

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



*Buy me a coffee*

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>

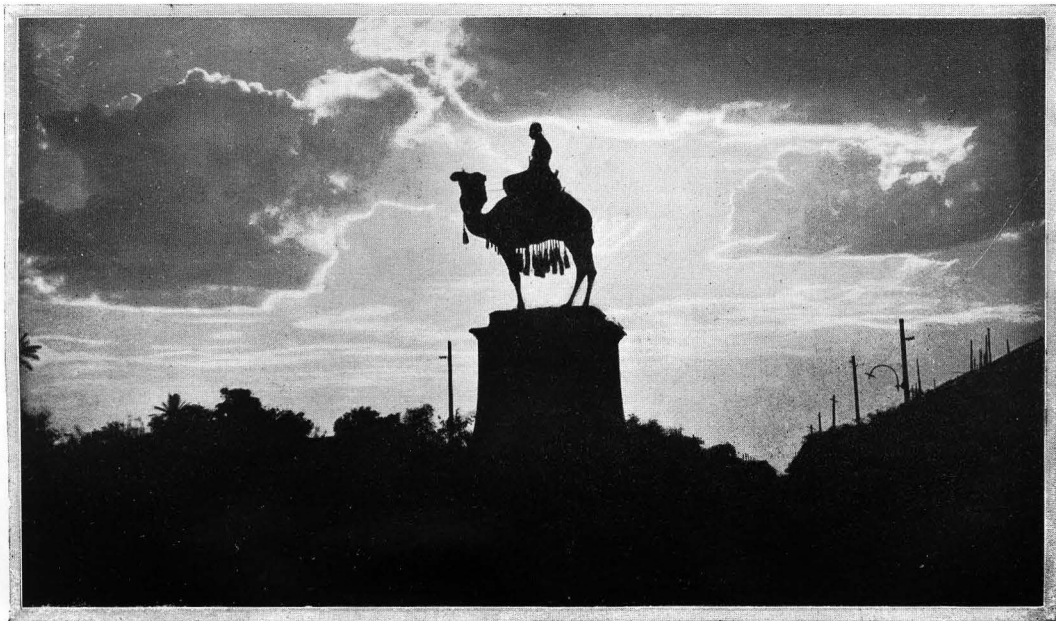


**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>



**The Gordon Statue at Khartoum**

# THE CHANGING SUDAN

BY THE REV.  
W. WILSON CASH

Author of *The Expansion of Islam, The Moslem World  
in Revolution, and Persia Old and New*

SECOND EDITION  
(*Third impression*)

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
SALISBURY SQUARE, LONDON, E.C. 4

1931

<i>First edition</i>	.	.	.	.	<i>February, 1930</i>
<i>Second</i>	„	.	.	.	<i>November, 1930</i>
<i>Third impression</i>	.	.	.	.	<i>December, 1931</i>

*To the beloved Bishop in Egypt and the Sudan, to whose wise counsel and spiritual leadership the author owes so much, this book is affectionately dedicated.*

## FOREWORD

**I**N January, 1929, I was privileged to visit once more the Northern Sudan, in order to confer with the missionaries and government officials on the future policy of the Church Missionary Society work in the Sudan.

The visit was a brief but very busy one, and as a result of it certain important decisions were made by the C.M.S. for the future development of the two missions in the northern and southern areas.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my deep gratitude to the Governor-General, Sir John Maffey, to J. G. Matthew, Esq., Secretary for Education, Health, *etc.*, in the Sudan Government, and to the many officials all of whom from the day of my arrival to the time I left the Sudan showed me such generous hospitality, friendship, and kindness, and to whose ready help any success that attended my work was largely due.

I also wish to record my deep appreciation to the missionaries who gave me such loyal and wholehearted co-operation in my efforts. Their work is beyond praise; and I came away with an impression of profound thankfulness for the great service they are rendering to the Kingdom of God.

I cannot close this Foreword without recording the special service rendered by Bishop Gwynne as chairman of our conferences, Dr. Lasbrey, the then secretary of the Egypt and Northern Sudan Mission, and Bishop Kitching and Archdeacon Shaw, both of whom travelled over a thousand miles to join in the discussions and who brought to our problems expert knowledge and advice.

This little volume is put out in the hope that it may enable the Church at home to see the greatness of our task, our responsibility to Arab and pagan peoples of the Sudan, and

## FOREWORD

the opportunity before us for advance. The challenge of the hour from the Sudan is a call for reinforcements and for financial support. The urgency of the call will, I think, be apparent to any one who reads this book. It is my hope that all who read these pages will contribute something towards the further spread of the Gospel in a country where the doors stand wide open and where there is every encouragement to us to go forward.

W. WILSON CASH

*January, 1930*

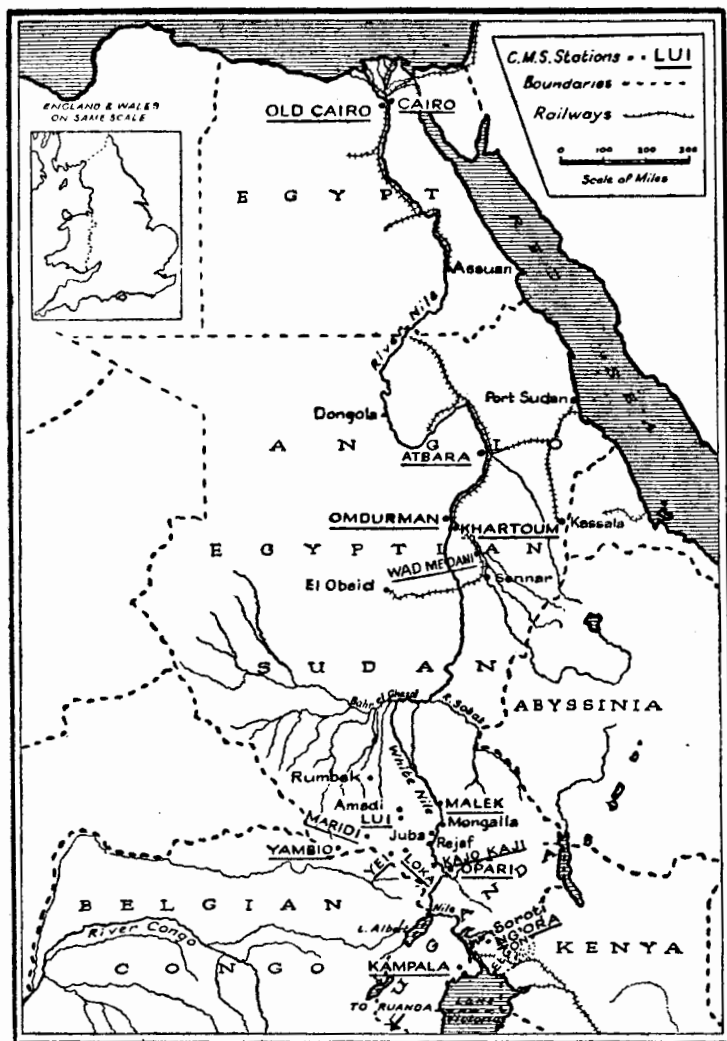
## CONTENTS

THE GORDON STATUE AT KHARTOUM . . . *Frontispiece*

MAP OF EGYPT AND THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN *Facing p. 1*

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE SUDAN EXPLOITED . . . . .	I
II. THE SUDAN LIBERATED . . . . .	10
III. THE NEW SUDAN . . . . .	20
IV. OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH . . . . .	28
V. AN HEROIC ADVENTURE . . . . .	44
VI. PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL . . . . .	58
VII. BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE . . . . .	76
INDEX . . . . .	87





## CHAPTER I

### THE SUDAN EXPLOITED

SOME years ago I was travelling up the Nile as chaplain to a British regiment that was being transferred from Cairo to Khartoum. In the early hours of one morning I was awakened by a curious medley of sounds. The chug-chug of the steamer was mingled with the Moslem prayers of one of the crew, and not far away a soldier was whistling *Tipperary*. As the steamer came to a halt by the bank of the Nile, the picture was one never to be forgotten. The silver streak of the river stretched away to the north, enclosed by golden banks of sand, and a fringe of palm trees rose out of the water close to the shore. There were mud villages with patches of green dotted up and down; but the sight that riveted attention was the rock-hewn temple of Abu Simbal. It stood out in the early morning light with a mysterious glamour that transported one back to the days of ancient Egypt. The whole face of the rock had been carved in bold workmanship to form the entrance to the temple, which was guarded by four great statues of Rameses II, each one about seventy feet in height, carved out of the rock.

We were soon ashore exploring and investigating this wonder of the Nile. Inside the temple the walls are covered with carvings, descriptive of battles depicting the triumph of Rameses over the negroes of the Sudan. The picture carvings show the Sudanese as slaves. They are shackled, and in one scene they are being beaten and in another beheaded.

Here was art of a high order, sculpture of a lost civilization, and architecture that has outlived the buildings of later and greater periods. Yet it all illustrated a loveless age, a time in the world's history when might was right and when the poor and the weak were made to serve the ends of the rich and the strong.

The four great figures sit facing the mysterious waters of

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

the Nile. With strange expressive eyes they speak of a dominant autocratic power. There is something forbidding in their expression, and they typify Egypt's rule over the Sudan down the long ages of darkness. The temple is a marvel of craftsmanship and art, yet an art that is cold and hard, which tells a pathetic tale of a civilization that enslaved a country and ground it under its heel with a cruelty and a misery unsurpassed in any part of the world. The history of the Sudan is one long story of murder, torture, slavery, and organized oppression. Century after century rolled by, and still the same cold features of Rameses looked down upon the land marked out for exploitation and still the people suffered under the relentless indifference of a foreign yoke. The slaves of the Sudan were employed in building the monumental temples and palaces of Egypt. In the gold mines of the Sudan everything was worked by slaves, and it has been estimated that about £80,000,000 worth of gold annually was taken from the country. People travel long distances to-day to see the glorious gold work from the tombs of Tutankhamen and others, but few remember the cost of these treasures in blood and life to a poor pagan people.

Before we returned to the steamer I was asked to conduct a short service for the troops. The regiment formed a semi-circle outside the temple and, with the same mysterious statues of Rameses looking down, they sang :—

Thy Kingdom come O God,  
Thy rule O Christ begin,  
Break with Thine iron rod,  
The tyrannies of sin.

The hymn echoed across the Nile and seemed to us a prophecy of a new day for the Sudan.

All that Rameses stood for has passed away, and a new era has begun. Slavery is a thing of the past, exploitation is ruled out. The misery of ages is forgotten in the prosperity of this new day. The Sudan has at last emerged from its long night. The dawn has come, and the people to-day look without fear at the statue of Rameses before whom their ancestors trembled.

## THE SUDAN EXPLOITED

As the steamer drew away from the bank we looked back at these statues, the embodiment of changelessness in the midst of change. Inexorable Rameses had for more than 2000 years looked down upon dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian kings, upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors, upon a Mahdi dreaming of world conquest, upon Gordon in his ambition to relieve a suffering people, upon Wolseley in his fatal relief expedition, and upon Kitchener in his conquest of the country. Rameses had watched the ceaseless misery of ages, and now unchanged he sat with the same inscrutable features looking down upon a new Sudan where a new and busy race is altering the face of a land that for thousands of years has been in the grip of a fateful destiny. A bend in the river shut out the temple from our view. The steamer chug-chugged against the current and we were borne on toward Khartoum.

As we approach the capital of the Sudan<sup>1</sup> let us pause and look at the country we have come to visit.

The total area of the country is about one million square miles, or roughly about that of British India, but unlike India with its dense population, the entire Anglo-Egyptian Sudan has only about six million inhabitants. Scattered over this vast expanse are innumerable tribes, some wandering over waterless deserts which stretch for hundreds of miles, some living in mountain caves, and others hidden in the jungle maze of swamp and plain.

The term "Sudan" is an abbreviation of the Arabic Bilad-es-Sudan, or the Land of the Blacks. The old title of Negroland was used for all the country stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, but this ancient name through Arab influence is restricted now to the Sudan. The Sahara spreads across the continent and includes a great area of the Northern Sudan, which is barren desert. The traveller from Egypt has to traverse this sandy waste from Aswan to Khartoum. This belt of desert is so distinct from the rest of the country as to give the impression of two wholly different lands. Leaving

<sup>1</sup>The word Sudan in this book will be used to refer to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The Hausa States and the French Sudan lie beyond the present survey.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Khartoum and travelling south the land lying between the Blue and the White Nile is known as the Gezireh and is to-day a productive cotton area through the building of the Makwar dam. The southern half from the Nuba Mountains to the borders of Uganda is forest and swamps, the haunts of the lion, the hippo, and the elephant.

