Khalifa for a number of years during which they claimed to have suffered "varied and terrible experiences".¹ They, therefore, regarded the Khalifa as their arch-enemy and were naturally hostile to him and his régime. The two escaped captives were also determined on revenging themselves. But revenge would only come if they could convince the British Government that the re-conquest of the Sudan was desirable and might be carried out with little difficulty. Both Father Ohrwalder and Slatin made no secret of their favour of a policy of re-conquest. The Father concluded his story thus: "How long shall Europe - and above all that nation which has first part in Egypt and the Sudan - which stands deservedly first in civilizing savage races, how long shall Europe and Great Britain watch unmoved the outrages of the Khalifa and the destruction of the Sudan people?"² Slatin's concluding paragraph also demonstrated that he had written his narrative with the object of re-conquest in mind. He confessed that he had narrated his experiences "with earnest desire" that these experiences might prove of some value when the time for the destruction of the Khalifa's rule would arrive.³

One other defect of the two narratives was that they were

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2. Ibid., p.459.
constructed from memory as the circumstances under which both captives had lived precluded them from keeping notes or records of events. Even what they could remember must have been "oral evidence" because they were not eye-witnesses to most of the events they described and thus their information was derivative. It, therefore, lacked the testimony of first hand knowledge.

Alfred Milner's, *England in Egypt*, was the result of his experiences and inquiries during a residence of several years in Egypt. So it could be fairly supposed that his sources were the same as those of Wingate and it was not unlikely that it was Wingate who had supplied him with the information on the Sudan. They were old friends and as the private correspondence of Wingate shows, they continued to correspond with each other even after Milner left Egypt. Milner's book, therefore, suffered from the same shortcomings as those of Wingate, Ohrwalder and Slatin.

Milner's book was also written with the purpose of showing how, while "Great Britain was occupied elsewhere, her brilliant persevering sons had repeated on a lesser scale in Egypt the marvellous evolution which is working out in India". Milner's thesis was that what had been done in Egypt ought to be done in the Sudan. For such a work to be achieved the reconquest of the Sudan, in the eyes of Milner, was inevitable. He considered that "honour and humanity alike" pointed "to the

overthrow of the bloody despotism of the Khalifa”, as soon as it could be carried out without too great a strain on the resources of Egypt.¹

The sources of Wylde’s and Russell’s were the refugees and traders who used to come into Suakin from other parts of the Eastern Sudan. Hence, their information on the Mahdist State was all theory and lacked the testimony of first hand knowledge. On the other hand they were hostile to the Khalifa’s régime and demanded that an end should be put to his rule and the Sudanese should be "emancipated" from his tyranny.²

It has been suggested that the works of Major Wingate as author and editor should be regarded primarily as war propaganda designed to prepare the British public for eventual re-conquest of the Sudan.³ This conclusion had been arrived at before the Wingate private papers were made available for researchers and the conclusion was, therefore, not accepted uncritically. The investigation, however, of the papers in the Library of the School of Oriental Studies, Durham University, leaves the examiner with no doubt as to the correctness of that conclusion. It is hoped, with the aid of these papers, to discuss when why and how Wingate campaigned for the re-conquest of the Sudan in the next section.

For all these reasons, the portrait of the character of the Khalifa’s régime as presented in the works of Wingate,

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Slavin, Milner, Russell and Wylde should not be uncritically accepted. However, they all agreed on the point that the Khalifa's rule was an unheard of tyranny and despotism.

In his, *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan*, Wingate led the way in giving a highly over-coloured and over-exaggerated picture of an oppressive and inefficient administration in the Sudan. Wingate confessed that in the first stages of the Mahdist revolution the inhabitants of the Sudan had heartily joined the movement, but, he claimed, it soon became patent to them that the lavish promises of the Mahdist leaders were seldom if ever carried into effect; and in 1891 – the adherents of Mahdism might be practically reduced to one tribe only – the Baqqāra. But this tribe was by far the most powerful in the Sudan – they were sufficiently powerful to maintain their dominance which might be compared to that of a small foreign army upholding a tyrannical form of Government in a hostile country, the inhabitants of which were forced to unwilling submission by want of arms, food and leaders.¹

As time went on, alleged Wingate, the Sudanese saw their spiritual leader, the Mahdi, steeped in the wildest debauchery and blindly led by his Chief Khalifa Abdułlahī, who, with his all-powerful Baqqāra tribe ruled the land with an iron hand. In place of a religious kingdom where the inhabitants would live in peace, where there should be communism of property and

poverty should be unknown, the Sudanese found the country drifting into a state of anarchy, rapine, bloodshed and horrors filled the land. Tribe after tribe attempted to shake itself free from the "Nessus Shirt" which clung round it, but the power they had unwittingly raised had now become a huge spectre which overawed and crushed them. The more they tried to drive off the horrible nightmare, the more closely and heavily did it press upon them and eventually they became its abject slaves. Their chiefs fell victims to the cruel caprice of a ruler of the most debased and tyrannical nature. Whole households were swept away; and whole tribes were extinct. No man could call his soul his own. Wingate concluded that the tribes longed for the return of the old Ottoman rule which, with all its faults "had never treated them thus".¹

Wingate portrayed the Khalifa as a debauched beast, a ruler without any good point in his character. He was a man of no education and of exceptional ignorance - but well versed in every sort of fraud and deception. He was intensely vain; was a despotic and tyrannical ruler utterly ignorant and regardless of all recognized laws and forms of government. His domestic life was not calculated to inspire his followers with the religious asceticism which his preaching and proclamations so fervently enjoined. He had some thirty-four wives but still he was not satisfied; he, therefore, employed one of his most trusted followers to find out all the good-looking women

¹. Ibid., pp.466-7.
and after due report had been made to him the husband of the
woman required was secretly advised to divorce his wife, who
was at once brought to the Khalifa. An attempt to evade such
an order would result in the immediate execution of the
unfortunate husband.¹

In 1892 Alfred Milner pictured the Khalifa and his
administration in no less sensational a way than that of
Wingate in 1891. Milner lamented that the Sudan was the only
portion of the world where "civilization" had during the
fifteen years preceding 1892 distinctly regressed - the one
region deliberately given to "barbarism". He considered that
fifteen years ago it was as safe to go to Khartoum and even
five hundred miles further up the Nile Valley, as it was to go
to Wadi Halfa in 1892. He thought that south of Wadi Halfa
there was now no security whatever.

Milner had no doubt whatever that the Government which
had existed in the Sudan in Khedive Ismail's time was, for the
most part, detestably bad. Bad as the old Government of the
Sudan was, it now appeared mild and beneficient by comparison
with the "savage tyranny" which had succeeded it. Milner
reported that it was estimated that half of the population of
the Sudan had perished as a result of misgovernment, famine
and war.²

The image of the Khalifa's rule, as one characterized by
a unique and unheard of ferocity, given by Wingate and Milner

¹. Ibid., pp.466-9
². Alfred Milner, op.cit., pp.159-60.
was soon corroborated by one who was introduced to the public by Major Wingate as "an eye-witness of long experience and unquestionable veracity" - Father Joseph Ohrwalder.

The Father conceded a few good traits in the character of the Khalifa. He thought that the latter had an intelligent face and was a man of great energy. He was also gifted by nature with common sense. Beyond this the missionary saw nothing appreciable in the personality of the Khalifa. The bad side of the Khalifa's character outweighed enormously his good side. According to Father Ohrwalder the Khalifa was much addicted to harem life. He had one hundred and fifty wives; yet, wherever a pretty woman was to be found he at once got information about her from his spies and she was immediately brought to be incorporated in the retinue of his harem. The Khalifa was also an intensely vain man, very cruel and quick-tempered. He surrounded himself with spies who pandered to his jealous and tyrannical nature.¹

His Government, according to Father Ohrwalder, was as bad and tyrannical as his character. Large portions of the country were depopulated. Hordes of elephants roamed the plains. Whole tribes and the population of large towns dwindled almost to nothing. This was all due to the oppressive nature of the Khalifa's rule. No man's life and property were secure. The result was that the progress of fifty years brought about by Ottoman rule was ruined.²

2. Ibid., pp.955-8.
If the missionary Father Ohrwalder had reason enough to hate the existing régime in the Sudan, Slatin had more than enough. The Father was detained for ten years but Slatin was detained for about twelve years and in the meantime was made to change his religion and his name and to appear as if he acquiesced in the Mahdia. And so, when Slatin escaped, all these humiliations haunted him. They made him forget the fact that the Khalifa had treated him well and that it was within the capacity of his ex-master to rid him of his life but that, being human, he refrained from this.

However, the ungrateful Slatin did not concede this humanity for the Khalifa. He painted his character and rule in the blackest terms. The personality of the Khalifa was subjected to the severest attack by the regenáde Slatin. According to him the Khalifa was a man of arbitrary nature; a mixture of malice and cruelty and a man who delighted to annoy and cause disappointments. The Khalifa was never happier than when he had brought people to complete destruction by confiscating their property, throwing them into chains, robbing families, seizing and executing all persons of tribal influence and authority and reducing entire peoples to a condition of complete impotence.  

Slatin alleged that the Khalifa gradually became the possessor of a harem over four hundred wives and he never hesitated to divorce them at will and to take others in their places. Moreover, the Khalifa encouraged or accepted tacitly

the moral laxity which, in the opinion of Slatin, prevailed in the Sudan at that time, because the Khalifa had come to the conclusion that it was much easier to rule by despotism and tyranny a degraded nation than one which possessed a high standard of morality.¹

According to Slatin the Khalifa was utterly ignorant of reading and writing; was also absolutely ignorant of theology and knew little or nothing about the rudiments of religion.

Since the Khalifa governed the country in a most tyrannical and despotic manner Slatin lamented the disappearance of the old Ottoman rule and talked of the benefits brought to the Sudan by that rule. He could not recall any other instance in modern times of a country in which a semblance of "civilization" had existed for upwards of half a century falling back into a state so little removed from "absolute barbarism".² And because of this state of affairs the Sudan was no longer open to the influences of commerce and "civilization". The once comparatively "civilized" Sudan was now occupied by a barbaric power hostile to European and Ottoman influences.³

The Khalifa and his tribesmen - the Baqqāra - continued Slatin, had destroyed and ruled the "unfortunate populations" with a rod of iron and with such oppression and tyranny as to make them long for a return to any form of government which would give them rest and peace. The horrors and cruelties

1. Ibid, p.562.
2. Ibid, p.622.
3. Ibid, pp.624-5.
which had been enacted by the Khalifa and his followers in order to maintain their position of ascendancy resulted in the fact that at least seventy-five per cent of the total population had succumbed to war, famine and disease while the remainder of the majority were little better than slaves.

To the traders, the Khalifa was also as much an enemy as he was to the soldier, Wingate, and the diplomat, Milner; and so the traders' picture of the Khalifa and his régime was as unfavourable as that of the former group. A.B. Wylde thought that the country had become one charnal house where every crime was perpetrated by its "savage" and victorious population against those who were grounded in the "just rudiments of civilization".¹

One of the iniquities attributed to the Khalifa's régime was the assertion that the slave trade had increased during his administration. This was an important theme which Wingate and Slatin alluded to in the strongest terms.

Major Wingate reported that the slave trade was said to be flourishing in the Sudan during the Khalifa's administration; and that large numbers of slaves left the Sudan via the Red Sea ports for whom the Arab merchants generally exchange contraband goods.² The Major had also written of the vast bands of slaves from Bahr al-Ghazal for the greatly enlarged household of the Mahdi, his Khalifa's and his own lieutenants.³

2. F.R. Wingate, Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan, p.479.
Father Ohrwalder's account affirmed Wingate's statement that the Mahdia had re-established the slave trade which at the time of the Father's escape was in full vigour; and that almost all those slaves who had been liberated in the days of the former Government were sold again into slavery.¹

On the other hand the Father reported that exports of slaves to Egypt and the Red Sea were forbidden because the Khalifa feared that the British might intercept them and make soldiers of them; but a certain number of female slaves were still smuggled through.²

Slatin alleged that the advent of the Khalifa had given a great impulse to the slave trade. As, however, the export of slaves to Egypt was strictly prohibited the slave trade was confined entirely to the provinces under the Khalifa's control. In prohibiting the export of slaves the Khalifa acted on the wise principle that he should not increase the power of his adversaries at his own expense. However, Slatin contradicted himself when he confessed that the slave-caravans which were formerly sent from the Sudan had now almost completely stopped.³

The nineteenth century writings on the contemporary history of the Mahdist State were dominated by writers who had a vested interest in the overthrow of that state. It was this interest that produced a highly coloured image of the Khalifa as a monster: a sensual, debauched, selfish and cruel tyrant;

1. F.R. Wingate, Ten Years, p. 383.
2. Ibid., p. 387.
and of his administration as one of continuous war, slave-
raiding and trading, oppression and an unimaginable cruelty.
This picture of the Khalifa's character and régime emanated
from propagandists and publicists but seemed to be generally
accepted by the reading public, and there was hardly any
dissenting voice at the time. The image was enhanced in the
minds of the reading public by the fact that the Sudan at that
time was closed to Europeans; no European could venture to go
to Omdurman and ascertain the true facts of the situation.
And so the reading public had to take at their face value the
picture painted for them by Wingate, Slatin, Milner and Wylde,
who, after all, were considered to be authorities on the subject.
There are also doubts whether the reading public could have
believed a picture, other than that of war propagandists, as
the Mahdist state, as the humiliations caused by the death of
Gordon, the fall of Khartoum and the return of the Gordon
Relief Expedition were not entirely forgotten, was as much
an enemy to the public as to Wingate and Slatin. And so it
was natural for the reading public to accept the Wingate-Slatin
portrait of the Khalifa's personality and administration.

