execution (assuming that the Egyptian authorities were sincere in proposing reforms).

C. *The Rise and Power of Mahdism.—*The Mahdist move­ment, which was utterly to overthrow Egyptian rule, derived its strength from two different causes: the oppression under which the people suffered,@@1 and the measures taken to prevent the Baggara (cattle-owning Arabs) from slave trading. Venality and the extortion of the tax-gatherer flourished anew after the departure of Gordon, while the feebleness of his successors inspired in the Baggara a contempt for the authority which prohibited them pursuing their most lucrative traffic. When Mahommed Ahmed (*q.v.*), a Dongolese, proclaimed himself the long-looked-for Mahdi (guide) of Islam, he found most of his original followers among the grossly superstitious villagers of Kordofan, to whom he preached universal equality and a community of goods, while denouncing the Turks@@2 as unworthy Moslems on whom God would execute judgment. The Baggara perceived in this Mahdi one who could be used to shake off Egyptian rule, and their adhesion to him first gave importance to his “mission.” Mahommed Ahmed became at once the leader and the agent of the Baggara. He married the daughters of their sheikhs and found in Abdullah, a member of the Taaisha section of the tribe, his chief supporter. The first armed conflict between the Egyptian troops and the Mahdi’s followers occurred in August 1881. In June 1882 the Mahdi gained his first considerable success. The capture of El Obeid on the 17th of January 1883 and the annihilation in the November following of an army of over 10,000 men commanded by Hicks Pasha (Colonel William Hicks [*q.v*.] formerly of the Bombay army) made the Mahdi undisputed master of Kordofan and Sennar. The next month, December 1883, saw the surrender of Slatin in Darfur, whilst in February 1884 Osman Digna, his amir in the Red Sea regions, inflicted a crushing defeat on some 4000 Egyptians at El Teb near Suakin. In April following Lupton Bey, governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal, whose troops and officials had embraced the Mahdist cause, surrendered and was sent captive to Omdurman, where he died on the 8th of May 1888.

On learning of the disaster to Hicks Pasha’s army, the British government (Great Britain having been since 1882 in military occupation of Egypt) insisted that the Egyptian government should evacuate such parts of the Sudan as they still held, and General Gordon was despatched, with Lieut.-Colonel Donald H. Stewart,@@3 to Khartum to arrange the withdrawal of the Egyptian civil and military population. Gordon’s instructions, based largely on his own suggestions, were not wholly consistent ; they contemplated vaguely the establishment of some form of stable government on the surrender of Egyptian authority, and among the documents with which he was furnished was a firman creating him governor­general of the Sudan.@@4 Gordon reached Khartum on the 18th of February 1884 and at first his mission, which had aroused great enthusiasm in England, promised success. To smooth the way for the retreat of the Egyptian garrisons and civilians he issued proclamations announcing that the suppression of the slave trade was abandoned, that the Mahdi was sultan of Kordofan, and that the Sudan was independent of Egypt. He enabled some thousands of refugees to make their escape to