The contrasts between these two areas are very striking. In the north the people are mainly of Arab extraction. In the south they are Nilotic black tribes. In the north Islam is the one religion while in the south paganism is predominant everywhere. The desert of the north is matched by the swamps of the south. In the north there is a common universal language—Arabic, while in the south the tribes are linguistically divided into many groups with no *lingua franca*. This land of many contrasts has its capital in Khartoum, 1500 miles from the Mediterranean Sea, yet Khartoum is really only the entrance to the Sudan proper for the land stretches away for 1200 miles more before Uganda is reached.

In the territory north of Khartoum there once flourished the ancient kingdom of Meroe with its own culture, civilization, and religion. It became a subject state to Egypt and was conquered by the Romans. The eunuch mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles was in the service of Queen Candace who ruled at Meroe. He was therefore a Sudanese. This was the nation described by Isaiah as "terrible." The people were racially distinct from the Nilotic tribes farther south who were enslaved and down-trodden. The eunuch was probably the first Sudanese to hear the Gospel. Philip had expounded to him the Christian interpretation of Isaiah liii, and he went on his way, a messenger of the Gospel to the Sudan. How Christianity was first carried up the Nile is uncertain, but the rapid spread of the Faith in Egypt gave the country a self-expanding Church and gradually churches were established up the valley of the Nile far into the Sudan, and Meroe became a Christian nation.

Christianity has left its traces in the customs of the people of Dongola and the ruins of churches are still to be seen a hundred miles south of Khartoum up the Blue Nile. It is

## THE SUDAN EXPLOITED

probable that there was a chain of churches from the Mediterranean up the Nile through Khartoum and the Blue Nile and into Abyssinia, thus connecting Abyssinia with Egypt.

In the sixth century a "priest named Julianus was greatly concerned for the black people who lived on the southern border of the Thebaid, and as they were heathen he wished to convert them. He was sent on a mission to the Sudan and there he taught and baptized the king and the nobles and thus were all the people of Kushites converted to the orthodox faith. By the latter half of the [sixth] century northern Nubia had been formed into a Christian kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

In the distant Darfur Province there are traces of Christian influence. The people, though all Moslems to-day, still preserve the custom of using the sign of the cross. During the marriage ceremonies the couple "are escorted to a stone by the shiekh of the village and there they each smear some blood, if an animal has been sacrificed, in the form of a cross with their forefingers on the side of the boulder and each deposits a stone or piece of green grass from the grove on the top of it."<sup>2</sup> The sign of the cross is used also at circumcision.

If the reader will look at the map facing p. 1, and follow with a pencil up the Nile from Alexandria until he reaches Dongola he can trace the first expansion of Christianity in the Sudan. Then if he follow the line farther through Khartoum up the Blue Nile to Abyssinia he will see the sphere of influence of the Christian faith extending to the east coast of Africa. The third line of advance seems to have been from Dongola to Darfur, and there is evidence to show that the people of Darfur had links with West and North Africa; so then Christianity having a centre in Darfur exerted its influence across Africa westward until it reached the Church of North Africa. It is certain therefore that by the sixth century Christianity had occupied all North Africa, had spread from the east and west into Abyssinia, and had expanded from Egypt south to Dongola, east and west to the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan.* H. A. Macmichael, vol. I, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

The seventh century saw the first invasion of the Sudan by the Moslems. An army of 20,000 invaded Christian Nubia and the country was compelled to pay a tribute of slaves to the Moslem rulers. Dongola having been captured in A.D. 652, a treaty was signed between the Nubians and Abdallah Ibn Saad, the Moslem leader. As this is the first treaty between Moslems and Sudanese, part of it is worth quoting :—

A treaty binding on great and small among them from the frontiers of Assouan to the frontier of Alwa. Ye people of Nubia. Ye shall dwell in safety under the safeguard of God and his apostle Mohommed the prophet whom God bless and save. We will not attack you ; nor wage war upon you, nor make incursions against you so long as ye abide by the terms settled between us and you. Ye shall protect those Moslems or their allies as shall come into your land. . . . Ye shall put no obstacle in the way of a Moslem but render him aid till he quit your territory. Ye shall take care of the mosque which the Moslems have built in the outskirts of your city and hinder none praying there. Ye shall clean it, light it and honour it. Every year ye shall pay 360 head of slaves to the leader of the Moslems, of the middle class of slaves of your country without bodily defects, males and females, but no old men nor old women nor young children.<sup>1</sup>

From this time onward there were repeated insurrections by which the Nubians tried to regain their independence. Moslem armies marched up the Nile and on each occasion the Christian forces were weakened. In the fourteenth century the last Christian king of Dongola was defeated by a Moslem force and sent as a captive to Cairo. Arab settlers poured into the Sudan and rapidly overran the country as far as Darfur and Abyssinia, and the Kingdom of Nubia came to an end.

The Northern Sudan has for thousands of years had its links with the outside world through Egypt, but owing to the *sudd* or barriers of reeds and mud which block the Nile and the impossibility of navigation, the southern area was unexplored until the nineteenth century. So impossible were the swamps and lagoons that Central Africa could not be penetrated from the north and the lakes of Central Africa were discovered from the east coast. This isolation made the Southern Sudan a part of the great unexplored centre of the continent, while the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *A History of the Arabs of the Sudan*, vol. I, p. 158.

## THE SUDAN EXPLOITED

northern half was well known. To-day under British rule the river has been opened up and there is a through waterway from Khartoum for 1100 miles south, but a country of swamps, isolated from the rest of the world for so long, cannot emerge with the speed of a train into a new way of life, and many parts of the pagan Sudan are still wildly savage.

The Moslem rule extended through those areas of the Sudan where Christianity had been established. The pagans of the south had been wholly untouched by Christianity, and Islam in turn failed to win them or conquer them. They remained the hunting ground of slave raiders, yet were savagely pagan as before. Christianity gradually disappeared and was replaced by Islam, and every living trace of the Christian faith was blotted out. Churches were destroyed and mosques were erected everywhere.

Isaiah gives a remarkable description of these people: "Woe to the land shadowing (rustling) with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled (polished), to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!"<sup>1</sup> The Sudan is the land rustling with the wings of myriads of insects. The people to this day use "vessels of bulrushes"; they are the very slender ambach rafts, shaped like a canoe, and capable of supporting two stalwart Sudanese. The word "scattered" is still applicable, for a small population of six millions occupies this immense area.

The people with their polished skins, black and glossy, have not changed since Isaiah's day. So far the description is perfect. But it is no longer "a nation meted out and trodden down." The days have gone when the slave raider hunted the black tribes for the slave markets of Egypt and Arabia. A new justice, freedom, and equity have begun a work of regeneration for a land hitherto crushed and broken. The rivers still spoil the land in many parts of the south though

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xviii, 1, 2.



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

the waters are being harnessed in the north now, where instead of spoiling they increase the productivity of the land, and are turning a wilderness into a well-watered garden.

The purpose of this book is to show the working of a Christian mission in a neglected part of Africa, and to show it in its relation to divers languages and races, differing religions, animistic and Moslem, changing conditions of life, the impacts of western science and civilization, and the old background of superstition and paganism. The Sudan is a peculiar medley, where the old and the new meet. The naked savage emerging from the forest stands in wonder as a motor car goes by. The lion stalks through the long grass while an aeroplane drones overhead. The hippopotamus raises its huge head out of the water to glance at a passing steamer. The medley seems more bewildering as one watches the early foundations of civilization in a land where every man has ever done that which was right in his own eyes. A solitary official daily faces groups of natives to explain to them the meaning of law. They cannot understand why any one should wish to interfere in their tribal war, which is the most exciting form of sport the Sudanese know, and it is far harder for them to give up fighting than it would be for British people to cease to play cricket.

Into this land there came a band of missionaries, who, believing they had something to give the Sudanese that would help them, were willing to live cut off from their fellow-countrymen, in a malaria country. They formed a new element in this kaleidoscopic picture of Sudanese life. The official, the merchant, and the missionary all sought to establish contacts with these people. This story therefore cannot be told without a study of the country and the changing environment. To understand the policy of the Mission we must see the soil in which the seed of the Gospel had to be sown. This may still be regarded in some ways as virgin soil, but to-day many of the old obstacles to the Gospel have disappeared, and native rule has been exchanged for an Anglo-Egyptian condominium.

Missionaries are no longer the only people with a conscience

## THE SUDAN EXPLOITED

about the black races. They no longer need to defend the claim of education for Africans against white opposition and criticism. Missionary aims of half a century ago have in many ways become the objectives of governments. To be pro-African in Africa is not the label of a group of eccentric Christians, for officials now are often as devoted to the true welfare of Africa as are the missionaries. Governments have awakened to a sense of their responsibility towards these people. They are no longer willing to leave undisturbed the education of Africans to the somewhat meagre resources of a missionary society. Medical service is not now confined to the devoted labours of a few scattered missionary doctors. Public health in a country like the Sudan is of vital concern to the administration and large sums of money are spent by the Government in combating such diseases as sleeping sickness. The economic development of the country depends upon hygiene, health, education, and civilization as much as upon the mechanical inventions of modern science.

The missionary in his efforts to evangelize the people finds that he is faced with a situation demanding the very best that Christianity has to give. He cannot ignore the changing conditions of the country. His educational and medical work must be related to the aims of the Government in these directions, and in building up a church he has to look to the future and to secure a place for his converts in a changing social order. An attempt will be made in these chapters to show how the missionaries, while preserving their distinctive Christian message, are seeking to build a church which will be vitally related to national needs.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SUDAN LIBERATED

**I**N the centre of Khartoum there stands to-day the famous Gordon statue. It is the figure of Gordon seated on a camel. In his right hand is a short stick and his left hand is holding the camel rope. There is nothing military about the statue. Gordon is depicted here just as he was seen in the Sudan, the simple, noble-hearted man of God who, with tireless energy, sought to redeem the country; who, failing in his lifetime to stem the tide of oppression, died among the people he loved, and who, dying at the hands of a Dervish mob, accomplished through sacrifice what through years of toil he had failed to do.

This statue depicts the hero of the Sudan looking out across the dark mysterious continent of Africa. A traveller gazing up at the statue, turned to his guide and said: "Ought not Gordon to have faced the city?" "No, sir," replied his guide, "they place him looking not towards the palace where he lived, nor towards the Nile by which he might have escaped, but towards the Sudan for which he died. He is waiting, sir, for morning dawn across the Sudan."<sup>1</sup>

In the previous chapter we saw the statue of Rameses, illustrating remorseless fate, the unchanging and unending misery of autocratic power used in the misrule of a simple and lovable people. The statue of Gordon is symbolical of a new hope, the dawn after the long night of gloom. We commence the story in the capital of the country that we may see how the fatal misrule of centuries was broken only by the costly sacrifice of the life of one of England's noblest sons.

Khartoum is an Arabic word meaning the trunk of an elephant. This name is given to the town because of its peculiar situation on the tongue of land where the Blue and the White Nile meet. It is not a town of any antiquity and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The Sudan*, by K. W. Kumm.

## THE SUDAN LIBERATED

prior to the nineteenth century it was a sandy waste. In 1823 the Khedive of Egypt, Mohammed Ali Pasha, founded Khartoum and it rapidly became a trade centre for the Eastern Sudan. It was the fortified stronghold of the Egyptian army and the starting place for expeditions into the interior. For the first seventy years of the nineteenth century the Khedives of Egypt sought to rule an area stretching from Wadi Halfa to the equator, a territory twice as big as France and Germany together. Throughout this period the worst form of misgovernment existed. "The entire country," wrote Sir Samuel Baker, "was leased out to piratical slave hunters under the name of traders by the Khartoum Government." The situation was further complicated by the fact that the Khedive did not rule as an independent monarch; Egypt was a Turkish possession and the Sudan was therefore indirectly a part of the Turkish Empire. The Sudan was rapidly being ruined by misrule and Egypt was on the road to bankruptcy when in 1882 the rebellion of Arabi Pasha led to a British armed intervention in Egypt.

The battle of Tel-el-Kebir brought the rebellion to a close and the British settled down in Cairo to straighten the tangled finances of Egypt. Thus it came about that through the occupation of Egypt, England was drawn into Sudan affairs and finally into the conquest and government of the vast territory from the Uganda frontier to Wadi Halfa.

Ismail Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, was profoundly disturbed at the state of affairs in the Sudan. Tales filtered through from travellers of the devastation caused by the slave trade and the misgovernment of the Khartoum officials. In 1869 the Khedive invited Sir Samuel Baker to go to the Sudan for four years in charge of an expedition having as its main objects the suppression of the slave trade and the introduction of a system of regular commerce. A chain of posts was established along the Nile. Steamers were brought out from England, and the great task of reorganization was begun. At the end of the four years the Khedive appointed Colonel Gordon to succeed Sir Samuel Baker. Gordon used his utmost endeavours to bring peace and prosperity to the

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Sudan, but realizing that unless he had fuller powers he must fail, he resigned in 1876. He was reappointed by the Khedive the following year as Governor-General of the entire Sudan, with unlimited powers.