To justify intervention in the Sudan the Wingate clique
needed a moral justification in order to convince those of
the British Establishment and public who had not been
convinced of the case for Britain to intervene and end the
Mahdist state. The interventionists, therefore, created the
tale of the unexceptionally cruel administration in the Sudan
and its wide-spread unpopularity among the Sudanese.
The Khalifa was no doubt an authoritarian and an autocrat but so, in their different ways, were nineteenth century European autocrats. Any authoritarian régime, even in our present century, was, and is, characterized by spells of ruthlessness to crush opposition. Moreover, violence and ruthlessness was not, in the nineteenth century, confined to the Sudan. The age of the Khalifa was an age of violence and brutality. It was an age in which violence was glorified by the most talented British poet - Kipling. It was an age of "Jingoism" and the "new imperialism" both of which rejoiced in violence and produced bloodshed and destruction to which the very people who condemned the Khalifa's ruthlessness contributed largely.

If the Khalifa's character was as beastly as it was painted by Slatin and Father Ohrwalder, both of them could never have lived to write their distorted narratives. A ruler who would refrain from executing his war prisoners and who would treat them well certainly had a good claim to some traits of humanity. The Khalifa never put a single European captive to death. Slatin's contemporaries were astonished to see him so fit after twelve years of captivity. The Queen was surprised when she met Slatin; and thought he looked so well. Of course the Queen and others attributed the soundness of Slatin's health to the inexhaustible strength, determination and powers of endurance of Slatin. None of them would concede the fact that it was because Slatin was well

treated by his ex-master that he preserved his health and mind. Mr. R. Hill, in a biography of Slatin, has recently alluded to this point and concluded from it that the Khalifa was not a person devoid of humanity.¹

It was ironical that the works of Wingate, Slatin and Milner should appear at the moment when the Khalifa had already moved, with some success, towards a policy of conciliation with the northern riverain Sudanese who opposed his rule before 1889. This policy of conciliation was inaugurated since September 1889. Within a year this policy began to show success.² When the re-conquest started in March 1896 the policy was so successful that the Khalifa's authority was accepted throughout the Mahdist state and there was no internal threat or challenge to his sovereignty.³

This fact was not entirely unknown at the time. In November 1895, when Wilfrid Blunt was visiting Wadi Halfa a number of Sudanese refugees applied to him to use his good offices with the military authorities to get permission for them to return to their homes. From the accounts of these refugees Blunt deduced that "there was no longer excessive oppression" in the Sudan.⁴ From the Chief of the Sudanese refugees in Egypt Wilfrid Blunt learned that, at Dongola, the

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tyrannical state of things existing since the Mahdi's death had lately changed and that the Khalifa's policy had become one of conciliation towards his enemies.¹

If Wilfrid Blunt, who was just on a few days visit to Egypt, could get the knowledge that the character of the Khalifa's rule had changed and that oppression of the opposition was no longer the Khalifa's target, it was inconceivable that Wingate and Slatin had had no such information. The fact was that they had known what Blunt reported. There was a passing reference to it in Father Ohrwalder's narrative in which he mentioned that the Khalifa had "decided to change the policy of oppression and to establish a milder rule" after 1891.² But the narrative did not go on to elaborate on the point; the writer doubted the sincerity of the Khalifa and thought the new policy was a design by the Khalifa to ward off his unpopularity rather than a genuine change; and that he effected this change to cope with the revulsion of feeling on the part of the inhabitants who were now thoroughly tired of his rule.

However, if Wingate and Slatin refused to admit the new conciliation policy of the Khalifa in their public statements, there was evidence to demonstrate that they were aware of the full details of it. The Intelligence Reports which emanated from Wingate's Intelligence Department were full of evidence.

² F.R. Wingate, Ten Years, p.389.
provided by reliable informants on this point. A clear statement of the Khalifa's new policy of reconciliation was given in a statement by a certain Sudanese trader, Mustafā al-Amīn, which was included in the Intelligence Report for December 1892. Mustafā al-Amīn's testimony admitted that when the Khalifa first began to rule, he exercised the greatest tyranny and oppression over the people but now the situation had changed. The supremacy of his own tribe being undisputed and the internal dissensions having been suppressed, the Khalifa was now attempting with some success to establish a more lenient and popular government. The basic taxation was less heavy than it had been in Ottoman times. Thus, in Mustafā al-Amīn's view a gradual consolidation of Sudanese support for the new régime was taking place. This informant warned Wingate that any invasion of the Sudan would "meet with opposition on the part of these very tribes who have been most clamorous for its return"; such opposition, moreover, would grow stronger with every passing year. Mustafā al-Amīn concluded that there was now more or less a general feeling that an advance on the part of a foreign power ought to be considered as "an attempt to interfere with their independence". 1

The Intelligence Report for August, 1894, included a statement by another well-known Sudanese trader, a certain Wad Dālil, who spoke in the same tone as Mustafā al-Amīn in December, 1892. His conclusion was the same as that of the

latter, mainly that in time of need or external aggression the Sudanese would rally to the Khalifa to fight the invader.\footnote{1}

These important statements were not made public at the time and it is doubtful whether the attention of the "policy makers" was drawn to them. Slatin's book made no reference at all to the changing character of the Khalifa's rule. That the oppressive character and the unpopularity of the Khalifa's rule had been a good deal exaggerated was evident even before the Mahdia was over. Baring, for example, used to believe in 1889 that the "Dervish domination" was "much more oppressive than the Egyptian rule, with all its defects";\footnote{2} and that the "Dervish rule" was "getting very unpopular".\footnote{3} But in 1897 Lord Cromer reported to Salisbury that the "unpopularity of the Dervishes" had been "a good deal exaggerated"; and that although the "Dervish rule was hard", judged "by an Oriental standard, not very cruel. The taxation was light, far lighter than that which prevailed under the Egyptians".\footnote{4}

The systematic and scientific study of the Khalifa's character and rule by British writers started only a few years ago. In 1950, A.B. Theobald's paper on "The Khalifa Abdallah\footnote{5}", "pointed the way to a more balanced and less emotional assessment of this ruler's character and achievements".\footnote{6}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 1. P.R.O. 30/57/13 Intelligence Report, Egypt. 29, August, 1894.
\item 2. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Sir Samuel Baker, Feb. 28, 1889.
\item 3. Ibid. same to same, Dec. 12, 1889.
\item 4. F.O. 633/5 Cromer to Salisbury, Feb. 21, 1897.
\end{footnotes}
The same author's book "The Mahdiya"¹ paved the way for a
new scientific approach of the subject. P.M. Holt's, The
Mahdist State in the Sudan,² has done justice to the Khalifa
and is a credit to modern British historians. The impartial
reader who consults the works of Wingate and Slatin together
with those of P.M. Holt can hardly escape realizing how unfair
were contemporary British writers to the Khalifa and his
administration and how they were carried away by political
and other prejudices to an extent which almost nullifies their
contribution. To substitute this more adequate scholarly
account of P.M. Holt of the Khalifa's life, achievements,
policies, ideas and of the historical situation within which
he had to operate, for the myths and propaganda of Wingate and
other propagandists and publicists is simply to move from a
more naive approach carried away by political and other
prejudices to a more mature level of historical thinking.

Thus with the publication of A.B. Theobald's and
P.M. Holt's works it has at last become possible for British
writers to discuss the character of the Khalifa and his
administration in scientific terms and to escape from the
melodramatic, stereotyped and emotionally loaded propagandist
generalizations which had hitherto dominated the subject in
British writings. However, those who are entitled to have the
last word on this topic are the new, native-born historians of
the Sudan. When the whole history of the Mahdist State comes

under their scholarly and scientific survey, they may well reach conclusions that will surprise western writers and historians.

The assertion of Wingate, Slatin and others that the slave trade had flourished since the Khalifa came to power was also an example of a deliberate attempt on the part of those writers to give a distorted picture of the Khalifa's rule. The fact was that the observations of Father Ohrwalder and Slatin on the slave trade at that time pointed to a conclusion opposite to their own. Both the Father and Slatin noted that export of slaves to Egypt and the Red Sea was forbidden by the Khalifa. They had also mentioned that slave producing districts - Equatoria and Bahr al-Ghazal - were not under the control of the Khalifa's authority and, as a result of that, slavers could not penetrate into these regions with the consequence that no slave caravans arrived from them. They also mentioned that the Red Sea route was closed up especially after the re-occupation of Tokar.

All these observations which were recorded by Father Ohrwalder and Slatin made a strong case for concluding that the slave trade diminished sharply during the administration of the Khalifa. As we have seen in a previous chapter the expansion of the slave trade had been a corollary of the penetration of what is now the Southern Sudan which then was the major hunting ground for slaves; but since the present Southern Sudan was practically outside the Khalifa's control after 1891, one could hardly see from where the increased numbers of slaves came;
nor which markets absorbed them as their export to Egypt and the Red Sea was forbidden and the markets in Egypt and Hijāz used to be the principal markets for slaves coming from the Sudan. Moreover, the markets under Ottoman or British control were closed.

Inside the Sudan itself there was no economic demand for slaves to give impetus to the slave trade. The state of trade in general was in depression and there was no trade carried in ivory or any other bulky commodity to give birth to a corresponding trade in slaves as a by-product of the former. The severe famine was also evidence that cultivation was neglected and that less land was cultivated than in the years before the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution which on the other hand, showed that, less slaves were used for cultivable purposes. In short the economic realities of the Sudan at this period precluded any possibility of an increase in the slave trade. There were reasons to suppose that the slave trade would have died slowly, but faster than it did under the Condominium Government, during the Khalifa's administration had the latter been allowed to exist longer than it did. This was so because one of the immediate effects of the newly formed Condominium administration was to increase the demand for slaves; as the initial opening up of transportation routes, organization of cash markets for produced and collective products and the like, had the effect of increasing the demand for labour, and one way of satisfying this demand was through slave labour.¹

It was perhaps an awareness on the part of Wingate and "the forward school" of the acceptance of the Khalifa's rule in the five years before the re-conquest that forced them to step up their propagandist war against the Khalifa and his administration. This school must have thought that if the new facts on the unity of the Sudanese behind the Khalifa reached the ears of the British reading public it would have deprived the school of its main arguments that the Khalifa's administration was detested by the bulk of the Sudanese and that as a consequence it was the duty of the British to "emancipate" them from this, as it had been due to Mr. Gladstone's abandonment of the Sudan that the Mahdist State imposed its grip upon the Sudanese. For this reason it was no coincidence that Wingate and his Intelligence Department did their best, with success, to effect the escape of Ohrwalder and Slatin in the years 1891-1895. Wingate must have known that the memoirs of Ohrwalder and Slatin would have a great impact on the British public.

There was also evidence to show that the British public was becoming less interested in the Sudan before the publication of the tales of Ohrwalder and Slatin. In December 1888, Lord Salisbury complained to Sir Evelyn Baring that public opinion in its largest sense took no note of Egyptian and Sudanese affairs.\(^1\) One of Wingate's friends informed him that the British public in general had ceased to take any

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interest in the Sudan. In May 1892 Macmillans refused the offer of Wingate to publish the narrative of Father Ohrwalder because they thought the risk of publication was too great as the subject of the Sudan was not very attractive to the average English reader.

Wingate tried to change this indifference towards the Sudan in the minds at least of influential quarters in 1891 when he published his book, Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan. He was contented with the good reception of the book and the interest shown in it. Detailed reviews appeared in almost every newspaper and periodical in Great Britain and Ireland, over several months.

But the effect of Wingate's own book on the "Establishment" and the public was nothing compared to that of Ten Year's Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp and Fire and Sword in the Sudan. Winston Churchill claimed that Ohrwalder's account of his captivity created a wide and profound impression in England; that Slatin's tale "increased the horror and anger of thoughtful people in England at the cruelties of the Khalifa"; and that because of these two narratives public opinion "began to veer towards the policy of re-conquest".

The success of Ohrwalder's and Slatin's stories was more than was expected by the authors and the publishers. The

1. Wingate MSS. Box 233/2 W.G. Cartwright to Wingate (undated but probably early 1892).
2. Wingate MSS. Box 230 George C. Macmillan to Wingate May 26, 1892.
publishers of Fire and Sword in the Sudan rejoiced that the book had made large sales, had become a standard work, and had found its way into every library in the country. It was even being used as a prize in schools.¹

It was a matter of satisfaction to Wingate, Slatin and Milner that their works were not only reviewed favourably but that their statements on the Khalifa's rule were endorsed by the reviewers as well as their conclusions that it was time to put an end to the régime of the Khalifa.

