ENGLAND IN EGYPT AND THE SOUDAN.

BY COLONEL CHARLES CHAILLÉ LONG, FORMERLY CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE LATE GENERAL GORDON, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE SOUDAN.

THE declaration, cynically termed "Anglo-Egyptian Convention," which was signed by Lord Cromer and Boutros Pacha at Cairo, on January 19, 1899, is the fulfilment of the writer's repeated prediction that a protectorate or annexation was the purpose of the prolonged presence of England in Egypt. If the rôle of Cassandra is neither pleasant nor profitable, there is some compensation in belonging to the few who have not been duped by the solemn promises and repeated declarations of Great Britain, that her occupation was entirely disinterested and for the benefit of Egypt alone. The writer has maintained that the facts were opposed to these assertions, and that the British occupation, which began in 1882, was the culmination of an ambition which dates from the commencement of the present century.

A distinguished writer has said that the rôle of the historian is confined to putting down everything in its place, and that only when this is done may he be permitted to draw his own conclusions, in common with his reader. With this principle in mind, the writer deems it opportune to submit to the readers of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW some notes which will permit them to form an unbiased judgment.

England, it is true, has treated by convention with Egypt, if forcing a manacled hand may be dignified with the name of treaty, but it is not impossible, nay it is quite probable, that England will be forced to submit her action in Egypt and the Soudan to the arbitration of Europe.

Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons in 1883:

"I must remind the House that the onerous duty which we have undertaken in Egypt is to put down disorder, and thus establish some beginnings of tolerable government. That is a duty we have undertaken, not on our behalf only, but for civilization. We undertook it with the approval of the powers of Europe—the highest and most authentic organ of modern civilization. We must fulfil it as we received it from them. I know the word 'protectorate' is sometimes spoken; perhaps it is not spoken in its technical sense, but it is a dangerous word."

Just here it is appropriate to quote the words of a member of the House of Commons, replying to Mr. Gladstone on the occasion above mentioned. He said:

"You need not pretend to be disinterested. It is all a sham. The first object you had when you went to Egypt was to establish English interests. It was for the gospel of selfishness that you went, it was for the British interests, and, thank God, there are some people who will stand up for British interests."

For the purpose of this article, it might suffice to limit our review to the events of 1882, but the presence of Mr. Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, and the continued reference to his proposition to construct a road from the Cape to Khartoum and to Cairo, induce us to look backward a hundred years, that we may show that Mr. Cecil Rhodes' project was not born yesterday, but dates from the commencement of the century.

On August 1, 1798, Nelson destroyed the French fleet at Aboukir, and to-day there may be found upon the shores of Aboukir uniform buttons bearing the inscription "Army of Egypt," which sufficiently explains the original purpose of that army. The battles of July 25, 1799, which followed, and the victory of Kléber at Heliopolis on March 20, 1800, were a part of this plan. In 1806, Great Britain seized anew the Cape of Good Hope, colonized by the Dutch and by the French Huguenots, with the manifest purpose of joining the two points of Africa, the Cape and Cairo.

In 1807, under pretext of protecting Egypt against a renewed invasion of Bonaparte, Great Britain sent a fleet to Alexandria, which was repulsed by Mehemet Ali.

In 1840, England organized a coalition composed of Russia, Austria and Prussia, which, by the Treaty of London, July 15, 1840, undertook to settle the difficulty between the sublime Porte and the Pacha of Egypt, without the co-operation of France. Beyrout was bombarded by an English fleet for nine days, and reduced to ashes, and the Egyptian troops obliged to evacuate

were replaced by the Turks. In 1859, during the war in which France was engaged for Italian independence, England sent a fleet to Alexandria for the purpose of occupying that city; but the peace of Villa Franca came just in time to prevent the disembarkment of troops destined to form an army of occupation.

In 1869, the missions of Sir Samuel Baker, as Egyptian Governor-General of the Soudan, and, later, of Colonel Gordon in the same capacity, were manifest indications of the policy of England in Egypt, and were intended to open the way to her future occupation of the country.

In 1869 a number of American military men replaced the French mission in Egypt. Great Britain protested, and requested Ismail Khedive to dismiss the American officers; but Ismail hesitated, and, on one plea or another, they were retained, but were finally discharged in 1879 on the plea of economy.