This new Governor-General was a great-hearted man who thought only of the good of others and never considered himself. He was a slight figure, possessed by a nervous energy and an unshakable resolution, qualities that stood him in great stead in the task before him. In China he had won the confidence of a foreign army and had led them victoriously through a great rebellion. Most of his pay in China had gone to provide medical comforts for the sick and wounded of his army. While stationed at Gravesend he had gathered the street boys of the slums into his home and had fed and clothed them. He himself lived on almost nothing and all he had was at the service of humanity.

Such was the man suddenly called upon to attempt the pacification of the vast Sudan, the suppression of the slave trade, the introduction of new laws of justice, and the protection of the depressed and harassed tribes. When he arrived in Khartoum he was horror-struck at the appalling poverty around him, and again his own private income was given to alleviate suffering. He found the people miserably unhappy because of the dread of compulsory slavery which hung over their daily life. Those who were not already slaves realized their impending fate. Villages were abandoned, districts passed out of cultivation, and a large part of the population simply vanished. Sir Samuel Baker, speaking of conditions in a region he knew well in 1864 and in 1872, wrote in the latter year: "It is impossible to describe the change that has taken place since I last visited this country. It was then a perfect garden, thickly populated and producing all that man would desire. The villages were numerous, groves of plantains fringed the steep cliff on the river bank, and the natives were neatly dressed in the bark cloth of the country. The scene has changed! All is wilderness. The population has fled. Not a village is to be seen. This is the certain result of the settlement of Khartoum traders. They kidnap

## THE SUDAN LIBERATED

the women and children for slaves, and plunder and destroy wherever they set their foot."<sup>1</sup>

Here was a task capable of daunting the bravest soul, yet Gordon never flinched. He travelled far and near suppressing the slave trade, fighting against revolting Arabs, organizing the country anew, and spending himself for the redemption of the Sudan. In Darfur he released thousands of slaves and dispersed and disarmed five hundred slave dealers. It was at this time (1878) that he appealed to the Church Missionary Society to commence missionary work among the pagan tribes. He, as a Christian man, saw that the only hope for this stricken people lay in Christianity. In Cairo intrigues were creating difficulties for Gordon, and the Egyptian papers only spoke of him as a madman. He was a disappointed man. His efforts at reform were attacked and he resigned. It was not until he had left Egypt that people in England woke up to a sense of all he had done and realized the magnificent work of the Governor-General.

Events moved rapidly. Gordon was succeeded by an Egyptian Governor-General, and the old conditions revived. Revolts broke out in many provinces and all that was needed to set the country ablaze was for a leader to arise who could unify the various groups of discontents and give a slogan to the people that would rally them to one standard. This came when a certain Mohammed Ahmed, a Dongalawi, began in 1880 to preach a "holy war" against the infidels. This remarkable man had joined a dervish order, but, shocked at the laxity among the leaders in the observance of Koranic rules, decided to purify the faith. He made a vigorous protest to the head of his order and for his pains was beaten and driven out. Mohammed Ahmed then commenced a crusade of his own. He knew the oppressed state of the people, and he promised reforms, liberty, and freedom to all who joined in a "holy war" for the liberation of the Sudan. He established his head-quarters on the island of Abba in the White Nile, and there he declared that he had a divine mission and was the long expected mahdi or successor of the Prophet, the messenger

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gordon*. D. C. Boulger, p. 142.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

of God to save the Sudan. There was in this man a curious mixture of the fanatical religious reformer and the unscrupulous schemer for political power. The word *mahdi* means "the directed one," or one who is fit to lead and guide others. All orthodox Moslems believe in the coming in the last days of a ruler who will restore the prestige and glory of Islam and enforce the faith throughout the world. One tradition says: "There shall be much rain in the days of the Mahdi and the inhabitants of both heaven and earth shall be pleased with him. Men's lives shall pass so pleasantly that they will wish even the dead were alive again."<sup>1</sup>

The conditions of life in the Sudan made the people ready to hail with delight any one who would embody in himself these fair prophecies, and the Mahdi rapidly gathered round him a large following. Egyptian troops moved against him and were everywhere defeated. The Mahdi seemed invincible and thousands flocked to his standard. The destruction of Hicks Pasha's army in Kordofan completed a long list of disasters and established the power of the Mahdi throughout most of the Sudan. He was trusted by the people and hailed as their deliverer. They were very soon to find that this movement was but a mirage and the fair promises were to vanish as easily as the mist.

It was at this critical stage that Gordon was asked again to go to the Sudan. No one seemed to realize how hopeless was the task. Gordon still had a passionate love for the Sudan and he entered in the same joyous spirit of enthusiasm upon what was to be a *via dolorosa*. He hoped to be able to come to terms with the Mahdi and thus complete the reform he had initiated some years before. When he arrived in Khartoum he found the town in a state of panic, but his entry was marked by scenes of wild enthusiasm. Khartoum was placed in a state of defence. Provisions were brought in and steps were taken to protect the town from attack. The road of escape was open to Gordon almost up to the time of his death, but to flee would have meant abandoning the people who loved and trusted him. He decided to stay, and to die

<sup>1</sup> *Mishkatu-s-Masabih*, Book 23, chap. iii.

## THE SUDAN LIBERATED

if necessary for the sake of his own honour and that of his country. The Mahdi moved forth and invested Khartoum and the great siege began.

The end came on January 26, 1885, when, like the bursting of some great dam, over 50,000 dervishes poured through the defences. Their one cry was "To the Palace," and this surging mass of wild fanatics swarmed over the palace gardens and broke through the doors. Everywhere was wild confusion; but one man was bravely calm. Gordon alone went forth to meet them. As the mob rushed up the stairs he came down and attempted to speak to them, but no one would listen to him. An Arab plunged his spear into Gordon's body and he fell forward stabbed by many spears. His head was cut off and sent as a trophy to the Mahdi. Thus ended the life of the one man who had toiled for the redemption of the Sudan.

The Mahdi did not live long to reap the fruits of his victory, for the same year (1885) he died. "Thus ended the Mahdi—a man who left behind him a hundred thousand murdered men, women, and children, hundreds of devastated towns and villages, poverty and famine. Upon his devoted head lies the curse of a people whom he had forced into a wild and fanatical war, which brought indescribable ruin upon the country and which exposed his countrymen to the rule of a cruel tyrant, from whom it was impossible to free themselves."<sup>1</sup>

The Mahdi was succeeded by the Khalifa Abdullah, who was a veritable tyrant and ruled with a rod of iron.

Let us pause here to look at the Sudan in the years between 1885 and 1898. For thirteen years the dervishes ruled supreme in the name of Islam. Public prayers were compulsory. Every one was forced to accept Mohammedanism. A holy war had given their country into the hands of men who denounced the infidel and ruled as Moslems.

Omdurman is situated on the west bank of the Nile, opposite Khartoum, just below the point where the Blue and the White Nile meet. In these days it was a maze of mud-built houses, mostly single hovels surrounded by a compound with a high wall to keep out thieves and spies. In this city the scum of

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp.* Sir Reginald Wingate, p. 163.



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Africa collected. Men from Nigeria and West Africa, tribes from all the northern provinces of the Sudan, slaves from the pagan areas, Egyptians, Abyssinians, Turks, and Meccans, Indians, Europeans, and Jews—all caught in the grip of the tyrant. The streets swarmed with beggars and the gallows stood in the market-square where daily executions took place as a warning. The devastation of great areas wrought its own revenge and famine fell on the country. In Omdurman the dead and dying lay in heaps by the roadside. The shopkeepers stood with heavy sticks to beat off the starving skeletons that crawled along begging food. No organization existed and conditions became worse until "one day a girl presented herself before the judge of the market-court and reported that her mother had roasted her little brother and eaten him and that now she had run away as she was afraid she might suffer the same fate."<sup>1</sup>

Children dare not appear in the streets at night lest they should be seized and killed. Fathers sold their children into slavery and entire districts became depopulated. Meanwhile intertribal wars went on, and all who opposed the Khalifa's rule were massacred without mercy. The slave trade, put down to some extent by Gordon, was revived and a large slave market was opened in Omdurman to which all captured slaves were sent. The slaves were sold by public auction. One who saw the slave market in these days tells how "the slaves are arranged in lines under the open sky; their bodies are generally well bathed in oil to preserve the gloss of their skin. Intending purchasers make the most careful and minute examination and the price varies from twenty to a hundred dollars."

Thus under this Moslem zealot the slave dealers emerged from their hiding-places and with gangs of slaves chained together proceeded to Omdurman. The blame for this did not lie simply upon the old slave dealers. The Khalifa himself sent raiding parties south. The lot of the unhappy people thus sold into slavery was miserable indeed. In the eyes of the Moslem rulers they were simply animals given by God to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

## THE SUDAN LIBERATED

make the life of the Arab comfortable. Practically every Moslem household, even the poorest, possessed at least one slave. Thus throughout these thirteen years the Sudan was devastated and the inhabitants, through raids, massacre, famine and the horrors of the slaves' long marches to Omdurman, reached the lowest level of misery. The population of the country was reduced from eight and a half millions to two millions, and whole tribes became practically extinct. It is difficult to believe that the horrors of the Arab raids on pagan villages were carried on right down to 1898, but such is the fact.

Gordon had trodden the pathway of suffering and death to redeem the Sudan and the people were treading the same road of agony day after day. Disillusioned they sank into despair. Pagan charms, witchcraft, superstitions, and an animistic faith did not help them. The grim features of Rameses still looked down upon the waters of the Nile, and still the suffering went on. Was it any wonder that a dull fatalism gripped the people? No one had ever brought a single ray of hope to them. No human kindness or love entered their lives. There was only the dumb appeal of a tortured people that rose to heaven in a cry for deliverance.

Long in darkness we have waited  
For the shining of the light ;  
Long have felt the things we hated  
Sink us still in deeper night.

A little band of Roman Catholic missionaries refused to obey the order to become Moslems and suffered untold horrors at the hands of a brutal Arab tribe. One of their number, Father Ohrwalder, was ten years in captivity in Omdurman. After reaching safety and before the Kitchener expedition had begun he wrote : " In the name of the companions with whom I suffered, in the name of the Sudan people, whose misery I have seen, and in the name of all civilized nations I ask this question : 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

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Great Britain watch unmoved the outrages of the Khalifa and the destruction of the Sudan people ? ”<sup>1</sup>

The appeal did not fall on deaf ears. The British Government had to face not so much the avenging of Gordon's death as the carrying out an expedition which, in the spirit of the great soldier, would ultimately complete the work Gordon sought to initiate. In 1896 it was decided to send an army under Lord (then Sir Herbert) Kitchener for the reconquest of the Sudan. It was a composite army of British and Egyptian troops.

The story of the methodical plan of a desert railway, of the battles of Atbara and Omdurman is too well known to need more than mentioning here. The dervish troops displayed all their traditional bravery, but they were hopelessly defeated, leaving on the battlefield over 10,000 dead and 16,000 wounded. The first act after the capture of Omdurman was to set free the prisoners, among whom were Charles Neufeld, Joseph Ragnolli, and sister Teresa Gregnoli, a nun, and about thirty Greeks as well as a large crowd of natives. In that day 10,854 prisoners were liberated.

Thus ended the Khalifa's dream of a Moslem state in the heart of Africa. It was the death knell of Moslem domination and the dawning of new hope for the Sudan.

When I was in Khartoum some years ago I saw the battered remains of Gordon's old steamer. It was worn and broken, and yet a pathetic relic of the days when Gordon sought to liberate the slaves of Africa. He dreamed of a new Sudan, and when, immediately after the capture of the city, a memorial service to Gordon was held on the ruins of the old palace and close to the spot where he had died, memory went back to the massacre on the night of January 26, 1885, and all who took part felt not only that Gordon had given his life to save the Sudan, but that Gordon's dream had at last come true. Upon a small group of British officials fell the responsibility of a great trust. To them was committed the charge of completing Gordon's unfinished task. His spirit seemed to pervade the country then as it does to-day, and the call was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 450.

## THE SUDAN LIBERATED

for a sacrificial service that would win the love and confidence of a nation ruined by misrule and oppression.

The Mahdi had assembled the whole town to prayer daily. Imposing was the sight when thousands of men had bowed together in worship of Allah, but Islam had not produced any corresponding sense of duty to man in its insistence upon the worship of God. Moslem rule in the Sudan was weighed in the balance and found wanting. The argument that Islam is the best faith for Africa is answered by the history of these years, and it is only fair to say that not until the country came under the control of a government which was actuated by the highest idealism of Christianity, did hope dawn in the lives of the people. The type of Islam in the Sudan to-day is better than anything known in the days of purely Moslem rule, but this is due mainly to the influence of British officials and missionaries who have helped to give a truer interpretation of life than was hitherto known.