In reviewing Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan, The Times judged that "the romantic fiction of a nation struggling to be free" might be corrected by watching the developments of the Mahdia from a religious and social upheaval against Ottoman misrule into a reign of terror wearisome even to the fierce Baqqāra tribes, who were its mainstay, and only bolstered up by superstition, sham visions and perpetual jihad.² The same paper, when reviewing Ohrwalder's account concluded that with all "its drawbacks and all its iniquities the Egyptian rule in the Sudan was greatly to be preferred to the state of things" that had followed the abandonment. The Sudan, in the opinion of The Times, was in 1892 "almost the darkest spot in Africa". The Times ended its review of Ten Years ..., by quoting Father Ohrwalder's final appeal to Europe to put an end to the Khalifa's rule.³

¹. Slatin MSS. Box 432/80 Edward Arnold to Slatin, November 23, 1895.
². The Times, October 15, 1891.
³. Ibid, October 20, 1892.
In reviewing Father Ohrwalder's account, the Scotsman came to the conclusion that the Khalifa's reign was full of horrors and of disasters to the Sudan and the Sudanese than even that of its predecessor.¹

Russell's book, The Ruin of the Sudan, and Ten Years Captivity, were the subject of a large review by the National Review. The reviewer considered that under the Ottoman rule the Sudan had been better off than it was under "the cruel despotism" of the Khalifa; and concluded that reasons of interest as well as pity ought to compel Britain or some "civilized" power, sooner or later, to interfere to put down the Khalifa's régime.²

In the same journal Captain F.D. Lugard reviewed Slatin's book. Lugard maintained that the cruelty of the Khalifa grew to proportions unrivalled even by the late Emperors of Rome. The Khalifa gloated over the massacre of whole tribes and his policy was to exterminate the Nile Valley tribes. The Captain thought that atrocities worse than those in Armenia had been perpetrated without ceasing for twelve years in the Sudan and that Britain was responsible for all that; for apart from the fact that it was on the advice of Britain that the Sudan had been abandoned it was also owing to the British veto that no other European power had been able to intervene to put a stop "to this awful chaos, oppression and cruelty".³

1. The Scotsman, October 20, 1892.
Under the title "The Fate of the Sudan", the Edinburgh Review, reviewed Wingate's Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan together with Henry Russell's The Ruin of the Soudan. The reviewer thought that both books threw light on dark pages of the history of a dark land. Ten years ago the Sudan was safer than many parts of London; but during these ten years the country had been deluged with blood - the result of the Khalifa's rule.¹

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, thought that what the Midi was to France the Sudan was to Africa. Its condition was as terrible and heart-rending as that of the Midi when hordes of savage revolutionists converted it into a pandemonium. "A hell on earth" was not too strong a phrase with which to characterise what the Sudan had become under the "barbarous" rule of the Khalifa. The Sudan became the darkest spot in dark Africa. The journal considered that the picture which Father Ohrwalder drew of the Sudan was not overcharged and suggested that the time had come when the Khalifa's power should be destroyed.²

The Anti-Slavery Reporter joined the chorus in condemning the Khalifa's rule but it naturally concentrated on its field of specialization - the slave trade. The Anti-Slavery Reporter interviewed both Father Ohrwalder and Slatin on the subject of the slave trade and when their narratives appeared,

it reproduced at length the parts dealing with the slave trade in the stories of the two ex-captives. The journal did not question the informants' evidence in spite of the contradictions implicit in it. In the 1870's the Anti-Slavery Reporter had urged that if the export of slaves from the Sudan to Egypt and Turkey and to Hijāz through the Red Sea was prohibited, this would strike a great blow at the slave trade in the Sudan. Both Slatin and Ohrwalder mentioned categorically that the Khalifa prohibited the export of slaves. In spite of this fact the Anti-Slavery Reporter forgot its earlier belief and contradicted itself when it wrote of the "enormous extent of slave raiding" that was carried throughout the Sudan. However, it could hardly be expected that the Anti-Slavery Reporter would give credit to the Khalifa for his prohibition of the export of slaves when it engaged itself in a campaign against him. It considered that the Sudanese were living under a reign of terror such as had not been seen in the history of recent times; and that it was the desire of all friends of humanity that it must come to an end.

It is evident from this survey of the reviews of the works of Wingate, Slatin, Russell and Milner in the Press and the periodicals that nearly all reviews concentrated on two themes -

the first was what they called the tyrannical nature of the Khalifa's rule and the second was that it was the responsibility of Britain to put an end to that rule. None of the reviewers questioned the facts, the conclusions or the motives of Wingate, Slatin and Milner.

The contemporary view of the Khalifa's administration would not be complete without considering the convictions and the speculations which were wide-spread as far as the strength or weakness of the Mahdist state during the Khalifa's sovereignty. Although it was impossible for any Briton to assess accurately the strength and the probable duration of the Mahdist State there was a prevalent belief in both public and official circles in London and Cairo that the Mahdist State was on the verge of collapse.

This belief started to gain ground immediately after the death of the Mahdi in June 1885. As early as August 1885, Mr. Egerton, who was acting British Consul in Cairo at the time, communicated to Lord Salisbury his belief that the religious element of the Mahdia had disappeared with the death of the Mahdi.¹

Until the re-occupation of Tokar in February 1891 the idea was prevalent in the British Consulate in Cairo that the Mahdia as a religious movement was nearly extinct and that the Mahdist State was on the verge of collapse. In 1887 Portal reported to Lord Rosebery that the Khalifa's authority had waned, that the late Mahdi's name was no longer revered as

1. F.O. 633/7 Egerton to Salisbury, August 6, 1885.
it had once been and that there was no longer any enthusiasm for the cause except among the few remaining real "Dervishes".\(^1\)

Until the re-occupation of Tokar, Sir Evelyn Baring was of the conviction that the Mahdia was declining. In June 1886 he expressed the opinion that there was no danger to Egypt from an advance by the Ansār.\(^2\) In the next year Baring reported to Lord Salisbury that the Mahdist movement was not yet extinct but he believed it to be dying out.\(^3\) In 1890 Baring gave it as his opinion that the decline of the Mahdia was going on quicker than he had expected; and that Mahdism was just now in that state that the slightest push might not impossibly knock the whole thing over. Baring thought that the battle of Tūshki and the famine had done in nine months the work which he had anticipated it would take four or five years to accomplish.\(^4\) However, Baring changed his mind on this point after the re-occupation of Tokar as we shall see later.

The belief that the Mahdist state was collapsing was widespread among British military circles in London and Cairo. Wingate who was considered the "perfect encyclopaedia of knowledge on all matters connected with the Sudan" was of the opinion that the Mahdist State was on the wane and the power of the movement appeared to him to be breaking up. Wingate

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1. S.P. Portal to Salisbury, Sept. 12, 1887.
2. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Rosebery, June 26, 1886; also Ibid., Baring to Lord Iddesleigh, Dec. 12, 1886.
3. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Salisbury, April 23, 1887.
4. S.P. Baring to Salisbury, January 19, 1890; Ibid., same to same, April 4, 1890.
believed that the power of the Mahdist State was continually tottering to its fall.

However, Wingate maintained that the authority of the Khalifa was still, in 1891, supreme in the Sudan. But he considered that the Khalifa's tyranny and bloodshed had weakened his power, and that there was strong grounds for believing that the collapse of the Mahdist State was approaching.¹

In his private correspondence with friends Wingate expressed the same view. In 1890 he informed a certain Collwell that the Khalifa's offensive power was considerably crippled but he was still the ruler and ought to remain so until a stronger rival would emerge.²

The year before, Wingate's observation was that the disaffection of the tribes especially al-Shukriya and al-Jaliyin indicated that the Khalifa's power had been of late considerably weakened; that his power in 1889 rested on the support of his own tribe, the Baqqara, but this tribe was by far the most powerful in the Sudan and they were sufficiently powerful to maintain their present position of supremacy. He judged that neither a possibility of famine nor a further alienation of disaffected tribes were sufficiently powerful agents to warrant the near overthrow of the Mahdist State. His conclusion was that although the Khalifa's power was greatly weakened, he was capable of holding his own for some time to come; and

¹ F.R. Wingate, Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan, pp. 248, 253, 270, 279.
² Wingate MSS. Box 227, Wingate to Collwell, Feb. 9, 1890.
that the Khalifa's resources had lately been so reduced as to necessitate a defensive rather than an offensive policy.¹

The escaped captives from Omdurman confirmed the dominant view that the Mahdist State was on the verge of collapse. Father Ohrwalder reported that the overthrow of Abd al-Rahmān al-Nujūmi at Tushki, the destruction of Abū Anja's immense army during his constant campaigns in Ethiopia, the year of famine in 1889 and finally the capture of Tokar and total defeat of 'Uthmān Digna in February 1891 had all tended largely towards the diminution of the Khalifa's power.² The Father believed that this decline was due to the immorality of the Khalifa and his conversion of the Mahdist movement into an entirely worldly and temporal power instead of upholding the religious precepts on which the Mahdīa was founded.³

However, Slatin gave a picture of a stronger Mahdist State than it was believed before his narrative was published. Slatin thought that the Khalifa's authority in his diminished dominions was undisputed. "Within the Sudan", Slatin wrote, "he is all powerful; but he is not in a position to offer a determined resistance to outside enemies. His leaders were neither capable nor sufficiently instructed to ensure victory. His men are not now loyal enough to fight with that determination which early fanaticism had inspired. They have little or no faith in the cause for which they are supposed to be fighting; and there is little doubt that the Khalifa's force could not

¹ Wingate MSS. Box 155/4 Confidential Report by Wingate, January 18, 1889.
² F.R. Wingate, Ten Years, p. 388.
³ Ibid., p. 400.
resist the advance of a foreign power bent on re-occupying the Sudan".1

Slatin's view on the strength of the Mahdist forces was supported by figures which gave the impression that he exaggerated the strength of the Khalifa's forces. This was not because there was contrary evidence but because his view was at variance with the pre-conceived idea on the weakness of the Mahdist State. Lord Rosebery was worried that Slatin's view was that the Khalifa was stronger than they had of late been accustomed to believe; and he requested Lord Cromer to ascertain whether Wingate's information confirmed Slatin's view or not.2 Wingate stood by his own estimation of the Khalifa's power and thought that the power of the Khalifa in 1895 remained much as it had been for the last ten years and perhaps, if anything, was weaker than formerly. Wingate believed that Slatin overstated the power of the Mahdist State in order to frighten the French and make them hesitate to advance.3

However, when the last battles were fought with the Sudanese, Slatin proved to be more accurate in his estimation than Wingate. In the years 1891-96 every time the Anglo-Egyptian forces moved into the interior of the Sudan they found that they had underrated the strength and the defensive power of the Sudanese forces. In 1891 the military authorities

2. F.O. 633/7 Rosebery to Cromer, April 5, 1895.
3. F.O. 633/6 Cromer to Rosebery, April 12, 1895.
in Cairo, supported by Baring, were putting pressure on
the British Cabinet to authorise an advance to Tokar as they
believed that the Mahdist power in the Eastern Sudan was on
the point of collapse and so Tokar could be easily and safely
retaken. However, when the Ansār and the Anglo-Egyptian
forces met for the decisive battle, the strength of the Ansār
proved to be "curiously at variance with reports received"
and Tokar was only taken after a heavy battle in which the
Anglo-Egyptian troops suffered severe losses. Baring
afterwards confessed to Lord Salisbury that: "If I had known
how strong the Dervishes were, I should certainly have
hesitated to recommend the advance".

And lastly in September 1898 when the final decisive
battle was fought between the invading army and the Sudanese,
the Khalifa's forces proved to be far more than had been
anticipated. Wingate estimated them between 40,000 to
50,000. Churchill's estimation was that they were more
than 60,000 and he observed that the Khalifa's army was "the
strongest and best armed savage army yet arrayed against a
modern European power".

At the end of the campaign for the re-conquest of the

1. Egypt No. 2 (1892) Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 14 (Correspondence Baring -
2. Ibid., Nos. 16, 17, 18, 28.
4. Wingate MSS. Box 233/5 Wingate to Mrs. Wingate, Dec. 13, 1898.
Sudan it was clear that the unpopularity of the Khalifa's rule and the supposed declining influence of his power were grossly exaggerated. When the Mahdist state was destroyed, it was not destroyed because of the failure of the Sudanese to rally behind the Khalifa. It was destroyed by the superiority in weapons possessed by the invading army which made the victory for the Sudanese impossible in spite of their superiority in numbers and their strong conviction of the cause for which they were fighting. "I never saw the Dervishes", remarked Wingate to his wife after the battle of Karari, "come on better, quite the old fanatical style, but in spite of their numbers between 40,000 to 50,000 they could make no impression on our superior fire".¹

2. Two Opposing Imperial Sentiments

British attitudes towards the Sudan from 1886 to 1896 reveal the emergence and growth of two opposing imperial sentiments. In this period most of the British public which was concerned with the Sudan considered it a British responsibility and looked for the time when British power and influence, through one way or another, would be paramount in the Sudan. The purpose of this account is to point to two opposing schools of thought which each of them had its own ideas and policy for bringing about this desired end. It is also hoped to explore the variety of objects which each of them

¹ Wingate MSS. Box 233/5, Wingate to Mrs. Wingate, Dec.13, 1898.
hoped might be attained through this control.

During the years 1886-96 the general view of all who concerned themselves with Sudanese affairs was that it was desirable and necessary that the Sudan should be brought back to "civilization". In the eyes of many whose views carried weight, it was believed that a certain stigma attached itself to Britain owing to the fact that under the auspices of the British Government the Sudan was lost to the ruling class of Egypt and "relapsed into a state of complete anarchy". It was also believed by many that the British could not once more hold up their heads in the Nile Valley unless they would bring about the end of the régime which had inflicted so many defeats on the pride and prestige of the British.

One school of thought whose views were current mainly among the military authorities in Cairo and London considered that the Mahdist State could only be dealt with by force of arms and that whoever desired to overthrow it ought to trust to his fighting power only. The other school was pledged to the view that believed in the possibility of influencing the Sudanese through negotiations, reconciliation and trade to persuade them to get rid of the Khalifa's sovereignty and to accept British supremacy over the Sudan.

This second view originated with and was campaigned for by a group of traders and businessmen who had had some business connections with Egypt and the Sudan. The moving spirit of this school and its most active campaigners were:

1. CAB 37/27, Baring to Salisbury, March 15, 1890.
Francis William Fox, an influential Quaker and owner of the Atlas Engineering Works at Bristol, A.B. Wylde, the son of a former head of the Slave Trade Department in the Foreign Office and a merchant in the Eastern Sudan for several years and lastly Henry Russell who was trading in the Red Sea Littoral for many years and at times "special correspondent" to the Daily News and the Daily Telegraph.

The idea of this group of merchants was that a policy of "pacification" should be carried out by the British Government. This policy was to open up trade with the Sudanese; and it was believed that a "trade policy" would give peace and prosperity to the bulk of the Sudanese who were distracted and terrified by a factious and fanatical minority that they were thus constantly compelled to ally themselves to this faction as the only modus vivendi.¹ The conviction among the supporters of the policy of "pacification" by means of commerce was that it would end the Mahdist State; and so they arrived at the conclusion that until an unfettered system of trade was fairly established all hopes of a definite, peaceful and prosperous settlement of the Sudan might be dismissed as vain and chimerical.² This was in simple terms the "pacification" and "trade policy".