In 1874, General Gordon was sent to Egypt on detached service as Governor-General of the Soudan. Nubar Pacha inspired Gordon's nomination, but the extreme individuality and personal ambitions of the latter, rendered him a difficult instrument to manipulate solely for Government interest.

In 1875, the British Foreign Office, in accord with an English and American journalistic enterprise, sent an expedition to the African lakes, ostensibly in the interest of discovery, but in reality to hoist the British flag in Uganda.

Ismail Khedive forestalled that purpose by appointing, in 1874, an American officer, then in his service, Chief of Staff to Gordon, with instructions to proceed to Uganda in haste, and after executing a treaty with King M'Tesa, occupy the Nile with Egyptian military posts. This mission was promptly accomplished, and when, in April, 1875, the British expedition arrived at the capital of Uganda, bearing both a British and an American flag, it was confronted by the fact of an Egyptian occupation. Gordon's Chief of Staff had arrived nine months before, and, returning to Gondokoro, had taken with him the coveted treaty by which M'Tesa recognized Uganda and the Nile basin as Egyptian territory.

Great Britain neither forgot nor forgave this unexpected check to its ambition, which aimed, even in 1875, to take possession of Uganda and the head-waters of the Nile.

In 1879, General Gordon was recalled from the Soudan by

Lord Cromer, on the plea that his financial administration of the provinces had been disastrous. It is claimed, indeed, that the British Government sent Gordon to the Soudan with a perfect knowledge of his iconoclastic ideas, and with the conviction that his administration would create disorder. However this may be, the revenue of the Soudan had disappeared, and Gordon himself avowed that he had "laid the egg which hatched the Mahdi," referring to his establishment of the monopoly of the ivory trade, a fact which well nigh ruined the Khartoum merchants, with whom the Mahdi was at that time affiliated.

In 1879, the prodigalities of Ismail, inspired by the wily Armenian Minister, Nubar, ended in a financial crisis. To the cries of distress of unpaid civil employees, were added the clamors of an army of 18,000 soldiers, whose arrears, due for thirty months, reduced them to the verge of starvation. Nubar proposed to disband the army without pay, a flagrant injustice, which provoked the revolt of the three colonels, led by Arabi Bey, whose first act was to administer a vigorous cuffing to Nubar and his English colleague. In the interest of European holders of Egyptian bonds, France, Italy, Germany and England demanded the abdication of Ismail, and, on June 20, 1879, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Mohamed Tewfik Pacha.

It is claimed by some that the interests of France were sacrificed to satisfy the bondholders; by others that Great Britain intended thus to punish Ismail for the offense of having executed the treaty whereby Uganda and the Nile basin were annexed to the Khedival domain. Great Britain's hostility to the American officer was made apparent, when subsequently, as military occupant of Egypt, she objected to his appointment as United States Diplomatic Agent to that country, because this officer, in fact, was in favor of the autonomy of Egypt.

The mild Mohamed Tewfik was but little prepared to struggle against the intrigues with which he was beset from the day of his accession to the throne. Informed of the hostile designs nourished by the British Government, in 1881 he addressed a letter of protestation to Lord Granville, who replied as follows:

"The English Government would act against the dearest traditions of its national history if it nourished the desire to diminish the liberty of the Khedive, or to break down the institutions to which she has given birth. It would not be difficult, if that were necessary, to show in referring to recent events that this government should be removed

from suspicions which, as you inform us, exist in Egypt as to its intentions."

Tewfik was reassured by Lord Granville's letter.

Time passed, and the simple military revolt for unpaid stipend grew into a serious insurrection, principally directed against the European and the Christian.

On June 11, 1882, occurred the massacre of Europeans at Alexandria. On July 11 an English fleet bombarded Alexandria. The battle of Tel-el-Kebir followed, and the outcome was the British occupation.

One day in 1882, shortly after the occupation, Tewfik was again admonished, this time that Great Britain had come to stay, notwithstanding the assurances of Lord Granville. The situation, he was told, might be compared to that in which a fireman who had assisted in extinguishing a conflagration, but was pleased with the building he had preserved, concluded not only to remain, but to put out the rightful owner. Tewfik, in great alarm, addressed a communication, dated July 22, 1882, expressing his fears to Lord Seymour, commanding the British fleet at Alexandria. The admiral's reply was as follows:

"I, the Admiral commanding the British fleet, believe it opportune to confirm without delay to your Highness that the Government of Great Britain has no intention to make the conquest of Egypt, nor indeed to make any attack in any way against the religion or the liberties of the Egyptians. The Government has only the unique purpose of protecting your Highness and the people against the rebels."