The bewilderment of Omdurman the day after the battle can be imagined when liberated prisoners walked free once more, the starving were fed, and when for the first time people saw an army occupy their country without looting and debauchery. They then caught a glimpse of the application of Christian principles to a conquered town. The Dark Continent had at last in this great area become the continent of opportunity and as the country settled down under a new administration the British officials faced the problem as a sacred trust of civilization. How wonderfully they succeeded must be related in the succeeding chapters.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NEW SUDAN

**W**AD MEDANI, the capital of the Blue Nile Province, lies about 120 miles south of Khartoum and in the centre of the new cotton area of the Gezireh. In January, 1929, I was walking through the streets of this town and saw in it one of the best illustrations the Sudan affords of the changing conditions of life. On one side of the railway and in the centre of a great plain is a native village composed of the thatched, conical-shaped African huts. These huts have one low opening as a door, no windows and little ventilation, but they are to be found from here right through the Sudan and beyond into Uganda. They are the primitive home of the African and have been the same from time immemorial.

As I walked through this colony I saw the children, some in birthday suits, and others with a single garment round their waists. They were black and swarthy, and many were of the negro type and I might have been anywhere in Central Africa. Crossing the railway I came immediately upon well-built brick houses, broad streets, motor cars and taxis rushing about, driven by Sudanese who had caught all the fever of an English speedmonger. Turning a corner into the square I saw rows of motor 'buses drawn up. Some were running to Khartoum for the ridiculously low fare of 3s. per passenger, others were destined for different towns along the Blue Nile. The shops displayed European goods in profusion and the buzz of Singer sewing machines told of a very different life from that of the olden days for the Sudanese of this town. A few minutes before I had been visiting as primitive an African village as one could find and now here was in the hum of a busy town where everything spoke of European influences.

I was taken in a car from Medani through the cotton fields for some fifty miles. This land which lies between the White

and the Blue Nile forms a triangle with the apex at Khartoum where the two rivers meet. It is a great plain as flat as a table, and up to a few years ago was mainly barren and uncultivated. Engineers from England came out and a scheme was initiated for building a large dam, two miles long, at Makwar, about 168 miles from Khartoum. From the dam a trunk canal was dug, running northward. From this canal innumerable smaller canals were cut at right-angles, and one memorable day when the dam was completed the waters were let into the canals, and suddenly thousands of acres of this desert-like land came under cultivation. The country was divided into plots of thirty acres, and Sudanese tenants were given the task of cultivation.

In the Mahdi's days these people had been harried and robbed until the population had almost entirely disappeared. Those who remained found a precarious existence on the minimum pittance that would keep body and soul together. Under the new scheme the Sudanese entered into a partnership with the Government and the Cotton Syndicate. The tenant was guaranteed forty per cent of the profits, the Government took thirty-five per cent, and the Syndicate twenty-five per cent; so that a triple partnership was formed, and the native found himself installed upon good land with a full supply of water, with English overseers to guide him in sowing, and an assured income. I watched the great steam ploughs at work with their thirteen ploughshares each, and saw the irrigation scheme for flooding the land at fixed periods. I never met a more contented, happy-looking body of people. They were no longer serfs and slaves, no longer was there the horrible dread of torture and the lash. The haunting fear of raids and attack had gone. They were free, independent, and contented agriculturists. The cotton was picked by hand, baled and weighed and sold in the best market, where the interests of the natives were watched with as much concern as those of the Europeans. A railway line ran from these fields through Atbara to Port Sudan where the cotton was shipped to England for the Lancashire mills.

Cotton is one of the big factors in the new life of the Sudan.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

What I have described above illustrates the transformation of a desert into a fruitful garden ; of a slave race into a free people, of conditions of poverty and starvation into prosperity and comfort ; of despotic rule by the sword into government by the free consent of the country. It is literally a change from darkness to light. Cotton, however, is having an influence far beyond the Gezireh. In the southern provinces the pagan tribes are still wild and savage ; yet, though they indulge in tribal wars at times and practise their old pagan customs of witchcraft, they too are cotton growers, and one sees the new process of contacts with the outside world through the sale of cotton. Here we have another example of the impact of civilization upon a pagan people. The meeting with traders and others is in itself an education, and every bale of cotton sold brings new influences into the life of a people who have hitherto lived upon their spear and their spoils.

Civilization is penetrating to the most remote parts of the Sudan, and although at present the effects of it may be few the seeds of a new life are being sown. The Sudanese are waking up, and we have before us the picture of a civilization breaking in upon paganism, overthrowing their attachments to their old faiths and superstitions and leading to a secularism which must be fraught with dangers for the future.

The Nuer tribe, which forms half the population of the Upper Nile Province, is described as " a difficult problem, the despair of the Governor. Savage, war-like, and suspicious, they have fought continually among themselves and with their neighbours."<sup>1</sup> Yet this tribe is to-day growing cotton and is in touch with new forces, economic and social, which must ultimately mean changes in habit and life.

Another line of development has been the new means of communication—roads, railways, and steamers—linking together the most distant parts of the country. It is possible to travel by motor almost anywhere in the Northern Sudan and the south is rapidly opening up new roads and the motor is increasingly being used in the pagan areas. The advent of

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, p. 50. A handbook prepared under the direction of the Foreign Office 1920.

the motor makes it easy for people of one district to visit another and this interchange of thought widens the horizon of people who previously seldom left their own patch of ground.

The Nile and its tributaries are the next link in communications. To-day the river is navigable by large river steamers for 1100 miles. In former days the sudd region formed an impenetrable barrier to navigation. The word *sudd* is Arabic for a "block," and this region is the swampy marsh which covers about 35,000 square miles of land, through which the Nile wends its way. The vegetation consists of papyrus and reeds which are uprooted by storm and the rising waters, and float on the surface in vast masses, piled one heap on another, and block the river for steamers. Under the new régime a channel has been cut through the sudd. The process is difficult. A line about thirty feet wide is marked out and men saw through the sudd until a great block of it is loosened. Wire hawsers are forced into the sodden mass of reeds and fastened to a steamer which pulls the mass free until a fairway is opened. This goes on continually and the channel is kept open by patrols. The significance of this is that what prevented easy communication in the past between north and south and between Moslem and pagan has now disappeared, and what is a pathway for Christian penetration is equally a highway for Moslem advance.

The third means of communication is the remarkable development of the railway system. There are now about 2000 miles of railway track, whereas down to the British expedition of 1896-98 there were practically no railways at all. The first great scheme was the linking of Egypt to the Sudan by steamer and train. Now a line runs from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum, from there it extends to El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan. Kassala is linked by railway to Port Sudan, and although hundreds of miles of desert had to be crossed yet the trains have penetrated it, and the journey that used to take about a month can be accomplished in a couple of days. In these modern times trains pass through the sandy wastes loaded with cotton, gum arabic, and other produce. They steam into Port Sudan, the new gateway of the country.



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Port Sudan used to be a dirty native village called Sheikh Bargout (which means in Arabic, Old Man Flea). The name was given to it by a local saint of Islam. Now it is a flourishing town with a fine harbour, extensive docks, coal wharfs, and petrol depots. Large P. & O. steamers are able to dock in the harbour and this old world place has been changed out of all recognition.

The Sudan, cut off from the rest of the world, sank in ruin. Linked to other countries as it now is, it has become a land of big ideas, extensive schemes, and broad expansions. Obstacles have been overcome and millions of pounds sunk in the development of the country, the revenue of which increases every year. The Egyptian Government is considering a scheme for cutting a canal from the White Nile near Bor across the country for two hundred miles to the Sobat River, in order to divert the Nile from its present course through the swamps into a carefully-banked cutting which would prevent the present enormous waste of water and add materially to the irrigation of Egypt. It would involve the draining of the sudd area and it would bring into the heart of the paganism an entirely new element. It is difficult to imagine all that this might mean to the Sudan. It would introduce into the pagan tribes a strong Moslem influence from Egypt, and it would alter the whole manner of life of the people in the district traversed. If this scheme were carried out it would probably bring under cultivation over 1,000,000 acres of reclaimed land.

We have seen Khartoum invaded by a mob of dervishes rushing to the murder of Gordon. We have also seen Omdurman in the days of famine and slavery. What is the picture to-day? A new Khartoum has arisen where the roads are laid out in the plan of a Union Jack. Britain has stamped on the surface of the soil this mark of her rule. Within a stone's throw of Gordon's statue there has been erected the Christian cathedral, the first in the Sudan since the Arabs blotted out Christianity. Electric trams race between Khartoum and Omdurman, and a great bridge spans the river between the two cities. In Omdurman the Khalifa's house has disappeared and near by is a government training college for Sudanese

girls. At the other end of Omdurman is a government model workshop for giving technical instruction to boys, and the primary school is packed with the youth of the town. The Gordon College was opened in 1905 through funds collected mainly in England. Lord Kitchener appealed for help in establishing an institution that would equip the young men of the Sudan to take their place in the national life as engineers, surveyors, mechanics, teachers, and clerks. From the commencement it has been under the direct superintendence of British educationists, who have done a splendid work. The boys from Gordon College are to be found to-day in every government department and in most walks of life. The College has been the apex of the government educational system and has had a profound influence upon the Sudan. The growth in the number of students has been remarkable : in the past decade it has risen from about 100 to 540.

When one remembers that down to 1896 the whole country was in a state of barbarism with scarcely any external trade except in slaves, it is startling to learn that by 1906 (ten years later) the total value of the trade in the Sudan was £3,500,000 and in 1927 it was £11,111,000. In the days of the Mahdi there was no external trade at all. To-day the Sudan has trade links with most parts of the world and is thus in touch with the products and discoveries of the West.

In 1921, when the C.M.S. sent out a delegation to Egypt and Palestine, I was privileged to travel with Major-General Kenyon to El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan. The journey occupied about thirty hours in a train from Khartoum and we travelled through the country famous for its gum arabic. It was here that Hicks Pasha and his army had been cut to pieces and almost annihilated by the Mahdi's forces, and it is from here to-day that England receives the gum required for its postage stamps. In the old days the gum was collected by slave labour, and now through a curious turn of events it is gathered by the Fallata tribe, a people who have trekked across Africa from Nigeria. An old Arab sheikh quaintly remarked that when the British took away their slaves Allah sent the Fallata to them, but he failed to add the significant

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

fact that the Fallata work for just wages, while the slaves knew no other payment than the lash. The people of this tribe years ago commenced a long trek to Mecca. After a lengthy period of toil and hardship they reached El Obeid and, finding employment, they settled down and many have never gone beyond Kordofan on the road to Mecca. Others reached Khartoum and are employed at the docks. Some saved money and did actually complete the journey to Mecca and fulfilled the dream of their lives in the pilgrimage. Many unhappily fell by the way and perished in a brave attempt to carry out the command of Mohammed their prophet.

Walking through the interesting town of El Obeid I came across a large booth made of wood and reeds. A continuous hum came from within and the sound seemed very familiar. Looking in I saw about thirty Sudanese seated at sewing machines making white garments for men's wear. They were working on British calico, with European sewing machines, for the people of the town. Here one saw East and West drawn together. The men themselves were sons of a black race that had for years known only the horrors of war and oppression. They were now peacefully engaged in a profitable trade.

This chapter has dealt with changes and developments, and the reader will naturally ask what is the significance of it all? I would place in the forefront of any answer to this question the fact of a changed mentality and outlook. While in some of the more remote parts tribal raids and wars still go on, yet, taking the population as a whole, they are now a peace-loving people and want to forget the horrible days of war. Security of life has brought with it a new value to human life. No longer does one tribe regard another as lawful prey. The first step in civilization is taken when the value of life is raised for with it comes a demand for social reform, education, justice, and peace.

The old fanatical hatred of everything non-Moslem has been replaced by a real appreciation of things Christian. The dervish army fought with the fury of the early Islamic days. To-day the sons of these men have lost the intolerance which

## THE NEW SUDAN

made it impossible for a man even to profess to be a Christian without danger to his life, and the whole attitude of the Moslem Sudanese towards Christianity has altered. The spirit of the people is tolerant and friendly, and links have been forged between the British and the Sudanese which augur good for the future. Where western education has been given to Sudanese youth it has tended to make them more independent in their thought and less inclined to accept the dictum of the sheikhs, and to encourage their freedom of action in religious matters.

The Sudan has no feminist movement such as one finds in Turkey or Egypt, nor is there any evidence of a break away from Islam, but the forces at work have already made such big changes that one may reasonably see in them disintegrating elements in Moslem life. Western influences will grow, and with them there will come increasingly a demand for a new basis of life. It may lead, as in many Moslem countries, to the growth of secularism, or it may offer to the Christian Church yet another opportunity for the expansion of Christianity in Africa.

## CHAPTER IV

### OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

**I**N earlier days the missionary in Africa was the pioneer, and trade and western civilization followed later. In the case of the Sudan the matter was reversed. It was British civilization that began to open the doors, British statesmanship that produced good government out of anarchy, and British capital that gave the first impetus to development. Missionary supporters should not forget that the open door for the Gospel in the Sudan is due to the successful policy of a group of British officials, who have upheld the highest traditions of the Empire and through a wise administration have made it possible for missionaries to travel in comparative safety from Khartoum to Uganda.