The main initiator and campaigner for this policy was Francis William Fox who got interested in the Sudan through his business connections in Egypt. In June 1885 when he visited

2. Ibid, p.245.
Cairo he formed certain ideas concerning the future of the Sudan which he communicated to Cardinal Manning and Commander Cameron, the African traveller. During the years 1885 to 1888 Fox was closely occupied with matters relating to the Sudan. In 1887 Fox visited Suakin with the purpose of investigating how the policy of "the pacification of the Soudan by commercial influences and christian agencies" - as opposed to the military and coercive policy of the military authorities in Cairo and Suakin - could be carried out.

Mr. Fox's actions in this direction might be said to have begun when a small group of persons interested in the Sudan met at his invitation at the house of Mr. W.E. Forster in the Spring of 1885. The meeting discussed the idea of federating the various Sudanese tribes between the Red Sea Littoral and the Valley of the Nile by means of a federation "bound together by self-interest and mutual protection for the purpose of maintaining order, promoting the development of trade along the several tribal routes and securing the confidence and good will of the tribes towards the authorities at Suakin and in this way through and by means of the agency of friendly tribes between Berber and the Red Sea Littoral, to win over by degrees the friendship of the hostile tribes between Berber, Khartoum and Lado".

It was suggested at that meeting that a confederation of

2. A.S.S. MSS. Francis William Fox to Mr. A. Albright of the Birmingham Anti-Slavery Committee, January 1, 1895.
the Sudanese tribes in the Eastern Sudan might be encouraged and facilitated by commencing the building of the long-talked of railway from Suakin to Berber and it was proposed to subsidize through their respective chiefs the several tribes "so as to secure their assistance in the construction as well as to police and protect the railway as it was carried forward". The construction of this railway was, in effect, to be the principal agent for pacifying and uniting the several tribes in a Federal Community.¹

While Mr. Gladstone's Government was in power, Mr. Fox saw little chance of his federation scheme being given the approval of the British Government. So when the Gladstone Government was out of office in June 1885, Mr. Fox rejoiced as he had good reasons to suppose that Lord Salisbury who was now at the head of the Foreign Office would acquiesce in his project.

In December 1885 Mr. Fox and Captain Cameron explained to Lord Salisbury their plans for the Sudan. They suggested that the solution of the Sudan problem might "be found in handing the country over to a powerful chartered company which should devote its whole energies to the important task of the pacification and development of the Soudan and of its future government".² They proposed that an attempt should be made to enter into negotiations with the Khalifa and his

1. Ibid.
2. CAB. 37/17, Captain Cameron and Mr. Fox to Salisbury, Dec. 18, 1885.
subordinates and that some person be deputed to examine the actual state of the country and advise as to the measures which should be taken by the Company to attain the end in view. For this mission they suggested the name of Sir Charles Warren. They assured Lord Salisbury that they had the support of public figures such as W.E. Forster, the Earl of Northbrook, the Marquis of Lorne and Mr. Villiers Stuart as well as some financial circles who had fully agreed that the scheme was a good one and they would be willing to join in the undertaking if they were assured of such a guarantee as would be afforded by government subvention and approval.¹

Lord Salisbury showed an interest in the scheme and asked to be furnished with details as to the amount of subsidy and the powers which the proposed company would require from Her Majesty's Government.²

In reply to the enquiries of Lord Salisbury, Fox and Cameron provided him with the draft for a Sudan Company. The draft suggested that the powers to be granted to the proposed company would be similar to those possessed by the East India Company. This "Draft for a Soudan Charter" stipulated that the suggested company should be entrusted in fact with the Government of the "dominions generally known as the Egyptian Soudan". It invested the company with all the powers and

1. Ibid.
2. CAB. 37/17 No.2 Sir J. Pauncefot to Captain Cameron and Fox, December 24, 1885.
functions of a Government including those of issuing notes and coins, appointing civil, military and judicial officers, making laws, having the power of life and death and supreme civil and military power in the Sudan. The company would have the right to impose taxes direct or indirect; the powers to levy national military and police forces and to make and conclude treaties subject to the approval of Her Majesty's Government. All mines, minerals, forests, rivers and water-courses were to be the property of the company. All lands, except where private right of ownership existed, were to be the property of the company. It would also have the right to the monopoly of trade in ivory and such other articles as might be found necessary.  

In short the draft charter would give a British Company the right to impose upon the Sudan its Imperial rule.

Fox and Cameron appeared to think that if the British Government would approve the scheme, provide them with some pecuniary assistance and put pressure on the Sultan to grant them his approval under Firmans relative to succession and Treaties of 1841, there would be no difficulty in carrying out the project. They seemed to have little doubt that they would be able to buy off the Khalifa and convince him to accept the Imperial rule of the British Company. Fox and Cameron urged that the time was a most fitting one "to enter into negotiations

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1. CAB. 37/17, Captain Cameron and Mr. Fox to Sir John Pauncefot Jan. 4, 1886. Enclosure in No.3, "Draft for a Soudan Charter".
with Caliph Abdullah and his chiefs, and a company which would appeal to their material interests would be more likely to obtain concessions from them than a government which can only act by the sword or by the promise of letting them alone".¹

It looked as if Lord Salisbury was willing to go some way with the idea of putting the Sudan under the rule of a British Company. He acquiesced in the request of the promoters to send Sir Charles Warren as Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral in order to be able to make preliminary investigations and negotiations with the tribes in that area.

Sir Charles Warren arrived at Suakin early in February, 1886, and was commencing "to carry out a policy of pacification, and had succeeded within a few weeks of his arrival to inspire the tribesmen around Suakin with confidence and feelings of friendship, when, unfortunately, Lord Salisbury's Government went out of office and was succeeded by that of Mr. Gladstone, who, apparently did not sympathize in our views, and so Sir Charles Warren was withdrawn just as he was on the eve of accomplishing most useful and important work in the Eastern Soudan".²

The coming of Mr. Gladstone to power gave a deadly blow to Mr. Fox's plans. With the events of 1884–5 in his mind, Mr. Gladstone could hardly be expected to favour a scheme of colonization such as that which was in the minds of Mr. Fox

¹. CAB. 37/17 No. 22 Cameron and Fox to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (undated but probably January 1886).
and Captain Cameron. And so Mr. Gladstone did not hesitate to withdraw Sir Charles Warren from the governorship of the Red Sea Littoral.

Nevertheless, Mr. Gladstone did not stay long in power and when Lord Salisbury came to office he seemed to have second thoughts about the scheme of Mr. Fox and Captain Cameron. He declined on March 19, 1887 to entertain the propositions he had apparently acceded to in January 1886.¹

In spite of this Mr. Fox did not give up. He visited Suakin in March 1887 for the purpose of collecting information which would be of service to him "in devising a scheme for the restoration of peace and prosperity to the Soudan".² On his return through Cairo he interviewed Sir E. Baring with regard to a concession of the Eastern Sudan to a chartered company but the result of the interview seemed to be unsatisfactory to him.³

Mr. Fox's trip to Suakin resulted in his issuing a pamphlet on the Sudan. The pamphlet argued the case for opening up the Sudan to trade by a British company and suggested the establishment of a number of posts and factories on the coast of the Red Sea. The pamphlet entered at length into details concerning the proposed company which the writer thought should be formed somewhat on the principle of the Borneo Company but with no monopoly whatever, leaving the trade open to all comers with honest intentions. He did not

². *The Times*, June 3, 1887.
wish the British Government to commit itself in any way nor did he anticipate any difficulties in the case of Turkey or Egypt. He claimed that some of the leading chiefs in the immediate interior of Suakin had expressed readiness to sign any reasonable agreement to trade with reputable Englishmen.

However, he was still interested and crusaded for opening up the Sudan to British influence. He came to the conclusion that the best procedure would probably be to organize small district committees of chiefs who would be advised and guided by Englishmen residing in each district in the commercial centres of the several provinces and that the leading tribes should in future be kept as far as possible in their respective districts and have their respective trade routes to, and tribal posts, on the Red Sea Coast. Mr. Fox suggested some twenty or twenty-five Englishmen be appointed in the first instance by the proposed Sudan Company as their agents at the stations and factories at the tribal posts on the Red Sea Coast and at the several commercial centres in the Sudan, and that three inspector-generals should also be appointed, whose duty it would be to visit and confer with the resident agents to inquire on the spot into any cases of oppression and injustice and generally to see that "liberty" and "order" were maintained and "justice" was administered throughout the Provinces of the Sudan. The inspector-generals and the resident agents would frequently and periodically despatch to the Governor and Council of the Sudan Company full reports of the political position of their respective districts as well as of the
trading operations of the company.

Besides acquiring and maintaining control of a great proportion of the export and import trade of the Sudan, the company would, according to the writer, engage in the cultivation, ginning and pressing of cotton; also in the management and working of the proposed railway from the Red Sea Coast to the Nile and of the small steamers on the Nile in connection with the railway. Mr. Fox attached great importance to this railway because it would connect the Eastern Sudan with the Nile and then through the Nile the influence of the company would expand as far as the lakes. Mr. Fox thought that such a road "would open up the whole of the vast Equatorial Africa, with its navigable rivers and chains of gigantic lakes, to British commerce".

It appeared that Mr. Fox was contemplating the extension of the influence of his proposed company as far as the lakes. There is evidence to show that he was making efforts towards this end. In 1886, he informed Dr. R. Felkin that he and J.T. Wills, the son of Justice Wills, were pondering over sending an expedition via the Ubanghi and Wele rivers with the purpose of getting a station in the Zande country "which they would take care not to give up". With this view in mind Fox concluded that "there can be no doubt in my mind that a chartered company, properly worked in a quiet and unaggressive

1. A summary of Mr. Fox's pamphlet is to be found in The Times, June 3, 1887.
manner, would soon be firmly established in the Soudan as soon as touch could be got with the Nile at Berber and steamers could be placed there the whole Blue and White Nile Valleys would be at the company's feet".¹

It is evident that Mr. Fox's object was to impose the Imperial rule of a British Company upon the Sudan. His aim was to exclude any other influence whether Egyptian, Turkish or European from the Valley of the Nile. The British influence, he considered, could be made paramount by forming a confederation of the various Sudanese tribes who had to accept the sovereignty of his proposed Sudan Company.

Mr. Fox's project for a Sudan Company found support from The Times. In a leader and a special article it commended Mr. Fox's report and gave a tacit support to his views.² But the warmest support for Mr. Fox's scheme came from two traders, A.B. Wylde and Henry Russell, who for many years had been trading around Suakin. In their own ways, but probably motivated by the same motives as those of Mr. Fox, they were also campaigning for the exclusion of any Egyptian or Turkish influence from the Eastern Sudan and the imposition of British paramountcy in that part of the Sudan.

A.B. Wylde's '83 To '87 in the Soudan, published in 1888, was a clear statement for the future exclusion of Egyptian and Turkish influence from the Eastern Sudan and the expansion of the British influence in that area through the medium of trade

1. The Times, June 3, 1887.
2. Ibid.
and by a confederation of the various tribes under the sovereignty of Britain. Wylde, as we shall see later, was fighting vigorously at this time for the opening of the trade between Suakin and the interior of the Eastern Sudan. He went as far as to suggest that a British Protectorate should be proclaimed upon the Eastern Sudan.¹

Henry Russell was more vocal than Wylde in his support for Fox's scheme of a Sudan Company. He was convinced that the Sudan question could only be settled by the medium of a company chartered by the British Government with powers to construct a railway between Suakin and Berber and to develop the resources of the country. He was strongly against the Egyptian Government holding Suakin and the Red Sea Littoral and argued that the responsibility in that quarter should be assumed by the British Government. He believed that the chiefs of the tribes in the Eastern Sudan would only be too ready to come to terms with any chartered British company. They would also be prompt in furnishing all necessary assistance in the construction and protection of any necessary public works among which the most important was the railway from Suakin to Berber. When this railway was completed, not only would the produce of the more immediate neighbourhood of Berber be brought within easy reach of the markets of the "civilized world", but that also of the more remote regions farther south via Khartoum and thence down the Nile.²

² Henry Russell, op.cit., p.325-331.
Mr. Russell declared that a fine opportunity was presented to England for exercising that remarkable appetite for colonisation which was the peculiar characteristic of her people and that there was a good chance to add the Sudan to her Empire through the medium of a chartered company. 1

Fox, Wylde, Wills and Russell did their best to enlist the support of the business community in Britain for their scheme to govern the Sudan through the medium of trade and a chartered company. In 1887 a paper on "The Red Sea Trade", written by A.B. Wylde was read at Manchester to the British Association; in which the writer enumerated to the meeting the benefits that would accrue to British commerce from a trade connection with the Eastern Sudan. 2 J.T. Wills read a paper to the Royal Geographical Society on March 28, 1887, entitled, "Between The Nile and the Congo: Dr. Junker and the (Welle) Makua" in which he enlisted the great prospects for British trade in Bahr al-Ghazal. 3 On July 9, 1891, Henry Russell read a paper to the London Chamber of Commerce on "British Trade prospects in the Soudan"; after elaborating on these prospects, he appealed to the Chamber, "in the interest of commerce in the United Kingdom" to hold meetings in various parts of the country to support their plans.4

There can be no doubt that the initiators and campaigners for a Sudan under the Imperial rule of a British

1. Ibid., p.354.
Chartered Company had economic motives. They considered that the Sudan would be of an economic advantage to them as the founders of the Company and secondly that these economic benefits would not be confined to the founders and share-holders of the Company but would largely benefit British trade and commerce. This was so because they had a highly optimistic view of the economic potentialities of the Sudan.