In 1883, Lord Dufferin was sent to Egypt, and, while there, declared that the zone of English intervention was limited to Wady Halfa. Nevertheless, during the same year a railroad plant was disembarked at Suakim for the avowed purpose of constructing a railway to Berber, a purpose which Osman Digma, the Mahdi's lieutenant, successfully prevented.

General Gordon's return to the Soudan in 1884, notwithstanding the generally accepted judgment on that subject, was in direct opposition to the wishes of Mr. Gladstone, of Sir Evelyn Baring and of Tewfik Pacha, the Khedive. Tewfik protested to the very last moment, and, explaining the religious character of the movement, urged that no Christian or European could control the rebellion, but that his presence would only add fuel to the flames, and he finally predicted that Gordon would never return. There was another potent argument used by the Khedive,

but the writer does not feel at liberty to announce it at present, and that for certain reasons of state.

Mention is made here of Gordon's return to the Soudan, because of the dramatic incidents which followed; but the writer, with an intimate knowledge of the question, is of the opinion that neither Mr. Gladstone nor his Government should be held responsible for Gordon's action, which was inspired by a purely personal ambition. The tardy attempt to rescue Gordon is quite another question, and beyond the scope of these notes.

Dr. Schnitzer, or Emin Bey Hakim, after General Gordon's retirement in 1879 from the Government of the Equatorial Provinces, became the Egyptian Governor-General *ad interim*.

In 1886, Emin Bey Hakim, feeling himself neglected by Egypt, decided to sell the provinces of which he was the guardian, and he therefore made propositions in that sense to Lord Iddesleigh, Secretary of the Britsh Foreign Affairs. Immediately a cry of urgency went up in England for the "succor of Emin." The Foreign Office in the name of Sir Wm. MacKinnon put 30,000 pounds, sterling, in the hands of Stanley, who hastened to Egypt, where 10,000 pounds more were added from the Egyptian Treasury to pay Emin for the sale of Egyptian provinces. The writer denounced the fraud which was being perpetrated in an open letter addressed to the Khedive of Egypt, which said:

"The series of robberies of Egyptian territories accomplished since 1882, Monseigneur, should put us on guard against the acts of this pretended expedition for the succor of Emin, who, after the latest news, is in perfect health and in no danger or want whatsoever. I invite the attention of your Highness to the fact that the Stanley Expedition can have no other object than to take from Egypt the Provinces of the Equator and the Nile Basin, which I have annexed to the Khedival crown. I protest, therefore, in the name of Egypt against this premeditated rape."

In an article on the subject in the *Nouvelle Revue* of Paris, in the number for March 15, 1887, the writer said:

"At the moment when an effort is made to plant for all time the English flag in Uganda on the borders of the Great Lakes, it becomes my duty to speak. The English expedition hides, under the appearance of succor to Emin, a political design conceived a long time ago. It is the first step *en avant* towards the constitution of an immense Anglo-African Empire."

The burlesque rescue expedition left London amid the hurrahs and systematic tears of the public and the Foreign Office, which latter had taken care to furnish its chief with Emin's

letters. It does not appear, however, why Stanley was also carrying with him a proposition from the East African Association, and one also from His Majesty the King of Belgium. The secret of the affair, now *secret de Polichinelle*, is that Emin expected a large sum of money for his proffered provinces from his *soi-disant* rescuer; but he received not a cent, hence the hesitation of Emin. The agent of the British Foreign Office profited by the delay to sow discord among Emin's people, and, when this was accomplished, the latter was obliged to follow his captor to the coast. The object at which Great Britain aimed in sending Stanley to Uganda in 1875 was thus achieved in 1890 by the occupation of Uganda by the British East African Association.