The Dervish forces under the leadership of the Khalifa were overthrown at Omdurman by Lord Kitchener's army in 1898; and when in the following year the centenary of the C.M.S. was celebrated many hoped that the new century in the Society's history would be inaugurated by a mission to the Moslems of the Northern Sudan. On Lord Kitchener's return to England a deputation from the C.M.S. waited on him to discuss with him the plans of the Society for this project, but to every one's surprise permission to carry on missionary work in the Moslem parts of the Sudan was refused "on the ground that nothing must be done to arouse Moslem fanaticism. In February, 1899, in the House of Laymen, Sir John Kennaway moved a resolution declaring the duty of Christian England in the matter, which was eloquently supported by Lord Cranborne, the son of the Prime Minister, and now himself Marquis of Salisbury, and carried unanimously." Lord Kitchener offered as an alternative facilities for the evangelization of the pagan tribes of the Southern Sudan. The Society decided to go forward into the south, but to press for freedom to carry on missionary work in the north also.

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

The same year the Lay Secretary announced at a meeting that "the Committee are preparing to send pioneer parties into the vast Sudan by the two routes most accessible. At Tripoli a small band are studying Hausa and will shortly proceed up the Niger for the Hausa States : and from Cairo in the autumn of the year it is hoped a party will go up the Nile to occupy some places in the equatorial provinces of the Eastern Sudan. The Committee anticipate that in answer to many prayers, the existing interdict on missionary work among the Mohammedans of the Upper Nile will shortly be removed."

The position was difficult for all concerned. The Government was responsible for law and order in a country that up to now had been ruled by a fanatical Mahdi and Khalifa, and officials frankly feared the consequences if missionaries were allowed to preach the Christian faith to these Moslems. On the other hand the C.M.S., as an agent of the Church, felt impelled to press for facilities for a Christian mission.

The policy of the British Government was based upon the fact that religion must be at the basis of life and that education if it is to build up character should be religious. As the religion of the Northern Sudan is Moslem it was argued that it should be made use of in character building, and thus any appearance of seeking to interfere with the faith of the people would be avoided. For this reason Friday instead of Sunday was made the day of rest, and the Government assisted financially in the building of mosques. It is only fair to say that when the condominium was arranged it was understood that there should be no interference with the Moslem religion. It was further claimed that as Islam was the "established" religion it ought to be recognized and supported.

With the politics of a country a missionary society is not vitally concerned, but when this policy was used as an argument for the exclusion of Christian missions while traders and others were allowed in the country the C.M.S. rightly protested.

No other society in Great Britain could point to such a long experience of missionary work among Moslems. In 1815 the Mediterranean Mission had been founded to evangelize the

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Near East. The C.M.S. was working among Moslems in India, Persia, Palestine, and Egypt, and over a long period of years its missionaries had tested their methods of evangelism and they had not stirred up trouble for governments. Experience had shown that carefully selected missionaries, with a sympathetic approach to Islam, could work in the most fanatical areas without incurring trouble.

The first encouragement came when, through the withdrawal of the embargo on traders residing in the Sudan, sanction was given for two missionaries to go up to Khartoum on the strict understanding that they were not to speak to Moslems on religious subjects.

In the faith that the door would eventually open the Rev. L. H. Gwynne (now the beloved Bishop in Egypt and the Sudan) sailed for Khartoum in 1899. He was joined at Cairo by Dr. Harpur, who accompanied him to Khartoum. Mr. Gwynne devoted much of his time to the care of the British military and civilian population. He established friendly contacts with Copts and Moslems, and what seemed a barrier to progress has turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Officials came to understand more clearly the nature of missionary aims and ideals, and the Sudan gained a spiritual leader whose life and influence for nearly thirty years has done more to create in the British life of the Sudan high ideals, nobility of purpose, and disinterested service than anything else. British rule in the Sudan is almost unique in the history of the Empire. Its lofty idealism is mainly due to one man, who fearlessly denounced evil, and yet by love and charity, breadth of sympathy and understanding, has won a foremost place in the affections of all classes of the community. It is to Bishop Gwynne's life of devotion that the C.M.S. owes the place it holds to-day in the Sudan.

It was not long before the embargo on mission work was partially lifted, and the first opening came through permission to commence medical work. It was a day of small things, but Dr. Harpur made a brave start with only a mud hut available for his work. The view on one side was of the endless desert that stretched across Africa to the west. Not a blade

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

of grass, not a tree broke the landscape, only sand as far as the eye could see. On the other side there was a picture of crowded mud huts and compounds, the teeming life of Omdurman. The Moslem call to prayer came clearly across the desert from the roof of a mosque, and the dervishes enlivened the night by their rhythmic chants. They formed themselves into a great ring and repeated, at first slowly, the name of God. With one voice they chanted : Allah, Allah, Allah. The speed quickened and as the word was repeated the whole assembly swayed backwards and forwards. Heard from a distance it sounded like the beating of some great engine. To the missionary commencing his work it was the symbol of Islamic strength, the source of fanaticism, and the challenge of Islam to the bold attempt of one solitary doctor to make an impression if he could upon the solid rock of Moslem faith.

Dr. Chorley Hall took over the work on Dr. Harpur's return to Cairo, and he and his devoted wife dedicated their lives to the service of the Sudan. For the next two years they laboured together in Omdurman when a crushing blow fell on the Mission. Dr. Hall, the man among ten thousand for Moslem pioneer work, died. He had been unsparing of himself and, consumed with a passion for the souls of the people, he had in the brief period of his service laid sure foundations upon which others were to build. Mrs. Hall, his widow, still heard the call of the Sudanese and decided that in spite of her sorrow she would not give in, so she remained on to carry forward by tireless devotion the work she and her husband had undertaken. For a quarter of a century she lived in Omdurman, seeking for no reward save that of knowing she was doing the Father's will. I met her in 1921 in Palestine when she joined us for a brief holiday. An eminent doctor warned her then that if she continued her work she would die. If she would abandon it she might live in comfort in England for some years to come. I was asked to speak to her, and I shall never forget how she said : " I would rather die at my post than give up my beloved work." She went back again to the hot, trying climate of the Sudan and pressed forward with new schemes of extension. She herself was an honorary missionary and never



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

received either stipend or allowances. Her means would have enabled her to live comfortably in England, but when I saw her for the last time at her station, she was living in a native mud house. She would spend nothing on herself, everything went into the work. When government officials suddenly found themselves with twenty freed slave girls on their hands it was to Mrs. Hall they turned for help. She took them in, taught them, trained them, and became a mother to them. In 1925 she was called to her rest while still at her post and she is buried on the edge of the desert amid the scenes and sounds of the Sudan. In 1929 when in Khartoum I stood one morning in the cathedral in front of a tablet erected to her memory. Close by it is the memorial to Lord Kitchener, the conqueror of the country, but to Mrs. Hall is the honour of having conquered, not a country but the hearts of a people that were once fast closed to the Gospel. On the tablet were these words :—



Remembered in the Lord

EVA HALL

The beloved missionary who laboured in the faith and power of Christ among the orphans, the fatherless and the poor of the Sudan for five and twenty years. She was born 21 December, 1857 and died on the 3 May, 1925.

“The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Such were the missionaries upon whom fell the task of winning an open door for the Gospel and of gaining an entrance

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

into the lives of a fanatical people who despised and hated every other faith.

We must now retrace our steps to the early days from 1900 onwards when the pioneers were struggling for a foothold in Omdurman. The first efforts to induce people to come to the dispensary were not hopeful. One stalwart dervish explained the difficulty. "In the days of the Mahdi," he said, "doctors were the official poisoners, and when the Mahdi did not like a man, the doctor administered medicine and the patient died. You," he added, "are the doctor of the British rulers, and you too may be the official poisoner of the new Government." Years afterwards when I was in Omdurman I saw the mud hut that had once been the C.M.S. dispensary and the old name had stuck to it. A passing Arab, when asked what it was, said: "That is the house of the poisoner!"

On the death of Dr. Chorley Hall, Dr. Edmund Lloyd, who had been invalided from the pagan area, took up the task of carrying on the medical work in Omdurman. Thus while the south lost its only doctor the northern work gained, at a critical juncture, a man who for the next twenty-three years laboured unceasingly to build up a strong medical institution.

The first real step in advance came when the Government in 1912 gave a large plot of land to the Society for a hospital. Soon the work was beautifully housed in a well-designed and well-built hospital and dispensary with a doctor's house. This new site was in the centre of Omdurman, within a few minutes' walk of the old slave market, and close to the spot where the terrible Mahdi and the gross Khalifa held their courts, and also near to the spot where Slatin Pasha and Neufeld languished as prisoners for so many years. It was here that the dervishes displayed the ghastly trophy of Gordon's head after the capture of Khartoum by the Mahdi, and here, years later, a Christian hospital first bore its witness to the love of God in Christ. The old name of "poisoner" was never transferred to the new hospital. The fears of the people were replaced by an unbounded confidence in the missionary doctor, and Omdurman, the trade emporium of the Sudan, attracted to the mission not only merchants but

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

patients from many distant provinces. They came from the Red Sea and Kassala, from far-off Darfur and Kordofan. They received treatment for their ills and went away wondering at the strange providence of Allah, who had sent a Christian of all people to bring comfort to the true believers. Soon the note of arrogant superiority disappeared and a spirit of inquiry was observed among those who found in this work a phenomenon never before seen, a Christian Englishman serving the Sudanese, poor and rich alike, and bearing testimony to Christ Who by His love and power could redeem them.

When night fell and the cool north breeze began to blow, and while the twinkling stars looked down, the stillness of the desert crept over the medical compound. Could you have looked in then at the wards of the hospital you would have seen the doctor, his day's work done, quietly talking to some Arab about the Kingdom of God. At times you would have heard the angry retort of scorn, but more often you would have heard the questions poured forth as a seeker after God sought for light.

In 1921 two doctors joined Dr. Lloyd in his heavy task. Dr. Lavy came from Baghdad with a ripe experience of Moslem evangelism and a good knowledge of Arabic. He was able from the day of his arrival to take a large share in the spiritual side of the hospital. Dr. Worsley, who had served in the R.A.M.C. in Palestine, also joined the staff, and quickly showed a genius for colloquial Arabic and a power of friendship with the Sudanese. It was due to the co-operation of these two doctors with the superintendent that the work was able to expand so rapidly after the lean years of the war.

The hospital had to be enlarged several times, further accommodation provided for the men and a separate building for the women. With every new development there came a growing friendliness on the part of the people. The closed door had been opened and the Sudanese themselves did the rest. Quiet evangelism stirred up no strife, and fanaticism died down before the spirit of love and service that emanated from the hospital.

The shortage of doctors offering to C.M.S. created a serious

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

situation. By 1928 the hospital staff of three doctors at Omdurman was reduced to one woman doctor. Criticisms of C.M.S. administration were very frank. In 1929, on my visit to the Sudan, this was one of the most pressing problems I was asked to investigate.

It had been suggested by some that the C.M.S. ought to close the hospital and let the Government do all the medical work required. My first task was to gather these statistics:—

Year	Out-patients	In-patients		Total In-patients	Major operations
		Men	Women		
1920	13,444	103	116	219	142
1921	17,591	133	132	265	141
1922	23,179	193	206	399	161
1923	25,775	213	214	427	131
1924	21,404	244	212	456	151
1925	25,426	289	320	609	173
1926	23,569	343	406	749	238
1927	15,632	262	501	763	214
1928	15,668	419	685	1104	235

These figures show that the number of out-patients in 1928 was nearly 2000 more than in 1920 and 10,000 less than in 1925. In the last-mentioned year there were three men doctors at the Omdurman Hospital and the value of a good staff was seen by this large increase in patients. Although the numbers had fallen in 1928 it is a remarkable figure when it is remembered that the whole of the work depended upon one woman missionary, who, in a temperature seldom below 100° in the shade, laboured night and day to keep the hospital afloat in the hope that recruits would come. The most striking figures are those for the in-patients. In spite of fluctuations of staff they show a steady increase, until in 1928 they were over five times as many as in 1920. The number of in-patients who come to the hospital generally for operations is, in a town like Omdurman, an indication of confidence, and these figures are sure evidence of the growing influence of the hospital and the increasing trust placed in the doctors and nurses by the Moslems. The fact that of 1104 patients 685 were women is interesting, as the Moslem women are largely

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

illiterate and more inclined to be afraid of a strange foreign institution than the men.

This is only a part of the story. The Government had built a large leper home with accommodation for ninety lepers and had placed it under the control of the C.M.S. hospital. When I visited it there were forty lepers under treatment and a splendid service for this suffering class was going on. A welfare centre had been opened at the other end of the town and in one month over 1000 poor people had come to the nurse in charge for treatment and advice. In addition to this a home for the poor, the crippled, and the blind had been opened near the hospital. The story of how it came into being is worth relating. Bishop Gwynne, who never sees suffering without wanting to relieve it, was troubled at the number of beggars in Khartoum. They went about in rags, many of them crippled with disease, some lepers and some blind, and the Bishop invited them every Saturday morning to his garden. They soon learned their way there, and once a week a motley crowd of the most miserable people imaginable congregated under the trees in the garden. Each week a simple address was given to them, and the Bishop went among them, speaking words of cheer. Each one received a small gift, some were sent to hospital, but most of them went back to the streets to beg. The only time they were known to laugh was on a Saturday when in the quiet garden they met the Bishop. A bond of friendship sprang up between them, and it was always the Bishop's hope that a home might be built for these people. This was realized when the Government erected a comfortable house for them and the C.M.S. medical staff was asked to look after them.