In his report of 1887, Mr. Fox entered in somewhat minute detail into the resources of the Sudan, the particular kinds of cultivation capable of development, the probable future of the economy of the Sudan, and the value of the trade that might be conducted by the proposed company between Britain and the Sudan basing his calculations on the trade of the past. Mr. Fox also considered that the larger proportion of the land of the Sudan was most fertile and so offered great potentialities for development. He believed that the various provinces of the Sudan could export large quantities of gum, ostrich feathers, raw hides, indigo, sugar-cane, rice, coffee, tobacco, and last but not least, cotton, which Fox considered to have a finer and longer staple than the Egyptian cotton. From this Fox concluded that there was "a great future for export and import trade between Britain and the Sudan, as the Manchester goods were also required in the Soudan".¹

A.B. Wylde was impressed with the growing import and export trade between the Sudan and Britain before the outbreak

¹. The Times, June 3, 1887.
of the Mahdist revolution and he was full of hope that the future would witness a great development in this trade if the Sudan was brought under the influence of Britain.¹

Henry Russell thought that in the Sudan there were means of opening up a vast and productive territory to the benefit of the whole British community and that the Sudan provided a field for the merchants and manufacturers because they could invest their capital in a country which was exceptionally fertile, especially in the produce of cotton, gum and grain which could be supplied from the Sudan in quantities sufficient to meet the demands of the manufacturers of Britain and the cereal supply of the whole population of Britain.²

The belief was widespread at the time among those who knew the Eastern Sudan that it could prove to be one of the main cotton-producing regions. The American Civil War had forced the cotton industry in Britain to seek markets, other than U.S.A., from which it could supply itself. This had led to the development of cotton cultivation in Egypt and by 1885 Egypt was increasingly becoming one of the major cotton exporters to Britain. It was natural, therefore, that businessmen with local knowledge of the Eastern Sudan should have entertained ideas of developing cotton cultivation in the Eastern Sudan. They, rightly, detected that the Tokar Delta, which is now one of the main cotton producing areas of the Sudan, could produce large quantities of fine cotton. Mr. Fox

2. Henry Russell, op.cit., p.VII.
was so convinced that the Tokar region could be a fine field for cotton growing that he applied in 1887 on behalf of the Sudan Company for permission to send an agent to Trinkitat to distribute cotton-seed to the Hadanduwa chiefs, with a view to the cultivation of cotton crops in the Tokar Delta.¹ John T. Wills of the so-called Sudan Trading Company at Suakin, wrote to a friend that: "This cotton business at Tokar, with patience and good management will prove, I think very good".² After the re-occupation of Tokar by the Anglo-Egyptian forces, Mr. A.B. Wylde started growing cotton around Tokar. In 1893 he wrote to Wingate informing him that the prospects for cotton cultivation were very good and that in the same year he had planted more cotton than there were people to work it.³

The dream of a cotton empire in the Sudan was contributed to by Sir Samuel Baker who was at that time regarded to be the greatest living authority on the Sudan. In April 1890 Sir Samuel Baker announced to Moberly Bell that a railway from Suakin to Berber would make the Sudan a mine of wealth because it would bring the area of thirty million acres of the most fertile soil under cultivation and supply Britain with cotton, thereby making her entirely independent of America.⁴

This deep and optimistic belief in the potentialities of the Sudan and especially its capability for the cultivation

1. Ibid., p.256.
3. Wingate MSS. Box 225 Wylde to Wingate, March 1, 1893.
of cotton, shared by nearly everyone who had had physical contact with the Sudan raised the hopes of some business communities in Britain that if some sort of connection was established between Britain and the Sudan, a new field would be opened for British capital and trade. Therefore, Wylde, Fox and Cameron found support for some of their ideas in the London Chamber of Commerce. In November, 1887, the latter petitioned Lord Salisbury on the question of opening up trade with the Sudan through the Red Sea ports. The Chamber assured the Foreign Secretary that if such a trade was opened up it would very largely contribute to the "pacification" and material development of the Sudan, and that from the point of view of British trade, it was of great importance to obtain unrestricted access to the Eastern Sudan as it possessed "rich and varied natural resources", and as it afforded an extensive new market for British goods.¹

This address, Baring suspected, had emanated from Fox and Wylde. He informed Sir T. Sanderson that Cameron had already written to him much the same thing.² The fact was that there were financial circles, besides the local merchants at Suakin, which showed an interest in the Eastern Sudan. Lord Salisbury informed Baring that Sir Henry Tyler had been corresponding with him about proposing to build a railway between Suakin and Berber and expressing entire confidence that the offer of good wages would prevent it from being attacked.

². F.O. 633/5 Baring to Sir T. Sanderson, Dec. 23, 1887.
But Sir Henry Tyler insisted that as a condition the English flag should fly at Suakin.\(^1\) Captain Fairholme of the Intelligence Department in London commented to Wingate that "it is evident that there is a good deal of interest taken in Manchester (and I believe in Liverpool as well) in the question of opening up trade between the Sudan and Suakin-Berber railway and I know for a fact that the money for the construction of such a line would be forthcoming at once ... In the meantime no doubt Manchester is losing a profitable market, and what the present agitators (Fox, Wylde, Russell and Cameron) would like to see is the annexation of Suakin by England and the formation of a British Erythera".\(^2\) Another officer of the Intelligence Department informed Wingate that there were financiers who were ready to take up the construction of the proposed Suakin-Berber railway provided that the political and military authorities presented no insuperable obstacle.\(^3\)

This clamour of traders and financiers for an exclusive British influence and trade in the Eastern Sudan disturbed Lord Salisbury a little. He complained to Baring that: "there are promoters, and financiers, and contractors of various kinds, who know perfectly well that there is as much chance of colonizing the Sahara as the Soudan, but who see a prospect of sweeping a shoal of guileless shareholders into their net, and

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1. F.O. 633/7 Salisbury to Baring, Jan. 3, 1889.
2. Wingate MSS, Box 256/1 Captain Fairholme to Wingate, Oct. 19, 1894.
are longing to take advantage of the prevailing delusion".¹

So the ideas prevalent among the British local traders in the Red Sea and through them among some financial circles in Britain of the wealth, fertility and the great agricultural potential of the Sudan persuaded them to attempt to influence the British Government of the need in the interests of Britain to bring at least the Eastern Sudan under the British political influence. The traders and their supporters in the financial quarters of London, Manchester and Liverpool argued that the rewards to British trade and commerce would be great and that the Sudan could be "pacified" by trade. And so the traders and financiers filled the political air with tales of the inefficiency and the brutality of the Turks "and with the virtues of the Sudanese only requiring Home Rule under the aegis of Great Britain to develop them into an equatorial Arcadia".²

It was, therefore, the intention of the traders and financiers, if they got their way, to exclude both the Egyptian Government and the Porte from any influence in the Sudan and to ensure the British ascendancy in a new Sudan. The medium by which they hoped to achieve this result was a chartered company which would have the functions of governing the country as well as monopolizing its trade. This method of "colonization" appeared to them to be the most conceivable and practicable process of "colonizing" the Sudan. The idea was not a novel one. Indeed the process of "colonization" of Africa by the

2. Ibid.
British in the 1880's was carried out by means of companies. At this time nearly all the colonizing enterprises of Britain in Africa were conducted through the agency of the Niger Company, the British South Africa Company and the Imperial British East Africa Company. In a speech at Edinburgh, Lord Salisbury commented that this method of colonization was a very "characteristic manner" and he gave it his hearty support. And so it was natural that British traders, financiers and contractors who were interested in the Sudan, commercially and financially, should try to get a charter for a Sudan Company.

However, they failed because of the combination of powerful elements against them. The Porte and the Egyptian Government rightly judged that the designs of the British traders and financiers were aimed at excluding them from the future "scramble" for the Sudan. They, therefore, opposed the project of Fox and Company for a Sudan Company. Riaz Pasha, the Egyptian Premier thought that the plan was doomed to failure as he believed that no influence other than religious could be exercised on the Sudanese. The British Company would not meet with the smallest success and nobody could aspire to exert any influence unless he was of great weight in the Muslim world. The plan was also interpreted by the Porte to mean handing over the Sudan and the Red Sea to the exclusive influence of a British Company. Consequently the

1. The Scotsman, May 21, 1891.
2. F.O. 78/4149 Baring to Salisbury, Dec. 8, 1888; also Mekki Shibeika, op. cit., p. 311.
Grand Vizier wrote to the Khedive informing him of the decision of the Porte to take over the administration of Suakin and he asked the Khedive to point to the means by which the take-over could be carried out.\(^1\) The opposition of the Porte and the Egyptian Government to the project of Fox was reinforced by that of Baring and the military authorities in Cairo for reasons to be discussed later. However, the whole scheme appeared to be a naive one. It was based on the assumption that the Sudanese could be easily bought off to accept the ascendancy of the proposed Sudan Company. Fox's idea was that the "tribes along the Nile Basin from Berber to Khartoum and Albert Nyanza" could easily, by diplomacy and by the "pacifying power of trade", be brought under the imperial rule of his suggested company.\(^2\) Fox did not put his idea to the test and, had he tried it, it was most unlikely that it would have met even with a partial success. There were no reasons why Fox should assume that the Sudanese who rejected and drove away a foreign ruling class would willingly accept the yoke of another foreign ruling class just because the new colonizing ruling class happened to be British.

Nevertheless, the strongest opposition to Fox's project and the one that prevented it from being put to the test was that of the military authorities in Suakin and Cairo who were also supported by the War Office in London. By the end of 1885 the British military authorities lost their battle with

\(^1\) F.O. 78/4419 Baring to Salisbury, Dec. 14, 1888, enclosed a French translation of a letter from the Grand Vizier to the Khedive; also Mekki Shibeika, op.cit., p.313.

\(^2\) Fox to Henry Russell, April 15, 1891, quoted in Henry Russell, op.cit., p.354.
the British Government to be allowed to hold on to the Province of Dongola. By then it was evident to them that military operations in the Sudan were not contemplated in the near future. The soldiers were resentful of their failure and were anxious to regain the prestige lost at the hands of the Ansār. And for these reasons the military authorities were wedded to a tough and hard line towards the Mahdist State. They were also anxious that they should continue to guide and direct the policies of the Egyptian and British Governments as far as the Mahdist State was concerned towards the tough and aggressive line which they advocated. The policy of the soldiers clashed with that of the traders and businessmen which had been explained; and it was only the intervention of Sir Evelyn Baring and the Foreign Office that checked the clashing ambitions and wild dreams of the businessmen and the soldiers.

At the end of 1885 the important questions of what the relations between the Mahdist State and Egypt should be had to be decided upon. Could there be co-existence? Should there be trade between the two neighbouring countries?

There were some who believed that an attempt should be made to explore whether the Khalifa would respond to any offer of negotiations or not. A Convention between the British Government and the Porte was signed at Constantinople on October 24, 1885, in virtue of which two commissioners, one British and one Turkish, were despatched to Cairo. The second article of the Convention stipulated that the Ottoman
Commissioner was to consult with the Khedive "upon the best means of tranquillising the Soudan by pacific measures". So Yousif Pasha Shuhdi was sent to Wadi Halfa with a view to receiving any overtures for peace that might be made by the Khalifa. Nothing seemed to have resulted from this mission. In 1908 Lord Cromer commented on this mission that it was well to make the attempt to negotiate, if only to show those who believed in the possibility of successful negotiations that it was hopeless to attempt to come to any arrangement with the Sudanese. He added that it was obvious to all who had any appreciation of the true nature of the Mahdist movement that Yousif Pasha Shuhdi's mission was foredoomed to failure.¹ A year after Shuhdi's mission, any illusions that the Khalifa would make advances for peace were dispelled by the two letters he had addressed to Queen Victoria and the Khedive in which – in the words of Lord Cromer – he "breathed the true spirit of Mahdism".² Commenting on those letters, Baring thought that there was not much probability of ever doing "much by negotiating with the rebel chiefs".³

If the militant nature of the Mahdist State precluded it from any negotiations with any Egyptian, Turkish or British functionaries, there were signs that the Khalifa and his lieutenants would welcome the opening up of trade between the Sudan and Egypt on one side and between the interior of the Eastern Sudan and the Red Sea on the other. The decision on

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2. Ibid., p.62.
3. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Salisbury, April 23, 1887.
this point was not an easy one because it involved political as well as military considerations. If there was to be trade, how would this trade be conducted? The question of duty on goods coming from the Sudan was one of considerable difficulty to settle. De jure, the Sudan still formed part of Egypt; de facto, it was separated.¹

Besides this important question there were arguments in favour of and against the opening of the trade. And considerable difference of opinion existed among the local authorities at Suakin and the military and civilian authorities in Cairo. The topic of opening up trade between Egypt and the Sudan had been a subject of hot discussions in the years 1886-7 and then later from time to time. At first the British civilian authorities in Cairo, Suakin and London were inclined to favour the opening up of the trade.

Sir Evelyn Baring recommended that the experiment of opening up the trade might at least be tried. He contended that by stopping the trade up the Nile, they were strengthening the authority of the Khalifa and would throw those who were inclined to be friendly to Britain and Egypt into the arms of the "Dervishes". He urged that the "Dervishes" were few in number, that they tyrannised over the mass of the population and that it was unjust and impolitic to make the mass of the people suffer the faults of a few. Moreover, if trade was allowed, it might augment the power of the Khalifa and invite

¹. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Kitchener, Feb. 10, 1887.
him to contemplate the invasion of Egyptian territory.¹

The opening up of the trade was also recommended by Cameron,² the British Consul in Suakin and, as was shown earlier, was vigorously campaigned for by the British traders in Suakin, mainly A.B. Wylde, Russell, Wills and Fox who conducted vigorous attacks in the columns of The Times, the Manchester Guardian and Pall Mall Gazette from time to time attacking Kitchener's policy of prohibiting the trade between the Red Sea and the interior of the Sudan.

To the military authorities in Suakin, Cairo and London the question of trade was not simply that of whether there should be a trade or not between two hostile neighbouring countries. The soldiers judged that the decision to open up trade with the Sudan might in one way or another compromise the policy - which they intended to follow and to which they were anxious to convert the British Government - of conquest and annexation of the Sudan. This policy had been outlined to the soldiers by their chief, Lord Wolseley, who, as far back as February 1885, informed a Sudanese magnate that they "mean to destroy the power of Mohamad Ahmed at Khartoum, no matter how long it may take us to do so ..."³ The soldiers had never lost sight of this object.