The *Anglo-Congolais* incident followed, which consisted in a convention, executed in London in 1891, by the terms of which, in consideration of a band of territory 25 kilometres in width, situated between the lakes Tanganyika and M'Outa N'Zighe or Albert Nyanza, the British East African Association, or, in other words, the Foreign Office, abandoned to the Congo Free State the left banks of the Lake Albert Nyanza and of the Nile as far as 5 degrees latitude, north. The French Government, by virtue of rights reserved in the charter of the Congo Free State, protested against this cession of territory belonging to the Congo Free State, and the treaty, signed May 12, 1894, by King Leopold and Lord Rosebery, was practically annulled by a convention signed at Paris between France and the Congo Free State, August 14, 1894. Great Britain on the demand of Germany restored the band of territory to the Congo Free State.

The *entente* between the British East African Expedition and the Congo Free State was made manifest by this incident, and it is likewise apparent that the King of Belgium was in accord with Great Britain as to the real purpose of the so-called Emin Relief Expedition.

Great Britain, in the recent affair of the occupation of Fashoda by the Marchand mission, claimed that Fashoda was Egyptian territory, and that France by such occupation violated the existing treaties which had been invoked by France herself and by all preceding Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The argument, in fact, was unanswerable,

The occupation of Fashoda might have been treated by France as a political point, from which she might have, with plausibility,

declared that her occupation meant simply her assumption of former rights, which she had temporarily vacated in 1882 in refusing to join Great Britain in the bombardment of Alexandria—that Fashoda in fact meant the re-establishment of the *status quo ante bellum* of 1882. The occasion was favorable to invoke the arbitration of Europe, declaring that France would maintain her occupation of Fashoda only so long as England maintained possession of Uganda, Zeileh, Kassala and other Egyptian provinces, which had been seized for the sole and separate account of England, and where, in violation of the very treaties invoked against France, England had set up and maintained not an Egyptian but an English administration. The opportunity to administer a severe rebuke to England and punish her with her own weapons was thus lost. The error, on the part of the French Government, was so manifest that it provoked numerous declarations of protestation in the Chamber of Deputies. Great Britain's occupation of Egypt, in fact, has been rendered the more easy by the series of mistakes and lost opportunities which have marked the last twenty years.

The first of these errors was the regrettable differences between the French Diplomatic Agent and the French Controller General of Finances in Egypt, which led to the disavowal of the former by his Government, when, had he been sustained, Arabi's rebellion would have been restrained within its just limits.

Secondly, the dethronement of Ismail Pacha, in 1879, was accomplished on the joint action of England, Germany and France. This act, both impolitic and arbitrary, especially for France, indicated the power and authority of the French holders of Egyptian bonds, who thus, unconsciously perhaps, sacrificed the political and commercial interests of France to the interests of her bondholders.

Thirdly, France should have co-operated with the British in suppressing the military revolt of Arabi Pacha.

Fourthly, she should have sanctioned in 1883 the disembarkment of Admiral Conrad at Port Said. Such disembarkment would have restored the *condominium* and the *status quo ante bellum*.

Fifthly, she should not have refused in 1884 to ratify the convention between M. Waddington and Lord Granville, whereby England was willing to fix the date of her promised evacuation.

Sixthly, she should not have declined in 1887 to accede to a second convention proposed by Sir Drummond Wolff, with a view to the evacuation of Egypt.

This bill of errors is incomplete, but it may be concluded by mentioning a proposal which, had it been accepted, would have indubitably given to France the key to Egypt, and have re-established her prestige and power in that country.

The writer acted as the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the United States Government at Alexandria in 1882, at the request of the citizens of the United States in Cairo and Alexandria, and with the approval of the Government at Washington, whose titular agents abandoned their posts in a moment of danger and fled to Europe. Returning from Egypt in 1883, the writer submitted a note, dated December 11, 1883, to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, based upon certain representations made to him by a competent authority, by which he proposed to assume the command (conjointly with King John) of an Abyssinian army of 200,000 Abyssinians, which, from Adowa, he would direct against Gallabat on the Blue Nile and Khartoum, where, after crushing the Mahdi, he would declare King John the Sultan of the Soudan under the protectorate of France. The proposition carried with it no responsibility nor expense; it was an occupation of Abyssinia and the Soudan, to which France was invited by King John. M. Ferry, then Minister, replied that the question of Tonkin had caused him already sufficient trouble, and that he had no desire to add to his sobriquet of *Tonkinois* that of *Abyssinien*.