Assuan and collected at Khartum troops from some of the out­lying stations. By this time the situation had altered for the worse and Mahdism was gaining strength among tribes in the Nile valley at first hostile to its propaganda. As the only means of preserving authority at Khartum (and thus securing the peaceful withdrawal of the garrison) Gordon repeatedly tele­graphed to Cairo asking that Zobeir Pasha might be sent to him, his intention being to hand over to Zobeir the government of the country. Zobeir (*q.v.*), a Sudanese Arab, was probably the one man who could have withstood successfully the Mahdi. Owing to Zobeir’s notoriety as a slave-raider Gordon’s request was refused. All hope of a peaceful retreat of the Egyptians was thus rendered impossible. The Mahdist movement now swept northward and on the 20th of May Berber was captured by the dervishes and Khartum isolated. From this time the energies of Gordon were devoted to the defence of that town. After months of delay due to the vacillation of the British government a relief expedition was sent up the Nile under the command of Lord Wolseley. It started too late to achieve its object, and on the 25th of January 1885 Khartum was captured by the Mahdi and Gordon killed. Colonel Stewart, Frank Power (British consul at Khartum) and Μ. Herbin (French consul), who (accompanied by nineteen Greeks) had been sent down the Nile by Gordon in the previous September, to give news to the relief force, had been decoyed ashore and murdered (Sept. 18, 1884). The fall of Khartum was followed by the withdrawal of the British expedition, Dongola being evacuated in June 1885. In the same month Kassala capitulated, but just as the Mahdi had practically completed the destruction of the Egyptian power@@‘ he died, in this same month of June 1885. He was at once succeeded, by the khalifa Abdullah, whose rule continued until the 2nd of September 1898,@@· when his army was completely overthrown by an Anglo-Egyptian force under Sir H. (afterwards Lord) Kitchener. The military operations are described elsewhere (see Egypt: *Military Opera­tions'),* and here it is only necessary to consider the internal situation and the character of the khalifa’s govern­ment. The Mahdi had been regarded by his adhe­rents as the only true commander of the faithful, endued with divine power to conquer the whole world. He had at first styled his followers dervishes *(i.e.* religious mendi­cants) and given them the *jibba* as their characteristic garment or uniform. Later on he commanded the faithful to call them­selves *ansar* (helpers), a reference to the part they were to play in his career of conquest, and at the time of his death he was planning an invasion of Egypt. He had liberated the Sudanese from the extortions of the Egyptians, but the people soon found that the Mahdi’s rule was even more oppressive than had been that of their former masters, and after the Mahdi’s death the situation of the peasantry in particular grew rapidly worse, neither life nor property being safe. Abdullah set himself steadily to crush all opposition to his own power. Mahommed Ahmed had, in accordance with the traditions which required the Mahdi to have four khalifas (lieutenants), nominated, besides Abdullah, Ali wad Helu, a sheikh of the Degheim and Kenana Arabs, and Mahommed esh Sherif, his son-in-law, as khalifas. (The other khalifaship was vacant having been declined by the sheikh es Senussi [*q.v.*]). Wad Helu and Sherif were stripped of their power and gradually all chiefs and amirs not of the Baggara tribe were got rid of except Osman Digna, whose sphere of operations was on the Red Sea coast. Abdullah’s rule was a pure military despotism which brought the country to a state of almost complete agricultural and commercial ruin. He was also almost constantly in conflict either with the Shilluks, Nuers and other negro tribes of the south; with the peoples of Darfur, where at one time an anti-Mahdi gained a great following; with the Abyssinians; with the Kabbabish and other Arab tribes who

@@@1 Writing from Darfur in April 1879 Gordon said: “ The govern­ment of the Egyptians in these far-off countries is nothing else but one of brigandage of the very worst description. It is so bad that all hope of ameliorating it is hopeless.”

@@@’ The Sudanese spoke of all foreigners as ,, Turks.” This arose from the fact that most of the higher Egyptian officials were of Turkish nationality and that the army was officered mainly by Turks, Albanians, Circassians, &c., and included in the ranks many Bashi-Bazuks (irregulars) of non-Sudanese origin.

@@@’ Colonel Stewart had been sent to Khartum in 1882 on a mission of inquiry, and he drew up a valuable report,*. Egypt,* No. 11 (1883).

@@@4 It is unnecessary here to enter upon a discussion of the precise nature of Gordon’s instructions or of the measure in which he carried them out. The material for forming a judgment will be found in Gordon’s *Journals* (1885), Morley’s *Life of Gladstone* (1903), Fitz- maurice’s *Life of Granville* (1905), and Cromer’s *Modern Egypt* (1908). (See also Gordon, Charles George.)

@@@6 Sennar town held out until the 19th of August, while the Red Sea ports of Suakin and Massawa never fell into the hands of the Mahdists. The garrisons of some other towns were rescued by the Abyssinians.

@@@• This period in the history of the Sudan is known as the Mahdia.