Thus when I arrived in Omdurman in 1929 to look into the problem of the hospital I found it was not simply a single institution, but it included a leper colony, a home for the poor, and a child welfare centre. Everywhere I went I saw signs of growth and development.

Here was a strange situation. In 1899 the C.M.S. was not allowed to open missionary work for fear of trouble from the Dervish populace. In 1928 these very people, who were

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

regarded as so fanatical that it would be unsafe to mention a Christian topic among them, were the first in Omdurman to plead for the life of this missionary institution. Nor was it because there had been no Christian witness. On the contrary, evangelistic work had been carried on consistently if quietly for years. Many of those who fought against the British in the Sudan war had been patients, and the leading Moslems of the town headed deputations to request that the hospital might be continued. This appeal from the Moslems was entirely spontaneous and was not due to any influence on the part of the missionaries, indeed, they only heard of the deputations for the first time from the Governor himself. Questions were asked as to the reasons for suggesting the closing of the hospital and some one mentioned finance. The Moslems, hearing of this, clubbed together and raised over £400 among themselves for the hospital. Could stronger proof be required to show the changed attitude of the people, and the place the missionaries had won in their affections? They not only talked, they gave liberally for a work they had come to regard as their own. The hospital had woven itself into the very life of Omdurman and I for one felt that it would be a shame to admit defeat and close the work when there was such progress to record.

Encouragement there was in abundance, and yet a problem faced the Society. In view of the financial state of the C.M.S. and the shortage of doctors dare we promise to continue the work? The Society had placed upon me the responsibility of deciding the matter. The only staff in sight at the time was one doctor, while an additional £500 a year was needed to maintain the hospital in any efficient manner.

It was at this juncture that the Government was asked to give an opinion on the problem. We wanted to know how the hospital was viewed in official circles. The Director of Medical Services gave us the answer in a frank and challenging letter. He said: "I consider that if the Church Missionary Society is able to provide a medical staff sufficient in quantity and quality not only to maintain the high standard of the past but also to enable the work to move forward with the growing

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

demands of medical and surgical progress, then this hospital could usefully be maintained and its continued presence would be welcomed by the Medical Service. The staff of the hospital would continue to receive every possible assistance from the Medical Service and from the staff of the Civil Hospital, and we should welcome their continued assistance in the Leper Hospital." The Government backed up this opinion by very generously offering the Society a grant of £500 a year towards the hospital expenses.

The financial side of the problem was now solved and it only remained for staff to be found. From the day the decision was made to continue the hospital the staff problem began to solve itself. Three doctors—two men and a woman—were found, a Scots lady went to Omdurman as house-keeper, and a catechist was sent to the hospital from the Egypt Mission. Christian doctors and medical students who read this will, I hope, take notice of the fact that this valuable institution was nearly compelled to close its doors because two men doctors could not be found. What happened in Omdurman happens elsewhere also, and other hospitals are at the present time in desperate need of medical recruits.

I must once more retrace my steps. I have followed the history of the medical work through a period of over twenty years, and now turn to education. Permission had also been given for the opening of girls' schools. In 1902 the first girls' school was started in Khartoum. A fine building was erected upon a site bought by the Society at a low price. Mrs. Hall was joined in 1908 by her sister Miss Jackson, and together they commenced girls' education in Omdurman. The same year, at the express invitation of the natives, a school was opened at Atbara. The Sudan Government Railways offered the free use of buildings and the British community supported the scheme wholeheartedly. Wad Medani on the Blue Nile was the next centre to be occupied. Thus in the course of a few years four girls' schools were being run by the C.M.S., all under the direct supervision of women missionaries.

The Government imposed a conscience clause upon all mission schools whereby no Moslem pupil could be taught the

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

Christian faith if the parents objected. How Moslems would regard Christian schools, and what their attitude would be to religious education was, of course, problematical. Some thought that the Sudanese would object to any form of Christian teaching, and it was a surprise to the missionaries to find that very few parents objected to the children attending the Bible classes. When objections were raised parents were invited to attend the religious lesson themselves and asked to decide afterwards, and invariably they agreed to allow the children to take Scripture. Through an experience of over twenty years in a strongly Moslem country, it has been shown that the conscience clause does not act unfairly upon the religious side of a mission school. The missionary has the advantage of knowing that the voluntary nature of the lesson gives strength to the teaching. The pupils take a keen interest in the Bible. Religion is not imposed by rule upon the children and is accepted by the parents as the best method of character building. The chief difficulty in opening these schools was the complete absence of native girl teachers. Egyptians and Syrians had to be employed, which added greatly to the cost of the schools. In order to meet this need training classes were started at Khartoum and Omdurman to equip the Sudanese girls themselves to take posts as teachers.

The early marriage age in Islam made training difficult, for no sooner had a girl reached the age when she might be usefully employed in a school than she was taken away to be married. The disappointments were very great but gradually a small band of teachers has been trained. All these are Sudanese and now are teaching in the schools. Each year the position improves, and ultimately the Sudan will produce its own teachers for the girls' schools.

The next school to be opened was that at Abu Rouf, a district of Omdurman with a population of about 10,000 Moslems. It was of a simple vernacular type for the poorer Sudanese. Washing, ironing, and dressmaking were made important features of the curriculum. The schools started hitherto were of primary standard for the children of native officials—Egyptians, Moslems, and Copts. A new departure



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

was now being made to endeavour to kindle a desire for education among people who were wholly illiterate. Two more of these vernacular schools were started in Omdurman, one of which was in the old Christian quarter of the town. When the Mahdi occupied Omdurman all the Christians were compelled to become Moslems under threat of death. In the days of Egyptian rule in the Sudan there was in Omdurman a large colony of nominal Christians from the Near East, and they had in a body accepted Islam. All through the years until the British occupation they had been Moslems and when the missionaries visited them they found no desire on their part to return to the Christian fold. They had become assimilated to the Moslem way of life and absorbed into the religion. The school was an effort to introduce Christian influence among them.

It was only to be expected that as the country developed the Government would turn its attention to girls' education. It was decided to develop vernacular schools similar in type to the C.M.S. school at Abu Rouf, and the fact that the missions were providing primary education was of great assistance. To-day the government training college for Sudanese girls is doing most excellent work. These girls are given four years training, after which they are sent out to towns and villages of the Sudan to new vernacular schools. They serve about two years as teachers, after which they are free to marry if they wish, and as compensation for the service they have rendered many are helped financially with their marriage dowry. The two types of education do not overlap nor do they compete against each other. The Government is doing for girls' education in the Sudan what would have been financially impossible to a missionary society, and is finding an ever-growing demand for girls' schools which is much greater than the total available teaching staff of the country can meet.

The United Presbyterian Church of America also carries on missionary work in the Northern Sudan and has work in Omdurman and other large centres. The two missions co-operate closely in the great task before them, and with a

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

frequent exchange of plans and ideas the one is complementary to the other.

The statistics of the C.M.S. schools in 1929 were as follows:—

		<i>Pupils</i>
Omdurman	—One primary school .. ..	..
	Two vernacular schools .. ..	350
Atbara	—One primary school .. ..	..
	Two vernacular schools .. ..	340
Wad Medani	—One primary school .. ..	150
Total girls		840

These figures may seem small but they are only slightly below the total number of girls in all government schools in the Sudan, and they do not include the girls in the American Mission schools. Missions were first in the field in girls' education in the Sudan and for more than twenty years they have led the way.

Canon Gairdner writing in 1919 said: "Friendly officials do not conceal their admiration for these Christian women and their work—which has that about it which they know can never be imitated by government effort: for though Governments can always beat missionary societies in equipment and plant and technical perfection, the character-forming work of women, who can, will, and do put into their work their whole selves and express it in their whole heart, conscience, and faith, remains for ever denied to Governments—we do not speak of the Sudan only, but of the world over, and of all educational institutions, whether colleges or schools or kindergartens, whether for men or women or boys or girls."

Such an account of girls' education does not convey anything of the real task undertaken by a group of English women. The problem was much wider than the education of children. It involved the influence of women missionaries upon the home life of the people, the contacts with the womanhood of the Sudan, and the need of combating social evils that were working havoc among the women.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

A British statesman once said: "We must concentrate upon the mothers, for what the mothers are the children will be." The missionaries sought to reach the homes through the school and an important part of their duty lay in visiting the parents after school hours. Child marriages spell ruin in the home, and with all the facilities for easy divorce the women find life a hard struggle. Polygamy adds to the burden, and the loveless marriages of Islam, where a wife has no choice in the selection of her husband, constitute a social evil that may take generations to correct. The sympathetic approach of a missionary in such an environment, quickly won a response from the women. Listlessly they would sit and listen as the missionary spoke to them, but hope was not often kindled, for a dull despair gripped them. It was the will of Allah and nothing could change that. When evil customs such as the circumcision of girls were mentioned, the women themselves, who knew the untold suffering they had undergone, were the first to oppose any reform. They clung tenaciously to all their old ways, and they feared reform. In spite of this there grew among these women a deep affection for the missionary, and perhaps the results were more real than apparent.

The moral effects of polygamy and divorce on the children are very bad, for they see the inborn jealousy on the mother's side and the suspicious distrust of the father. When they come to school they are lifted into a new world. There are things that cannot be said in a book of this sort, but I would like the reader to catch the spirit of the quiet heroism that kept these English women year in, year out, toiling in a hot and unhealthy climate for the uplift of Sudanese womanhood.

Let us look back over the years that have gone since in 1899 two missionaries first set foot in the Sudan. Then the country was ruined and the people in misery through the past misrule. Now it is a prosperous land and the people are contented and happy. Then placards were posted, forbidding Moslems to discuss religion with missionaries. Now there is freedom for the witness of the Christian faith. Then the only medical mission was a mud hut. Now a fine hospital stands out in the centre of the town as evidence of missionary

## OPEN DOORS IN THE NORTH

interests in the care of the body as well as the soul. Then there were no girls' schools in all the Sudan. Now hundreds of girls are being taught by the Mission. Then few cared for the lepers and the poverty-stricken beggars. Now the lepers have a home of their own with the best medical skill, and the poor are fed and cared for. Then suspicion, hatred, and fear were uppermost in the native mind when he came in contact with a missionary. Now friendship and trust have taken their place. The years of patient toil and perseverance have brought to the missionary a new day of hope and opportunity. It is no exaggeration to say that in the British task of the pacification of a turbulent country the missionaries' contribution has been a signal success. In fact the greatest pacific force in Omdurman has been the missionary work.

Were the Society to be asked now to give up the Mission in the Northern Sudan it would be the Moslems themselves who would insist upon its continuance. Love, service, and friendship have triumphed over bigotry and hatred. A new day has dawned, but whether it will usher in a glorious period of light depends upon our permanently maintaining an adequate staff in the Sudan.

What of the future? The Society is seeking to extend its child welfare work by opening other dispensaries. We hope to establish an itinerating medical mission, probably by using a motor van fitted up as a dispensary. The future is bright with hope, but let it not be forgotten that though it is comparatively easy to initiate a new movement, the test comes later and success depends upon permanent support. I think again of Dr. and Mrs. Hall laying foundations, of their lives of sacrifice for the Sudan, and that grave on the edge of the desert. Dare we let them down? Those heroic souls who gave their all for Christ in the Sudan call to us to-day to go forward until the black Sudan has been won for our Lord and Master. Dare we let them down? God forbid!

## CHAPTER V

### AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

I am known to the night and the wind and the steed,  
To the sword and the guest, to the paper and reed.

THESE lines from Mulannabi well illustrate the Sudan. We have in the previous chapters seen something of the "night" of paganism, the coming of the "steeds," mounted by Arab conquerors, the "sword" of the Mahdi, the British "guests" in the country, and the inauguration of a new era of "paper and reed."

In a previous chapter we have described some of the startling changes taking place under the British administration. From the missionary point of view the uplift of the Sudan depends upon Christianity, education, and agriculture.

These three are not separate compartments shut off one from the other. They are inter-related in a far more vital way than many people realize. The African for generations has found existence uncertain and unstable. Tribal wars have made life cheap, and apart from the strenuous days of spasmodic fighting the people have been lazy and indolent. With the introduction of a civilizing government the gospel of work becomes a serious factor in the well-being of the people. Agriculture ceases to imply simply the growing of a minimum of food for a tribe. It is tackled from a national point of view where the natives of the country contribute to the general prosperity of the community. To this problem education brings its contribution, education that is African and vocational and which fits the youth for the new life into which he is being introduced. But to leave the country with a twin policy of education and work is to ask the African to find life on a two-dimension basis only. The Christian argues that life can only be lived to the full on a basis of three dimensions of length, breadth, and height. That is to say that however

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

much may be accomplished by material prosperity through the hard work of an educated people, something more is needed if through education we break up the old religious values of paganism. New moral and spiritual forces must be planted in the life of the people if we are to avoid a policy that would make the nation purely material and secular.