The year 1887 witnessed a sharp clash between British businessmen who had had trading connections with the Eastern

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1. F.O. 633/6 Baring to Salisbury, April 23, 1887; also 633/5 Baring to Sir T. Sanderson, Dec. 23, 1887; also Cromer, op.cit., vol.II, pp.73-4.
2. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Sir T. Sanderson, Dec. 23, 1887.
3. W.O. 33/44 No.69 Wolseley to Secretary of State for War, Feb. 15, 1885, Enclosure No.3, Wolseley to Kashm el-Müse, Feb. 13, 1885; also Rundle MSS. Box 155/1 Wolseley to Rundle, March 2, 1885.
Sudan and the soldiers over the question of trade. Major Kitchener, who was at the time Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, was at the centre of the dispute. Kitchener was anxious to use the question of trade in order to initiate a "forward policy". At the beginning of 1887 he insisted that trade ought not to be opened until Tokar was taken from the Ansār. He claimed that his agent at Sinkat had recommended to him that no provisions should be allowed to leave Suakin until Tokar was captured.¹

In his militant attitude Kitchener was supported by his fellow soldiers. Lord Wolseley assured him that he fully endorsed his ideas against those of Mr. Fox and other businessmen who were trying to prove that Kitchener's policy was wrong. Wolseley accused Fox of looking at the question "from the narrower tradesman's point of view", and that all he wanted was to make money quickly and "to let the main questions which concern us as a Nation to be relegated to the future".² General Graham also wrote to Kitchener commending his views and ridiculing those who were busy to set up a trading company through which they could interfere in the Sudan.³ Wingate confessed later that he defended Kitchener's policy in the columns of The Times under the disguised name of Abd al-Qādir.⁴

In spite of this support, Kitchener was anxious not to alienate the confidence of the civil authorities, and especially

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¹ S.P. Kitchener to Baring, April 20, 1887; also F.O. 633/5 Baring to Goschen, April 3, 1887.
² P.R.O. 30/57/5 Wolseley to Kitchener, April 13, 1888.
³ Ibid, General Graham to Kitchener, Jan. 1, 1887.
⁴ Wingate MSS. Box 257 Notes by Wingate on Kitchener sent to a certain Harry, Feb. 4, 1934.
that of Sir Evelyn Baring, on whom he depended for his future career. In April 1887 Baring advised Kitchener to rethink his view of waiting for Tokar to fall before he would open the trade.¹ So Kitchener yielded to the pressure from Baring and decided to open trade on the Berber route in spite of "the fact that he had grave doubts as to the wisdom of doing so ...".²

In spite of his pressure upon Kitchener and even before the end of 1887 Baring was not sanguine of the result of opening trade at Suakin. He told Cameron, the British Consul at Suakin, that the policy of opening trade was tried in practice in connection with Wadi Halfa but produced no effect whatever one way or the other. He considered that the opponents of the policy were all wrong and its advocates were far too sanguine.³

By 1890 Baring, who had tipped the balance in favour of opening the trade in 1887, appeared to have been convinced of the views of Kitchener and the other military authorities. At the beginning of 1889 Baring confessed to Lord Salisbury that Kitchener had been very unfairly attacked and that he was at one time inclined to think Kitchener was in the wrong but, when the more facts were gone into, the better did Kitchener come out of it. Baring had little doubt that Kitchener was much more right than the traders in his opposition to opening

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¹. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Kitchener, April 4, 1887.
². S.P. Kitchener to Baring, April 20, 1887.
³. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Cameron, Dec. 22, 1887.
trade from Suakin. The only result of opening trade from Suakin, Baring judged, was to supply the Sudanese forces with food and thus enable them to concentrate near Suakin in an attempt to take the place.

Baring's view was supported by Portal, who in 1890, was acting Consul in Cairo in the absence of Baring. Portal was of the opinion that the policy of free trade at Suakin had failed as it resulted only in the strengthening of 'Uthmān Dīqna's power, and that he was forced to stop a large consignment of grain which was to be delivered to 'Uthmān Dīqna at Tokar that would have enabled him to take the field with a large army. Portal thought that he had no doubt that by arbitrarily stopping that consignment he had saved the cost of a little campaign.

These ideas seemed to have been passed on to Baring and Portal by the military authorities who urged that if grain were allowed to leave the coast, it could not be prevented from reaching the "Dervishes" and further, that under the cover of legitimate trade, they would receive ammunitions of war. The Sirdar, Sir F. Grenfell, confessed to Baring that the unrestricted trade had a "pacifying effect" on the Eastern Sudan, but, taking the whole Sudan question into consideration, it would prop up the Khalifa's power, prevent its collapse and might put off the re-occupation of the Sudan for an infinite time.

1. S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Jan. 11, 1889.
2. S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Nov. 10, 1888; also F.O. 633/5 Baring to Barnham, March 1, 1890.
time. He thought that the most determined attack of the
Sudanese was made after Rundle had reversed Kitchener's policy
of supervised trade and opened the port of Suakin to "Dervish
merchants".¹

The lengthened controversy over whether it was desirable
to prohibit or permit trade with the Sudan appeared in 1887
to have been decided against Kitchener. However, this did
not prevent him from initiating a "forward policy". In
January 1887, Sir Evelyn Baring complained to Lord Salisbury
that Kitchener had issued a Proclamation in which he spoke of
establishing a firm government in the Sudan which would do
justice to all. Baring, therefore, requested the Sirdar to
warn Kitchener to take a little care about what he would say
so as to keep "within the lines of the policy approved by the
English Government". When Kitchener was questioned about the
Proclamation he said that he had meant to come to terms with
the tribes and that he was considering the possibility of
subsidizing some of them and was far from intending to use
force. However, the Sirdar, at Baring's request, sent
Kitchener some general instructions to guide his conduct in
future.²

In spite of these instructions Kitchener was not likely
to give up his intention of using force to promote a "forward
policy" if he was provided with an opportunity. The chance
was offered to him by Uthman Digna when the latter in the

1. F.O. 633/5 Sir F. Grenfell to Baring, Feb. 15, 1890.
2. S.F. Baring to Salisbury, Jan. 15, 1887; also Phillip Magnus,
autumn of 1887 moved with his forces from Kasala to Handoub, some fifteen miles north of Suakin. A camp of the Ansar grew there with the purpose of harrying the fort of Suakin and ultimately capturing it. Kitchener, therefore, requested the Sirdar for permission to take out a force to attack the Ansar at their camp at Handoub and disperse them. The proposal was approved; however, Kitchener was instructed that the garrison of Suakin must on no account be taken out and his proposed reconnaissance should be carried out with the irregulars only. But when Kitchener led his raid in January 1888, he ignored that proviso and took with him some of the regulars who had thrown away their uniforms and pretended to belong to the irregulars. In the end the enterprise proved to be a fiasco which resulted in the defeat of Kitchener and he was wounded.

Kitchener's action was criticised severely by the British Radical Press which suggested that if he had been less aggressive, the Red Sea coast would have enjoyed peace and trade would have flourished.1 Kitchener was also criticised because he encouraged raids to induce counter-attacks in order to increase the garrison of Suakin - a charge which he denied.2

The criticism in the Press must have emanated from Fox, Wylde and Russell. In his book, The Ruin of the Soudan, Henry Russell launched a vigorous attack on what he called the "raiding policy" of Kitchener. He accused Kitchener of

1. Phillip Magnus, op.cit., p.72.
carrying out the "aggravation versus pacification policy" to the best of his ability until he eventually succeeded in drawing the "Dervishes" down to the walls of Suakin thus necessitating the employment of 5,000 troops to dislodge them and British troops had to be employed for the purpose. Henry Russell observed that raids eventually induced counter-attacks from the Ansār and that at the first sign of the Ansār appearing near Suakin more ships and troops were asked for by Kitchener.¹

Kitchener's policy of "raids" was also criticised by Lord Salisbury who remarked that Kitchener's ideas were wrong; that they savoured strongly of that "short and easy method" of government which did not pay with the Arabs and which had brought the Germans to such awful grief at Zanzibar.²

Kitchener's raid on Handoub in January, 1888, annoyed his Commander, the Sirdar. The Sirdar had specifically instructed him not to use regulars; but when he knew that Kitchener had taken regulars with him, he commented that Kitchener deserved to be court-martialled.³

In spite of this stricture from the Sirdar, Kitchener's action was, in general, in conformity with the views of the British military authorities in Egypt. Indeed Kitchener would not have embarked upon such an enterprise had he not been confident that it would find support among his fellow-soldiers. Kitchener was not more enthusiastic than some of them in his

desire to use force to break the authority of the Khalifa in the Eastern Sudan. As early as January, 1887, General Stephenson, the Commander of the British Army of Occupation, wrote to Sir Evelyn Baring proposing that a strong line should be taken in the Eastern Sudan. He remarked that the whole of the Eastern Sudan seemed to be ready and anxious to place itself under the rule of a governing power capable "of keeping the different tribes in order and ruling them with justice". These tribes had become "sick of Mahdism and fighting" and were looking out for someone to govern them and to enable them to live again in peace and carry on trade. The General judged that it would not be right for Britain to shut its eyes, and that the time had arrived "when some decided line will have to be announced to those peoples, by telling them that we will help them towards obtaining the government they want, or else that we intend to leave them to fight amongst themselves until some other Osman Digna shall assert himself as their ruler. I should be sorry to see us take the latter course, which however, is, I fear, the direction of England's policy".¹

In October 1887 Baring reported to Lord Salisbury that the soldiers were anxious to go back to Dongola.²

The presence of Uthman Digna and his forces in the neighbourhood of Suakin provided the soldiers with an excuse to press their policy of destroying the Mahdist power in the Eastern Sudan. The soldiers were, therefore, happy when the

¹ S.P. Stephenson to Baring, Jan. 12, 1887.
² S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Oct. 16, 1887.
Government decided to send reinforcements to Suakin under the command of the Sirdar in December 1888 in order to relieve the pressure upon the garrison at Suakin.

The decision appeared to have been taken because of the pressure from the military authorities in Egypt. The Sirdar wrote to Baring in November urging that an advance into Handoub should be made.¹ Baring remarked that the Sirdar was influenced by those around him, especially Lady Grenfell and Kitchener. Therefore, Baring warned that in order to guard against the aspirations of the soldiers it was desirable that Grenfell should have something decisive from home on the subject of limiting his operations.²

There were also some people in Britain who were anxious, as Baring was, to stop or at any rate to prevent the Anglo-Egyptian forces under the command of the Sirdar from pursuing the Sudanese beyond the fort of Suakin. Among those was Francis William Fox who was of the opinion that war and force could not serve any purpose and that the Sudanese could best be reconciled and governed through Christian, commercial and pacific influences, a policy which he had advocated as far back as 1885, and which he considered to have been prevented from being put to the test by Kitchener when he carried out a policy of military coercion in consequence of which the Sudanese besieged Suakin.³ Fox attempted to enlist the support

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¹. Ibid., Grenfell to Baring, Nov. 9, 1888.
². Ibid., Baring to Salisbury, Dec. 18, 1888.
³. A.S.S. MSS. Fox to Mr. A. Albright, Jan. 9, 1895.
of some influential persons and papers in his campaign to stop the Anglo-Egyptian forces from attacking the Sudanese at Handoub in December 1888. He succeeded in gaining the support of The Times, the Daily News and the Pall Mall Gazette as well as the co-operation of some of the leading provincial daily papers. John Morley and Lord Randolph Churchill had also come to his side.

On December 4, 1888, Lord Randolph Churchill moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the despatch of a British battalion to Suakin. Supported by the Liberal Opposition, he attacked the decision to send British troops to Suakin and demanded that the expedition should be stopped altogether.¹

This combination of a powerful public opinion manifesting itself in the leading articles of some influential papers as well as the protest of the Liberal Opposition forced the Government to send instructions to Sir Francis Grenfell to confine his operations to the object of drumming the Sudanese forces out of the limits of fortifications near Suakin and not to pursue them beyond that limit.

This must have been strongly resented by the military authorities as the whole enterprise, according to the Secretary of State for War, was decided upon because of the advice of the soldiers.² It seemed that the soldiers were intending to go to Handoub, had not the specific instructions of the Government made this point clear to them. Baring was pleased that the orders sent to Grenfell not to go to

². Ibid., Mr. Stanhope, cols. 1040-3.
Handoub were firm and specific and he thought that if the instructions had not been positive the point would have been missed.¹

The desire of the soldiers to move from Suakin to the interior of the Eastern Sudan was intensified by the victory gained over the Ansâr at Tushki in August 1889. This victory was the first major defeat inflicted on the Ansâr by the Anglo-Egyptian forces since the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution. After it the military authorities began to exert an increasing pressure for an advance in the neighbourhood of Suakin. This appeared in the covering minutes sent with the intelligence reports from Suakin to the Adjutant-General in London. The protagonists were Holled Smith, Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, Grenfell, the Sirdar, and Dormer, the General Officer Commanding in Egypt. Between August and December, 1889, the keynote of these minutes was the decline of the Mahdist State in the Tokar district, the desire of the local tribes for the restoration of the "Egyptian rule" and their inability to throw off the Mahdist rule without assistance.²

The Sirdar tried to influence Baring and to convert him to the side of a "forward policy" in the Eastern Sudan. At the end of 1890 Grenfell wrote to Baring complaining that it was very disheartening to all of them but more so to officers at Suakin with 2,500 troops "penned in within the walls".³

¹ S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Dec. 12, 1888.
² F.M. Holt, The Mahdist State, p.171.
³ S.P. Grenfell to Baring, Dec. 14, 1890.
It seemed that in the years 1889-90 the soldiers were concentrating their efforts towards gaining the approval of Sir Evelyn Baring to their policy. They, rightly, judged that he was the man who could tip the balance in their favour. Lord Cromer confessed in 1908 that there was frequently pressed upon him during the year 1889 the necessity of reoccupying Tokar which he described as the granary of the Eastern Sudan. It was pointed out to him that if Uthman Digna were once driven out of Tokar, he would no longer be able to obtain supplies and would be obliged to evacuate the Eastern Sudan. Cromer added that he hesitated for some time before he recommended an advance to Tokar.¹ There is evidence to show that Baring was, very slowly but gradually, being converted by the soldiers to their views and policy.