The writer's note must have been thrown into the waste basket of the ministry. However this may be, a translation appeared in an English journal forty-eight hours thereafter, followed by the significant announcement that an English mission under Admiral Hewett would leave London for Adowa that night, charged with a special mission to King John. It seems that Admiral Hewett at Adowa tried in vain to induce King John to march upon Khartoum. It is possible, too, that the French Consul at Massowah may have been instrumental in explaining to King John the impolicy of such an act, for Admiral Hewett failed to accomplish the object of his mission.

Five years later, toward the end of February, 1889, King John, failing to induce France to accept his overtures, decided to undertake the conquest of Khartoum alone. He left Gondar with 150,000 warriors. Descending the Bahr-el-Azrak, he arrived at Gallabat on March 9, 1889, where he attacked and defeated the principal army of the Mahdi. Victorious, he was about to resume his march upon Khartoum, when he was killed accidentally by a spent ball. The victorious march was arrested, the chiefs engaged in jealous wrangling as to who should assume the chief command; and, during the disorder which ensued, the Mahdists recovered from their defeat, and, attacking the mutinous camp, drove the Abyssinians back to the Abyssinian frontier.

Had the French Government accepted the writer's proposition five years before, there is scarcely a doubt that the Abyssinian army of 200,000 warriors could have been led victoriously to Khartoum, for with each Abyssinian chief it was proposed to place an experienced European commander. King John, during the year 1884, would have been crowned Sultan of the Soudan (which, by parenthesis, would have fulfilled both an Arab and an Abyssinian tradition). Besides, the return of General Gordon to the Soudan would have been forestalled; and, consequently, the world would not have had to lament the irreparable and useless sacrifice of the hero of Khartoum.

In 1894 the writer again submitted the possibility of taking Khartoum, this time to M. Casimir Périer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who received him in private audience on January 17, 1894. The minister listened with earnest attention to the proposition, which was to do with King Menelik what M. Ferry had failed to do with King John. M. Casimir Périer objected that both England and Italy had secured a footing on the Abyssinian coast since 1883, and that any expedition from the Red Sea, by way of Obok, might cause complications with Italy.

The writer could not, of course, combat these objections; but, not only to the minister, but also to certain members of the Colonial Group, he insisted that any expedition having the Nile as an objective point, should be sent from Obok, either down the Bahr-el-Azrak or Blue Nile, or from Obok down the Sanbat, the objective point in either case being Khartoum. Such an expedition, needless to say, should be based upon a strong, offensive military force, capable of crushing, if need be, the Mahdists or the British. The writer was asked by a member of the Colonial Group if he would accept the command of a mission having its

point of departure from the Mobangi, and he clearly and explicitly refused; but, on the other hand, he expressed his willingness to accept the command of an expedition having its base on the Red Sea, with Khartoum as an objective point, supported by an Abyssinian army. Judge, then, of the writer's surprise when, several months prior to the recent affair on the Nile, he learned of Captain Marchand's defenseless mission to Fashoda!

Fashoda, it must be assumed, was a mere incident, and not the terminus of this mission; which, if it did not propose to go at once to Khartoum, should have at least crossed the river 100 or more miles south, and occupied the mouth of the Sanbat, where, aside from the defenses of the two rivers, it could secure its communications with Abyssinia. Fashoda, during General Gordon's administration of the Soudan Provinces, marked the southern limit of the Governorat of Khartoum; it was an Egyptian penitentiary, a desolate and unhealthy place of exile to which were relegated those who had incurred the disfavor of the Khedival palace at Cairo.

In conclusion it will prove instructive to quote from an article by the writer, entitled "*Du Cap au Caire,*" which was published in *La Nouvelle Revue,* August 15, 1895:

> "Khartoum is the key to the Soudan; for England it is more, it is the door to the African continent, to which she has aspired for a hundred years. Should England seize this last remaining Egyptian province, she establishes effectively her route from the Cape to Cairo, and thus becomes the mistress of Egypt."

It was Mr. Gladstone who reminded us that England interfered in Egyptian affairs "with the approval of the powers of Europe." England cannot escape her responsibility to Europe, which fully understands that Egypt is not the property of any one nation, but the common property of the world, "an international passage way indispensable to the commerce of all nations."

Europe, therefore, is the arbiter of the destinies of Egypt; and it needs no voice of Cassandra to predict that England will not be permitted to consummate her ambition in Egypt, even though that ambition is a century old.

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