When the C.M.S. viewed the Sudan as a missionary sphere it was with a view to planting the Gospel of Christ among a people who were being introduced to modern life guided by western minds. It was an effort to demonstrate that apart from Christianity true progress could not be obtained. The beginning of the work coincided with the dawn of a new era and yet when it was only dawn. The changes most people saw coming in the Sudan had not to any great extent affected the pagan tribes, but those who looked into the future saw that the old order must pass away and give place to an entirely new condition of life.

The Sudan is so vast, the people so wild and savage, that the task before any missionary band was of necessity a colossal one. When there were more than two thousand years of misrule and misery behind them, the people could not rise at once to better things. Where a population was void of all education it was impossible to preach the Christian faith without laying long and carefully prepared foundations. Progress had to be slow, but the missionary ideal was to bring into the lives of groups of people those spiritual forces that would make for new character and development based upon the spiritual, not the secular view of life. Missionaries knew from experience that the Gospel they brought to a pagan people must be a full and complete Gospel which would penetrate every department of life, which would lead to new home conditions, a new social order, and would teach the African who had lived for himself alone that sacrifice and service were essential elements of true life. The hospital and medical service of the missionary was therefore designed not only to relieve suffering, but to initiate preventive measures where mortality among the people was appalling.

The message of the Gospel had to be related to such problems

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

as polygamy, the fear of evil spirits, and the hatreds of inter-tribal life; and in order to succeed the missionary had to bring the Gospel into the social conditions of the people and relate it to daily life. The evangelistic message therefore, while in itself as simple as in any part of the New Testament, had none the less to be as dynamic as the Apostles proved it to be in their day.

In 1905 the first party of missionaries sailed for the Southern Sudan. They travelled by way of Cairo to Khartoum where preparations were made for the long river journey of 1100 miles into the heart of Africa. A *gyassa* or large sailing boat was purchased. It lay on the opposite bank of the Nile from Khartoum and each day the missionaries ferried over to work on it. A great deal had to be done before it could be made suitable to form the home of this pioneer party for about a month's journey. A deck house had to be built, stores purchased, including everything a party of men were likely to need who were going to live hundreds of miles from shops. These days were a trying time. The temperature often stood at 110° in the shade. There were numerous delays, and the missionaries were taught patience by the native workmen who are never in a hurry and to whom time has little meaning. At last the great day came. The boat was completely equipped and ready to sail. A group of friends, including government officials, stood on the mud bank of the Nile and watched the great sail unfurled from its mast 118 feet high. Slowly the boat moved away into mid-stream, round the headland into the White Nile amid the cheers and good wishes of those who had come to bid them God-speed. Khartoum was left behind and the great adventure had begun.

As the missionaries gathered on the deck of the boat there came home to them in a fresh way the nature of the task they were facing. They were going to an area where no missionary had ever worked; to a people who had never heard of Jesus Christ, and to a work that would demand their very best for the Kingdom of God. It was an adventure such as St. Paul would have loved. They carried the same Gospel as he had preached and the same indomitable faith filled them with an

apostolic optimism that through years of toil was to be tested again and again.

As the boat is now launched we can look more closely at the party on board. The crew numbered ten Sudanese from Dongola, a province once Christian but now solidly Moslem. The missionary party was six in number. Three were clergy, one a doctor, and two industrial workers. Archdeacon Gwynne (now the Bishop in Egypt and the Sudan) was their leader.

For the first two hundred and fifty miles the country was desert, very typical of the Northern Sudan. The scene as far as the eye could travel was a sandy waste, dotted here and there with thorn bushes upon which camels can make a good meal, and a few scattered mimosa trees.

The new era had not then touched this barren land, but missionaries traversing the same route to-day are shown from the steamer the great tract of land that has been reclaimed for cotton cultivation. They pass the spot where, at the time of writing, another large irrigation scheme is to be carried out through the building of a barrage to conserve still further the water for the territory to the north.

Fortunately for travellers up the Nile the prevailing wind is north-west and the *Endeavour* made good progress. Soon the Arab villages and the mud huts were left behind and the country completely changed in character. It was now an extensive park land. In the desert no game had been visible; now herds of shy antelopes and other game were seen. The people, too, were of a different race; instead of the swarthy Arabs the villages were filled with jet-black Nilotic tribes. The camel of the desert was no longer seen, but instead there were herds of cattle.

The missionaries had passed out of the Moslem area into the pagan regions of the south. The desert had given an impression of sterility. Now the party was amazed at the abounding life of the country. Thousands of birds and feathered fowl in wonderful variety rose as the boat stirred them to flight. Teal, duck, and guinea-fowl furnished the larder, and crocodiles and hippopotami were a common sight.



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

This picture appears to be a very pleasant one, but the voyage was not all plain sailing. The captain of the boat was an experienced Sudanese and he watched the sky for gathering storms. One day a dense black cloud formed on the horizon, a sure sign of trouble, and the boat was quickly brought to the bank and securely moored, the sail reefed, and all made ready to encounter the gale. In the Sudan these storms are called *haboobs*. Some people think that we have derived our English word hubbub from it. This may not be etymologically correct, but what happens when the storm breaks is no small hubbub. The gale travels across the country picking up on its way dust, dirt, sticks, and anything light until it rolls across the plain in a great black mass. When it strikes the water it churns it up and will capsize a boat with ease. The *Endeavour* was fortunately secured to the bank, but even then the experience was terrible enough. The dust blew in clouds through every crevice. Every one was covered in dirt. Eyes, ears, and noses were filled with it and when it had passed the whole boat was in a filthy condition. The haboob travels quickly and soon passed on its way towards Khartoum; the sun shone once more and the boat again set sail.

The last stage of the journey was in many ways the most difficult. The party had reached the great sudd region described on p. 23. The masses of mud and reed had piled themselves up across the river and a sailing boat could not, without long delays, penetrate it. A distance of 300 miles of this swampy barrier lay before the missionaries, when a friendly government steamer came to the rescue and towed the boat the remainder of the journey. A channel through the sudd had been cut and the little boat, towed by the steamer, made its way through a twisting, tortuous waterway with high walls of thick vegetation on either side. The tall papyrus reeds were often over twenty feet high. Eventually the *Endeavour* moored at Mongalla. The 1100 miles' journey was completed, and very glad the party were to be able to leave their tiny little home on the boat and to begin to prospect the land of their adoption.

At Mongalla Dr. A. R. Cook from Uganda met the party to

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

initiate them into the pioneer work that lay before them. What of the country to which they had come? Dr. Cook, writing at that time, says: "The principal feature of the place is the Nile, which is perhaps half a mile wide, although owing to a long island in the midst the visible channel is only a couple of hundred yards, but with a rapid current of over four miles an hour. From the Nile the land slopes very gradually up to perhaps a height of thirty feet, but the country generally is as flat as a board. To the south-west is the prominent hill of Lado. This is the last hill visible from the river till Khartoum, 1100 miles away."

First impressions were those of a flat country, swampy in places, swarming with mosquitoes; of coal-black natives of a warlike and savage type, generally suspicious and unfriendly; of innumerable dialects, none of which had been reduced to writing; of scattered hamlets formed of mud and reed huts; and of an immense task—the introduction of the Gospel into a land where cruelty and superstition had held sway from time immemorial.

The first station chosen was near Bor on the river, about forty miles north of Mongalla. A clearing was made and a zareba formed as a protection against wild animals. The first thing to be done was to select a permanent site, healthier than Bor, and a village was found where a friendly welcome was given to the missionaries. Health was a primary consideration, and huts were speedily erected and work was begun on the Dinka language.

Here a word should be said about the Dinka tribe. The men are entirely naked, though the women often wear goat skins for a covering. The youth of both sexes usually wear only beads and other ornaments. The men plaster their hair with a disgusting preparation of dung and clay and smear their bodies with it. It could hardly be said that there was anything attractive in the spectacle of these black sons of Africa, all armed with spears, watching the missionaries as they sought to establish friendly contacts. Women in this tribe are of secondary importance to the cattle, and the Dinka venerates his animals so much that he lives in their enclosure, praises

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

their brute strength, and sings to them. A rich Dinka often owns 600 to 1000 head of cattle, but he seldom trades with them. The reason for this is that the tribe lives very largely upon milk; millet is soaked in milk and the sticky mess forms a daily meal. In order to facilitate eating the four front teeth are extracted, generally by the use of a fish spear, a practice which does not add to a man's beauty. A common custom is for a bull to be hobbled by the legs and then speared in the neck; bowls are filled with the blood, which is then drunk; the wound is tied up, smeared over with a mixture of dung and clay, and the animal is saved alive for a future meal. The witch doctors are all-powerful and are the doctors of the tribe.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the people that the C.M.S. sought to evangelize. Dr. Cook, writing at the commencement of the work, said: "The Mission has a magnificent field before it. May God enable us to take full advantage of it." I wonder how many supporters of the Mission at home would have seen in this environment "a magnificent field"?

Seldom had a Mission started with more prayer. The little band of workers were not viewing simply the swampy plains of the Southern Sudan. They knew they were pioneers and that the particular bit of country occupied was part of a great plan for the Kingdom of God in Africa. It was, to quote Dr. Cook again, "a link, albeit a very important one, in the chain of mission stations seen by the prophetic eye of Krapf sixty years ago as he laboured at his lonely post at Mombasa. How the heart of the old veteran would have rejoiced could he have seen how the enormous gaps that once existed in the hypothetical chain are being steadily filled up till, as the Church of Christ lengthens her cords and strengthens her stakes, a thin white line spans the dark continent from shore to shore."

Thinking back into 1905-06 we may well ask what was the policy of the Society in stationing a small band of men in the heart of a vast country, some ten times the size of Great Britain. The first point to note is that the missionaries never hoped to cover the whole area. They sought to select

<sup>1</sup> See *Savage Life in the Black Sudan*, pp. 132-4.

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

strategic centres from which the influence of the Gospel would radiate to more remote regions. They had a well-thought-out plan of campaign which would include not only direct evangelistic and pastoral work, but also medical, educational, and industrial agencies. The Society had in mind the rapid growth of the Church in Uganda and it was hoped that this Dinka Country would prove again the power of the Gospel in a purely pagan area.

The year 1906 was marked by the first skilled medical help many of these Dinkas had ever received. Dr. Lloyd's work took a firm hold upon the people and patients began to come from many distant villages. The same year witnessed the publication of St. Luke's Gospel in Dinka by the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>1</sup> An outline grammar and vocabulary was completed and reading sheets of the alphabet, syllables, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and a selection of verses from the Scriptures were sent to Cairo for printing. The first year closed therefore with substantial gains : progress in language, the opening of a dispensary, growing contacts with the people—the beginnings of a brave enterprise.

The early days of pioneer work were marked by many a thrilling adventure and many tedious days of toil. Malek was chosen as the head-quarters of the Mission and from there trips were made in many directions. Down the river a missionary would find progress barred by the impenetrable sudd and the boatmen had to push the canoe through masses of vegetation. Many parts of the country were explored, and centres for future development were noted. By 1908 three stations had been opened, two on the river side and one inland, all among the Dinka people. A beginning had been made but at what a cost ! Of the original party of six only one remained in the Mission in 1908, all the others had been invalidated out of the country. Bishop Gwynne sent home a stirring appeal for men. " We have raised Christ's banner," he said, " which still flutters feebly in the unequal contest with long-established and strongly-entrenched heathenism. People

<sup>1</sup> The original translation was made by Roman Catholic missionaries of earlier days, and subsequently was revised by the B. & F.B.S. with the help of a Dinka boy. To find this beginning already made was an immense help to the C.M.S. pioneers.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

of England helped generously at the commencement of the Mission. Never let it be said that after the first bout, when we seem to have come off worst, people at home have lost sight of, and lost interest in, the Gordon Memorial Mission."

The position in 1908 seemed desperate; the Rev. (afterwards Archdeacon) A. Shaw was alone. Paganism seemed triumphant, yet the three years had marked advance and progress. To a great extent the confidence of the people had been won. Medical work, although no doctor was there, was still carried on by the one missionary who acted as house builder, carpenter, clergyman, teacher, doctor, and general peacemaker to a tribe of Dinkas who were lazy, savage, and mainly indifferent. The C.M.S. has seldom undertaken a harder task. The late President Roosevelt, after his visit to the Sudan, used these significant words in an address in London: "It is not worth while belonging to a big nation unless the big nation is willing when necessary to undertake a big task." These words apply equally to the Church. The C.M.S. represented a big cause and a divine command, was it now prepared to embark upon a big task? Difficulties have never been regarded by the Society as the signal for retreat, and in this case they were interpreted as a call to prayer and a challenge to action.