At the end of 1886 Baring defined the policy of the "Egyptian Government" as not one of any direct intervention in the Sudan but as one aiming at the "pacification of the country and the development of commerce by coming to terms with some of the leaders and tribal chiefs".² The policy of the "Egyptian Government" with reference to the Sudan was not to make any attempt at re-conquest or any endeavour to govern the country again by direct Egyptian agency, but gradually by arrangements with the tribes, some of whom might possibly be subsidized, to restore "tranquility" to such an extent as would enable trade to be resumed. Baring considered that this was

². F.O. 633/5 Baring to A.B. Wylde, Nov. 17, 1886.
the only policy which the circumstances admitted and he was optimistic it might eventually prove successful if it were given enough time.¹

These views did not differ much from those of Fox and Company who propagated the idea of "pacifying" the Sudan through conciliating the tribes, subsidizing them and then finally governing them "through christian, commercial and pacific influences".² The difference at the time between the businessmen and Baring was over who would carry out this peaceful policy. Fox and Company wanted the job to be entrusted to a British Company, while Baring thought that this was the task of the Egyptian Government under the guidance of the British Government and with the assistance of the British Officers in the service of the Egyptian Government.³

But at the end of 1887 Baring had grave doubts that the policy of conciliation and of employing friendly tribes would succeed. He considered that some other policy ought to be tried.⁴ The policy of conciliation was unsuccessful because, Baring thought, of the difficulty of carrying it out into execution. There was not much chance of negotiating successfully with the "Dervish" leaders whilst the "non-Dervish" party were numerous, but from a military point of view less powerful than their opponents, and naturally said "come and deliver us from the Dervishes and we will then make any terms with you".⁵

1. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Lord Ribbesdale, March 1, 1887.
2. A.S.S. MSS. Fox to A. Albright, Jan. 9, 1895.
3. F.O. 633/5 Baring to Kitchener, April 4, 1887.
4. Ibid., same to same, Dec. 22, 1887.
5. Ibid., Baring to Samuel Baker, Feb. 28, 1889.
The alternative policy was that of the soldiers - a policy of a vigorous military campaign which would gradually put an end to the Mahdist State. By the beginning of 1889 Baring came to accept this policy in principle but he differed with the soldiers on the timing of carrying out this policy of conquest. He considered that the choice of the exact time which was most opportune for raising the issue of the re-conquest ought always to be left to him and not to be decided by the soldiers.

However, if the soldiers were capable of converting Baring to their policy of using force it would not be difficult for them to convince him of the necessity and feasibility of undertaking limited military operations which would ultimately lead to the conquest of the Sudan by piece-meal. And so the military authorities set out to work upon Baring to convert him to their view that the time had come when Tokar, and through it the Eastern Sudan, would be regained by the Egyptian Government.

After the victory near Suakin in December 1888 of the Egyptian and British forces under the command of the Sirdar, Baring appeared to have great confidence in the Sirdar. He praised Grenfell's faculties of good judgment and common sense and confessed that he attached the utmost weight to the Sirdar's opinions. The Sirdar must have discovered this high opinion of himself entertained by Baring and so he played upon it by putting pressure upon the Pro-consul to convince him of a

1. S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Nov.11, 1889.
"forward policy" in the Eastern Sudan.¹

Besides this pressure, Baring was very worried with the activities of the Italians around Kasala at the end of 1889 and beginning of 1890. In December 1889, he reported to Lord Salisbury that the Italians were negotiating with the "Chiefs of Kasala" which he considered to be a matter of much great importance. Up to December 1889, he had always looked upon the question of the Italian extension as one of not very great importance either to Britain or Egypt. He had always imagined that the main line of their colonial expansion would be towards Ethiopia, and that Ethiopia would, for a long time to come, be a sufficient hard nut for them to crack. But by the end of 1889 he realized that this view was by no means correct. The Italians were now making serious advances towards the Eastern Sudan and if they were allowed to do this, they would soon clash with the Egyptian policy of Britain. Baring believed that if the Italians succeeded in Kasala they would do permanent harm to Egypt and to Britain for they would materially loosen the British hold over Egypt. Baring, therefore, requested Salisbury to warn the Italians to keep their hands off Kasala and the Nile basin.²

At the beginning of 1890 Baring was troubled further by the Italian pressure on Kasala. He requested that if Salisbury could not come to terms with them, he should try to keep them back a few years by which time the Sudan would

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¹ S.P. Grenfell to Baring, Dec. 14, 1890.
² S.P. Baring to Salisbury, Dec. 15, 1889.
probably come "back to Egypt without much trouble".¹

It is probably this fear of Italian expansion coupled with the pressure from military authorities that converted Sir Evelyn Baring to a "forward policy" in the Sudan in 1890. The military must have known Baring's fears and must have taken advantage of them. So in March 1890 the Sirdar proposed to Baring to order a strong reconnaissance to be made south of Wadi Halfa which might be eventually turned "into a permanent advance", and Baring had to approve the proposition without referring the matter for the consideration of the Foreign Office. Baring even appeared to have thoughts that this reconnaissance might lead to the occupation of Dongola.²

From Suakin Colonel Holled Smith had strongly urged that the "Egyptian Government should occupy Tokar", and he was supported in his plea by the Sirdar.³

This pressure from the military authorities and the Italians caused Baring to announce to Lord Salisbury that it was "not improbable that a crisis is approaching in the Soudan affairs". In his long and well argued letter of March 15, 1890, to Lord Salisbury, he expanded upon the change of circumstances which convinced him that the moment had arrived when it had become desirable to reconsider the Sudan policy which had been pursued for the last six years. The circumstances which had in some degree changed the situation

1. Ibid., Baring to Barrington, Jan. 19, 1890.
2. CAB. 37/27 Baring to Salisbury, March 15, 1890.
3. Ibid., also S.P. Grenfell to Baring, Dec. 14, 1890.
were mainly the decided disposition of the Italians to extend their territory in the direction of the Sudan. Their activity in that direction pointed to the undesirability of any necessary delay. The "Dervish movement" appeared to him to be going rapidly downhill. The cruelty and misgovernment of the "Dervishes" had produced their natural results. The Khalifa's rule had become very unpopular. Many tribes more especially those in the Eastern Sudan had thrown off their allegiance to the Mahdist regime, others merely remained nominal followers of the Khalifa through fear. This unpopularity of the régime together with the spread of the famine which desolated the Sudan, would rule out the possibility of any serious opposition. Baring guessed that if Dongola province was re-occupied, it is quite possible that the "Dervish rule" might collapse altogether and the Egyptian troops would be able to march unopposed to Khartoum. The financial equilibrium had been restored in Egypt; a surplus had been provided, great progress had been made in the establishment of administrative order and regularity and the rehabilitation of Egyptian finance had proceeded at a more rapid rate than Baring thought would be possible some three or four years ago. Thus, it would be possible, without serious financial disarrangement to incur some moderate increase of military expenditure. Lastly, Baring contended that there could scarcely be any question as to the desirability of re-occupying the Sudan so far at least as Khartoum.  

1. CAB. 37/27 Baring to Salisbury, March 15, 1890.
In March 1890 Baring was cautious not to put his weight in favour of an advance from the north for the object of occupying the province of Dongola, but he was willing to use his increasing influence with Lord Salisbury to support the "forward policy" of the military authorities in the Eastern Sudan. He regarded the occupation of Dongola as a measure to be deprecated unless it was to be regarded as a first step towards the conquest of the Sudan as far as Khartoum. But in the case of Tokar, if it were occupied, there would not be, he believed, any particular military necessity for any further advance. The question of occupying Tokar should, therefore, be treated on its own merits, either as a separate incident, or a part of a general plan for the gradual conquest of the whole of the Sudan.¹

Baring drew the attention of Lord Salisbury to the fact that the desirability of occupying Tokar had during the last few years, been frequently urged by successive governors of Suakin. He had always been opposed to the occupation as he did not consider that the moment for action had arrived. But in March 1890 it appeared to him that the change in the Eastern Sudan had been even greater than in the case of other parts of the Sudan. All the indigenous tribes appeared to have abandoned Mahdism which was only kept to a very limited extent alive by the presence of a few "Dervishes" who belonged to distant tribes and who occupied Tokar and Handoub. Also, according to Colonel Holled Smith and Mr. Barnham, the British

¹ Ibid.
Vice-Consul in Suakin, the Italians had been actively intriguing at Tokar, although the place lay wholly outside the sphere of Italian action. Baring contended that Tokar would be re-occupied with little opposition and difficulty.¹

In spite of these powerful arguments by which Baring hoped to convert Lord Salisbury in favour of an advance to occupy Tokar, Baring did not commit himself on March 15, 1890, and refused to express any definite opinion as to whether it would be advisable to occupy Tokar or not until he would be able to consult Sir James Dormer, Sir Francis Grenfell, Colonel Holled Smith and Mr. Barnham. In his letter of March 15, Sir Evelyn Baring was careful to give the impression that he had arrived at the arguments and conclusions he expressed in that letter without any influence or pressure exercised upon him by any other person or persons. However, the fact was that he was just repeating the arguments which were pressed upon him by the soldiers and which were to be found fully expressed in the intelligence reports. It was probable that Baring desired to test the response of Lord Salisbury before he would definitely commit himself to the occupation of Tokar.

On 28th March, Baring finally recommended an advance as far as Tokar; but Salisbury rejected his recommendation with equally strong arguments. Salisbury was concerned with the effect of such an advance on the British public. He considered that a "forward imperialist policy" in the Sudan

¹. Ibid.
would be unpopular at home. "They (the public) were so deeply impressed with the disasters of six years ago", Salisbury remarked, "and the apparently inexorable necessity which had driven them into situations where those disasters were inevitable, that they shrink instinctively from any proposal to advance into the Egyptian desert". Salisbury also commented to Baring that it was "only by a forced process of reasoning" that the Red Sea Coast could be "represented as essential to the safety of Egypt"; and that until he had money enough to justify him in advancing to Berber he had better remain quiet.\(^1\)

Baring, rather unwillingly, concurred in the decision of the Government on 28th March.\(^2\) Nevertheless, on his return from leave in November 1890, he renewed his pressure for an advance to Tokar.\(^3\) There is evidence to show that during the months of November and December, the military authorities in Egypt increased their pressure upon Baring. "I am convinced", Sir Francis Grenfell wrote to Baring, "that the time has come when, without any strain on the finances of the country, and without any assistance from the English troops, the country as far as Tokar could be pacified".\(^4\) About the middle of

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2. S.P. Baring to Salisbury, April 4, 1890.


December the Sirdar remarked that it was disheartening to all officers and especially those at Suakin that the Suakin garrison should be penned within walls.¹

Lord Salisbury was aware of the pressure of military authorities upon Baring; and this awareness made him look with suspicion to the proposal of advancing to occupy Tokar. He warned Baring that once they had permitted a military advance, the extent of that military advance scarcely remained within their own discretion. It was always open to the military authorities to discover in the immediate vicinity of the area to which their orders confine them, some danger against which it was absolutely necessary to guard, some strategic position whose invaluable qualities would repay ten times any risk or cost that its occupation might involve. Then they had no means of arguing against them. The soldiers were upon their own territory and could set down civilian opposition to civilian ignorance; and so step by step, the imperious exactions of military necessity would lead into further conquests.²

By the end of 1890 Lord Salisbury was fully aware of the pressure from the soldiers and he felt uneasy about the "jingoistic" attitude of the military authorities. He protested against Grenfell's letter of December 14, in which the latter complained that the garrison at Suakin had been penned within walls. Lord Salisbury observed that if the soldiers

2. S.P. Salisbury to Baring, March 28, 1890; also Cromer, op.cit., vol.II, p.75.
were complaining now that 2,500 troops were penned within the walls of Suakin, would not the same complaint be lodged by the soldiers when a greater number of troops would be penned in behind the walls of Tokar and Handoub? "As long as the feeling is that", Salisbury continued, "it is an unnatural state of things that soldiers should be 'penned in behind walls' so long the voice of our distinguished officers will be for war". ¹

Nevertheless, Salisbury eventually - on February 7, 1891, gave his "distinguished officers" the war they were clamouring for during the last three years - when he telegraphed to Baring on that day that the British Government had sanctioned the advance to Tokar.

Military opinion in England backed their fellow soldiers in Egypt in their demand for an advance to Tokar. The Adjutant-General, Sir Redvers Buller, declared that "from a military point of view the time for the reoccupation not only of Tokar but of Berber and Khartoum has fully come, and an advance has I fancy been restrained by political, not by military considerations". In this statement, the Commander-in-Chief concurred.²

The re-occupation of Tokar was a triumph to the British military authorities in Egypt and Suakin. By the re-occupation of Tokar they did not only promote their "forward policy" but they were now more confident in their tactics and their ability

¹. S.P. Salisbury to Baring, Dec. 24, 1890.
². Cecil, op.cit., vol.IV, p.333, Baring to Salisbury, Nov. 28, 1890; also G.N.Sanderson, op.cit., p.81.
to put pressure upon the civil authorities and persuade them into accepting an advance into the interior of the Sudan when the circumstances and the opportunity would allow. The re-occupation also struck the final death blow to the policy of conciliation and of governing the Sudan through the agency of trade and a British chartered company, a policy which had been campaigned for by traders and businessmen. It was evident to the soldiers in February 1891 that their policy of re-conquest by military force had triumphed. Moreover, they were now confident that when the Sudan would be re-conquered, it would fall to their lot to take its administration.

As early as March, 1890, Baring decided that the "only one way in which the Soudan could be governed", in the first instance at least, with safety and prudence, was through the English Officers of the Egyptian Army who ought to be given the chief civil control over the would-be newly conquered provinces. Baring deplored the return of the old Ottoman rule because of "the almost total absence of capable Egyptian administrators in Egypt". And so British influence would be dominant in the Sudan through the "informal" rule of British officers - a method which had been followed, with success, in Egypt itself since 1882.

After the re-occupation of Tokar Baring must have felt that the soldiers had deceived him. They had continuously assured him that the Mahdist troops at Tokar had recently been very greatly reduced and that the place could be taken easily

1. CAB. 37/27 Baring to Salisbury, March 15, 1890.
without much resistance. A day before the final battle to take it, Grenfell reported that Tokar would be occupied with slight opposition if any. However when the battle ensued at Afāfīt, the Mahdist camp near Tokar, it was evident to the attackers that they had grossly underrated the strength of the Ansār. The Mahdist strength proved, in the words of the official account, to be "curiously at variance with reports received."

Baring confessed to Lord Salisbury that if he had known how strong the Ansār were, he should certainly have hesitated to recommend the advance. Could the soldiers hope to influence Baring again? They certainly did not succeed in converting Cromer in the years 1892-6 to their view that the time had arrived when an advance from the north to Khartoum should be started. Baring's hopes of an early advance in that direction faded after the re-occupation of Tokar. From that time and until March, 1896, all Baring's powerful influence was exerted against launching a re-conquest even of the Northern Sudan.

After the experience of Tokar, Baring grew more and more suspicious of the soldiers and feared that they might get out of hand if once again they were allowed to take the offensive, which might result in another Sudan business before they were aware of it. In November 1892 he told Lord Rosebery that there was sufficient cause for apprehension to render it

1. Egypt No. 2 (1892) Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 14, 16, 17, 18, 28; also G.N. Sanderson, op.cit., p.81.
desirable to lay down again clearly the general line which the Government approved. He thought he could control Walker and Kitchener if the latter were left alone but the process of controlling them would become more difficult when Kitchener and Walker were pressed for a forward advance by the military authorities at Suakin and the War Office authorities in London. He hoped that Lord Rosebery would write to him something which would let all the soldiers, whether at London, Cairo, or Suakin understand what was expected of them.¹

In 1895 he informed Lord Rosebery that he had always been so afraid of the soldiers getting the bit of their teeth running away with one, that he had persistently put forward objections to a "forward policy".²

After the re-occupation of Tokar, the soldiers moved their campaign for an early advance to Khartoum from Cairo to London. The British Officer class in Cairo now turned their attention towards influencing the authorities in London rather than Lord Cromer. This task was conducted mainly by two future Governors-General of the Sudan - Kitchener and Wingate.

In April 1892 Kitchener was appointed to the post of Sirdar, or Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army. Wingate became his Intelligence Chief.

Wingate confessed later that, from the time of his appointment as Sirdar, Kitchener steadily kept his mind to one object and one object only - "the recovery of the Sudan".³

1. F.O. 633/6 Cromer to Rosebery, Nov. 12, 1892.
2. Ibid., same to same, April 12, 1895.
3. Wingate MSS. Box 256/1 Notes by Wingate on Kitchener sent to a certain Harry, Feb. 4, 1934.
During the years 1892-6 Kitchener and Wingate worked hard and earnestly to convince the Foreign and War Offices that the time had come for the overthrow of the Mahdist State and that it could be dealt with easily.

Kitchener used his annual visits to England on leave during the 1890's to move round the country houses which were at that period seats of political influence. As his reputation increased such houses competed with each other for the privilege of welcoming him; and so after starting with the Grenfells and Cecils, Kitchener was soon intimate with many patrician families. In those circles viceregal dreams of future glory floated happily in Kitchener's mind. He was now looking to himself as a man of destiny, with a mission to smash the Mahdist State, avenge Gordon and reconquer the Sudan.

To realise these dreams Kitchener was actively pressing the case for an advance amongst high civilian and military authorities. In September 1894 Alfred Milner informed Wingate that Kitchener was trying very hard to impress upon the Foreign Office the desirability of an advance to Khartoum. In the previous month Kitchener himself told Wingate that he had been actively pressing the advance until Lord Cromer did not like it. Kitchener thought that if only the Liberal Government would go out, they might do something. He had got all the War Office officials on his side and if a Conservative administration came to power they would get their point as he

2. Wingate MSS. Box 256/1 Milner to Wingate, September 2, 1894.
"did well at Hatfield." 1

The most active officer who campaigned for an advance southwards of Wadi Halfa was F.R. Wingate. He was not as popular or influential in the country houses as the handsome Kitchener was. But his position of Chief of the Intelligence Department gave him the opportunity to pose as a man with knowledge and authority on all Sudanese matters and hence his advice was sought by the Foreign Office and his ideas and judgements were not ignored or sneered at by that Office. T. Sanderson, of the Foreign Office, informed Lord Wolseley that the Foreign Office had a high opinion of Major Wingate. 2 Lord Rosebery appeared to have entertained the same high opinion on Wingate. 3 He recommended Wingate for the C.B. in 1895 because of the information which the latter collected "always fresh and available about the Soudan". 4

This confidence in Wingate's character and information gave him the chance to impress his views on the Foreign Office and Lord Rosebery. Wingate attempted to impress upon Rosebery the view that the Mahdist State was on the verge of collapse and that inside the Sudan itself, as refugees had reported, there was a persistent rumour that the Egyptian Government was about to retake the Sudan. 5 Wingate, in an effort to convince Lord Rosebery of the iniquity of the Khalifa's rule, sent him a copy of Ten Years Captivity in the

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1. Ibid, Kitchener to Wingate, August 2, 1894.
2. Wingate MSS. Box 256/1, T. Sanderson to Wolseley, July, 10, 1894.
4. Wingate MSS. Box 104/1, Rosebery to Wingate, June 14, 1895.
5. Wingate MSS. Box 233/2 Wingate to Rosebery, Dec. 12, 1892.
Mahdi's Camp. In thanking Wingate for his present, Rosebery commented on the book to the effect that he had never, or scarcely ever, read so interesting a book for it told one all that one wanted to know - "the dark interior of that darkest of mysteries and continents".  

In spite of his efforts to spell out his views to Lord Rosebery and the Foreign Office, Wingate was not optimistic that his attempts to influence Lord Rosebery would succeed. His friend Alfred Milner, informed him that Rosebery was sympathetic to the ideas of the "forward school" but was discouraged "by finding that the bulk of his party cared not a bit about his efforts to make England more respected abroad". However, Milner advised Wingate not to be dispirited as the former thought that a more Imperial view would shortly gain ground even among the Radicals.

Another fellow imperialist - Captain Lugard - informed Wingate that the only hope for their policy in the Sudan to be adopted was a change of a ministry. If there was a change of government, Lugard hoped that there would be a reasonable prospect of energetic measures to defend British interests in the Nile Valley. He assured Wingate that he had worked on some of the Unionist leaders and was confident that the latter had very decided views on the Nile Valley question.

The hope of the "imperialists" for a Conservative administration was fulfilled in June 1895 when Salisbury

1. Wingate MSS. Box 230 Rosebery to Wingate, Dec. 1, 1892.
2. Wingate MSS. Box 256/1 Milner to Wingate, Sept. 2, 1894.
3. Ibid., Lugard to Wingate, Jan. 27, 1895.
returned to office after an election in which the coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists had won an overwhelming victory. The soldiers had not waited long before Lord Salisbury authorized an advance to the south of Wadi Halfa on March 12, 1896. Whatever the reasons for this decision might be, it can hardly be doubted that when Salisbury and his colleagues were deliberating on the question of an advance they had in mind the pressure put upon them by Kitchener, Wingate and Lugard who had already impressed the Ministers while in Opposition with the desirability and little difficulty with which an advance to the South of Wadi Halfa could be undertaken.

In advocating a "forward policy" in the Sudan throughout the years 1886-95 the British Officer class in Egypt and Suakin too often claimed that this policy was in the interests of Britain, Egypt and the Sudanese people. Motives frequently baffle analysis, but in this case they can be brought within narrow limits. It appears that the soldiers were motivated more by personal ambitions than anything else. Most of them were young and very ambitious men. As such they hoped to acquire privileges, positions, promotions, more pay, decorations and glory. These were the motives that had led them to join the service of the Egyptian army and which were now driving them to insist on using this army to further their own personal ambitions. The fact that the British officers were commanding a foreign army was more tempting since, the bulk of the fighting, and hence of the casualties, would be undertaken by the Egyptian soldiers. The British officers did not have to meet the enemy.
They would sit in their tents drawing and directing plans. If victory came in the end it was the officers' victory and they would reap the fruits more than anyone else. And this is what actually happened in the years of Reconquest, 1896-99. The Sudanese and the Egyptians fought hard to kill each other and they succeeded in killing each other in tens of thousands, while Kitchener and Wingate were sitting in their tents. Yet Kitchener, Wingate and other British officers got all, and even more, than they had hoped for. They got their promotions, decorations, more pay and the government of a country which is almost one-quarter of the area of Europe.

So in the end the soldiers won their battle against the traders and businessmen. Both those sections of the British public were really making a bid to put the Sudan under the Imperial rule of Britain. The aim was the same, yet the methods differed. The motives of both groups were personal—that is to say personal gain and privilege. In a remarkable statement Winston Churchill summed the motives of both when he asserted that those who clamoured for a "forward policy" in the Sudan were dreaming of "a bright if vague vision of Imperial power, of trans-continental railways, of African Viceroys, of conquest and commerce".¹

¹ Winston Churchill, op. cit., p.90.
CONCLUSION

Beginning with 1820 and until the middle of 1885 an increasing number of Britons came into physical contact with the Sudan. They were men and women from all ranks and intellectual levels: explorers, travellers, hunters, antiquaries, administrators, traders and soldiers. The data brought by this group was subjected to the synthesis of the stay-at-home publicists and scholars, who, in their turn, brought the Sudan, intellectually, in contact with the reading public. From the middle of 1885 and until the end of our period there was practically no physical contact between Britain and the Sudan. No single Briton dared to travel to Omdurman, the heart of the Mahdist State. But in spite of that a flood of data on the Sudanese political scene continued to pour out and the synthesis of this data continued also. Thus by 1896 we had an impressive quantity of data in English on all things Sudanese. It was embodied in state papers, private papers, memoirs, travel accounts, newspapers, journals and pamphlets.

It is from this literature that an attempt has been made in the previous chapters to reveal the body of opinion and thought relating to the Sudan, derived from individuals, groups and the British public at large. It is hoped that the former chapters have shown the quality of British thinking on the Sudan, the degree of British knowledge of the country as well as the degree of ignorance and self-interest that appeared in Britain's understanding of the Sudan.

The most astonishing fact which this study reveals is the extent to which views on the Sudan, whether official or public,
were founded upon didactic ignorance and self-interest. Because of these two serious limitations one notices the discrepancy between British views and the Sudanese reality as we now understand it.

In arriving at their attitudes towards the Sudan, both public and private, the British depended mainly on British ideas, prejudices and experience rather than on a knowledge of the Sudan or standards derived from Sudanese experience. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the British had no doubts as to the superiority of their character and culture and the dominant global position of Britain. Thus, practically almost all their impressions, reactions and judgments on the Sudan were, consciously or unconsciously, affected by this attitude of superiority. Facts about the Sudan were adapted to suit this mental attitude. The British, thus, judged the Sudan by their cultural values and political standards. In this way they saw the Sudan not merely as it was, but as it should be according to their own values and standards.

The British attitudes, therefore, arose from inadequate intellectual and moral standards as well as from deficient knowledge. These inadequate standards became, in most cases, the basis for British attitudes. The result was that personal self-interest and shallow national interest affected the British attitudes and policy.

There was, however, a saving grace in British attitudes. Some British attitudes which were dominant among one party of the British were subjected to criticism by another party. There was, for example, enough criticism by the Radicals of the
attitude of the Conservatives and "imperialists" towards the Mahdist revolution. Also the aggressive and tough line adopted by the soldiers towards the Mahdist State was often criticised and checked by the Foreign Office.

Professor George Shepperson has recently commented that, in the pattern of Imperialism, there is room for "the individual, the maladjusted European individual who, bidding his time and place, made his mark on the partition of Africa".\footnote{G. Shepperson, "Africa, the Victorians and Imperialism", Rev. Belge Phil. Hist. XL, 4 (1962), p. 1238} It is hoped that this thesis has brought out clearly the role of some individual Britons who made their marked contribution to the history of British ideas on the Sudan as well as to the British penetration and colonization of the Sudan. Baker, Gordon, Kitchener, Wingate and Fox were the prototypes of individual Britons whose essence was "the projection of personal fantasies on to what appeared to be the tabula rasa\footnote{Ibid.} of the Sudan". Such fantasies might be sexual, economic or personal ambitions.

This leads to the more complex question of motives. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish motives from attitudes. Some attitudes were in themselves motives; while some others inspired motives. However, it is a striking fact that economic forces and motives were so much uppermost in the minds of those individuals and groups who were concerned largely with the Sudan. Professor George Shepperson has stated that "contemporary agents of European expansion often gave an economic construction to
their motives. Sometimes, this was done consciously as a veil for political and nationalist aims, support for which could only be obtained from reluctant but influential groups whose main spur to action was the appeal of economics. More often, however, these agents of imperialism believed sincerely that they were working for economic ends.¹ This remark applies to Speke and Baker, who genuinely believed in the economic advantages that would accrue to Britain from a British paramountcy over the Sudan. It was also true of Fox and other business-men who held the same belief. Material gain in the form of increased salaries was also in the minds of Wingate, Kitchener and other soldiers. On the other hand, those who opposed the imposition of British supremacy over the Sudan, mainly the Radicals, gave an economic rationalisation for advocating such a view: they argued that the Sudan would be of no economic benefit to Britain.

Whatever might be the attitudes and motives of the nineteenth century British they were the starting point of bringing two peoples and two cultures in contact with each other for the first time. This contact has certainly contributed to the cross-cultural misunderstanding of our recent past. However, the study of these attitudes is not without relevance to the needs of the present and the future. By revealing this heritage of the past it is hoped that this revelation would promote a better understanding between two peoples and two cultures; and perhaps there is no better justification for writing history than writing it with the purpose of promoting a better understanding between two nations and cultures.

¹. Ibid., p. 1231
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