In 1908 Archdeacon Shaw sailed for England for a brief rest, and the same year returned with one recruit to the Sudan. Was this all that could be done in the face of imminent disaster to the Mission? Difficulties were by no means over, for on arrival Archdeacon Shaw, now the only survivor of the original band, was laid low with malaria and was sent to the Northern Sudan to recuperate, leaving a young recruit alone for the next three months in the pagan area. On his return the two missionaries settled down to their problem and for nearly two years they held the fort alone amid many difficulties and discouragements, but with never a thought of surrender. Gradually another band of missionaries was chosen and sent to the Southern Sudan to reinforce the two workers and a new start was made.

Sir Reginald Wingate, who had followed the progress of the Mission with keen interest and active support, was now

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

pressing the Society to move forward into the country west of the river called the Lado Enclave, which had been leased to King Leopold of Belgium, but which on his death had reverted to the Sudan Government. This seemed a most important field because Moslem officials and soldiers were being sent from Egypt among the pagan population and Moslem schools were being opened.

Early in 1911 Bishop Gwynne and Archdeacon Shaw visited the new territory and on receipt of their report the Society decided upon a forward movement to occupy this untouched area. Three new missionaries sailed in 1912 and two new stations were established, one at Lau among the Cheech Jieng, and the other at Yambio, among the Azande tribe.

Six years had gone since the first party of missionaries made their way up the Nile in a native boat. The Mission now consisted of six clergymen, four of whom were British, and two Australians, supported by the Australian C.M.S., three laymen, one of whom, Mr. Scamell, was accompanied by his wife. Mrs. Scamell was therefore the first woman missionary in this remote part of Africa.

The scales often seemed weighted against the missionaries yet they never faltered but set to work methodically to lay the foundations of a future Church of the Sudan. These were indeed days of toil, for in spite of the strenuous efforts of six years' increasing work not a Sudanese had come out on the side of Christ. In the Azande Country now occupied the outlook seemed more promising. The Azande tribe is very numerous and stretches across Africa from the Nile towards Hausaland. They are a fine type of Sudanese, and their chiefs belong to the great Fulani race which overran and conquered the Hausa States long years ago. It was this particular tribe that General Gordon had in view when he appealed to the C.M.S. in 1878 to open work in the Sudan.

Archdeacon Shaw, after a survey of the whole field, saw the need of African helpers. There were no converts who could be trained for service, so he visited Uganda to ask the help of the Baganda in the evangelization of the Sudan, and one well-trusted Muganda clergyman and a band of six teachers

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

were chosen to go with him. This provided a new outlet for the Uganda Church, which was now undertaking a further piece of missionary work when its own needs were very great. The clergyman who volunteered gave up his post in Busoga. Two of the teachers came from the Budo High School and sacrificed lucrative posts in order to serve in the Sudan.

In the letters that came from the Sudan at this time there was a strong note of urgency. The missionaries watched with alarm the growing power of Islam in the pagan areas. Arch-deacon Shaw, writing in 1909, said: "Unless all these black tribes are evangelized within the next few years they must inevitably become Mohammedans." Under a new stable Government and with better transport facilities the pressure of Islam was increasingly felt. The missionaries seldom visited even the most remote areas without finding some traces of Islam.

The Azande links with the Fulani race tended to make Moslem progress easy, but strange to say these primitive people had down the centuries of Islamic expansion remained pagan, and they now came forward to give the missionaries a warm welcome. Dr. R. Y. Stones (now of Mengo Hospital) wrote in 1915: "The influence of the Egyptian and Sudanese officials tends to Mohammedanism. The raw Azande soldiers are all under the influence of Sudanese Mohammedan commissioned and non-commissioned officers; they are taught a little Arabic; they keep the Mohammedan sabbath (Friday), and are often given Mohammedan names. How very important then is the work of the Mission, if the Azandi are to be a Christian nation."

At present the Moslems form about half the population, but they are the more progressive half and the bulk of the wealth of the Sudan is in their hands. The Government is scrupulously fair to Moslems and pagans, and in religious matters adopts a strictly neutral attitude. The task of evangelization is no part of the Government's work and it falls to the Mission alone to decide whether these southern pagan tribes shall be left to be captured for Islam or whether they shall be won for Jesus Christ.

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

Dr. Fraser, writing from Lui at a later date (1926), reiterates the same warning. He says: "A definite aggressiveness on the part of Islam is also noted, especially at Amadi, fifteen miles away. The Moslems have recently succeeded in getting the most outstanding and influential Moro in the tribe to declare himself a Moslem." We believe that Africa deserves something better than Islam. We hold that Christianity alone can meet the needs of an African, but no amount of mere belief will alter the situation unless those responsible for the Mission in the Sudan give this brave band of missionaries the backing and support they require. The number of missionaries is wholly inadequate and the Church at home ought to make it a primary duty to supply this young Mission with fresh recruits.

So much for our own point of view, but what do the Sudanese feel about it all?

Great progress has been made since the early days of the Mission when distrust and theft abounded. By 1915 there were at each station groups of Christians gathered out of pagan degradation, and on Sundays quite large congregations would assemble for public worship.

We often wonder how evangelistic work is carried on among pagan tribes. Here is one picture of it. A missionary and a little party of Sudanese Christians can be seen making their way to the river side. They take a boat and pull across the river. As they approach the opposite bank they see a cattle kraal. The animals are lazily wending their way to their temporary home among the marshes of the Nile, now fairly dry in the hot season. Curious faces meet the little party. Standing well forward there are tall, gaunt, naked men, each with a club tucked under his arm and a spear in his hand. They present a weird spectacle for they are smeared all over with ashes from the cattle fires. Small boys dodge in and out and all wait with curiosity to see why the strangers have come. The party assembles on the bank and an informal open-air meeting is commenced by the singing of a hymn. Here is something quite unusual and the excitement grows. The young men and the married women, with babies on their hips,



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

are attracted to the spot and in a hush of wonder they watch this foreigner pray. He is talking, seemingly to no one, but they understand it is worship and remain quietly attentive. Explanation follows, a picture is produced, and one of the visitors gives an address.

After the meeting the kraal is visited, sick folk are brought forward and are given temporary relief, and asked to come to the dispensary the following day. More hymns are sung and friendly greetings exchanged, and then as the sun is setting the little boat is pulled away from the kraal on the shore and the party return to their station.

What do the natives think of it all? The news quickly spreads of a group of foreigners who speak about an invisible God and give medicine to their sick ones. Invitations come from other villages. In one instance the men came to a meeting with their long spears, fresh from a native dance. The chief with a crowd of men sat down to hear the Gospel. Here were men, not one of whom had ever heard the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they were eagerly asking questions. The following evening just as the sun was sinking "a line of black forms could be seen winding their way up the rocky slope. It was the same chief and his men coming again to inquire about God. 'When you told us yesterday the good words I did not hear well so I want you to tell me all over again.'" So in the calm of the evening he and his men heard the Gospel again.

We close this chapter with this scene of the setting sun, the hill top, and the long procession of dusky sons of Africa making their way to the missionary with the request, "Tell us again." The initial stages of the work had been arduous and difficult. At one time the existence of the Mission was threatened by break-downs in the health of the missionaries. Tribal wars, attacks from wild animals, and adventures on the river gave a thrill to life, but the infinite patience needed in breaking new ground was the biggest test. Here is a record of ten years' pioneering (1905 to 1915), of foundations laid and plans made for advance. But in all those years not a convert was baptized. The people in their dim way were pathetically seeking

## AN HEROIC ADVENTURE

the light. "Tell us again," they said. It seemed to them, after centuries of superstition, fear, and oppression, too good to be true. "Can God love us? Say it again," and once more the missionary would repeat: "Yes, it is true. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.'"

## CHAPTER VI

### PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

**I**T was my lot some years ago to live close to the banks of the Nile. Through the early months of the year the river was so low that at many places men could walk across it. Great stretches of mud flat stood out and the waters seemed slow and sluggish. Mysteriously the water rose, the mud was covered, and still the river rose higher and higher. Each day I watched the increase until it became a mighty river once more stretching from bank to bank; but even then the flood had not spent itself; it rose still higher until it lapped the tops of the banks and threatened to burst through. Then it overflowed on to a rainless land, until great tracts of country were under water. The farmer waited until it had almost subsided, whereupon he splashed through the soft mud throwing his seed in handfuls in the hope of a good harvest. It was no wonder that the Nilotic peoples worshipped this river, and more so because no one could tell the secret of its rise and fall. Down even to the last century we find references to the mystery of its birth. But now the mystery has been unveiled. "The primary sources of that wonderful river have been found in those giant mountains on the line of the equator, whose snow-clad summits pierce the heavens, untrodden by human foot and for the most part hidden in the haze of human sight."

To find the primary motives of the Mission in the Southern Sudan we must trace them back to their source. "The deep in the awful need of the world has called to the deep in the infinite heart of God, and there, unveiled to our view by His own Word, we find the primary source of the whole missionary enterprise, its primary motive from beginning to end—'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have

everlasting life'—the love of God—there is the well-head of missions."<sup>1</sup>

The Nile is so inseparably bound up with the Mission, the progress of which we are studying, that it is fitting for us to pause as we commence the story of gains and losses in the years from 1915 onwards, and to visualize the remarkable phenomenon in the material age of a band of young men, all of whom had the prospect of comfortable billets in their own country, sticking to a task frequently very discouraging, often dangerous, among a people many of whose habits and customs were both repulsive and abhorrent; in a climate that was unhealthy, malarious, and trying. Their lives form a story of both heroism and adventure. Across the stage we see suffering Africans finding sympathetic treatment and healing; the youth of both sexes gathered into schools; Sudanese seeking God and confessing their faith in baptism; native Christians assembling to meet the good Bishop for confirmation; the first Holy Communion service for Africans in that part of the country; all these mark the early days of Church building. If the missionary's life is a phenomenon his work is a panorama of quiet, noble achievements, of victories won in the face of bitter opposition and of foundations laid true and sure upon the Rock of Ages, and behind it all as the source of vision, life, and service lie the resources of God. Just as the great mountains of the equatorial regions formed the sources of the Nile and fed its waters by countless streams and torrents, so these men had learned to draw upon the divine resources for their great undertaking. Let us make no mistake about it, such service finds its motive in God alone and in the revelation of His love through Jesus Christ.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, behind every activity lay the aim of bringing the Sudanese face to face with the claims of Christ. Common sense, sympathy, and a genuine love for the people made the work possible, and the Mission developed along three main lines—provision of literature, education, and medical help. After the reduction of languages to writing the first aim was to give the people the Word of God

<sup>1</sup> Dr. George Robson in Report of the Third International Conference of the S.V.M.U.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

in their own tongues, of which there were many. For the Dinkas the Scriptures have had to be translated in four different dialects—Kyec, Bor, Chich, and Ager or White Nile. To-day portions of the Bible are being read in all the occupied areas as the result of the work of C.M.S. missionaries in the past twenty years in making translations and in producing text-books and primers. To accomplish this the missionary had to master the language for himself and then teach the people to read. At first there were no school buildings and classes were held on the veranda of the missionary's house. In the initial stages the invitation to come to school was countered by a demand from the natives for payment. It took a long time to teach them that school tuition was for their benefit and not for the good of the missionary. A nucleus of a class was formed by arranging for the men employed in building mission premises to work as builders in the morning and to attend school in the afternoon. Education had to be both simple and practical, and the technical instructors in the Mission began to teach carpentry and building.

Here the teacher had to be a man of resource. The pupils were raw Africans and to teach carpentry it was necessary for pupils and teacher to go off into the forest where the timber was still growing, cut it down, build a saw-pit, and saw it up. This preliminary stage over, the planks had to be transported from the forest to the mission house. Here a workshop was improvised with whatever material came to hand. In a similar way a beginning was made in teaching brickmaking and building. Here a seemingly insuperable difficulty presented itself. There was no clay, but one of the missionaries experimented in brickmaking from ant-hill mud, and it was found that quite a good brick could thus be made. Try to imagine a class of boys learning to make bricks. A crowd of naked Africans are busy carrying the demolished ant hills, others are puddling the material, and a group is modelling the bricks. The missionary is busy constructing a brick kiln. The scene has nothing of the orderliness of an English brick-yard. Mud is splashed about and almost as much of it sticks to the boys as goes to the making of the bricks, but every one

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

enjoys himself, and when the day's labour is over the boys dive into the Nile, wash off the dirt, and return spick and span in their birthday suits for a scripture lesson.

Such a beginning sounds primitive, but this is a foundation for the future. In the social order these boys must be taught to support themselves. More important than this, however, is the fact that industrial work among primitive people literally *makes men*. The sacredness of labour is taught and the training given is important both morally and physically. Since those days the industrial side of the work has developed and is very much improved. But it has not received the attention by the Society that should have been given to it, and to-day a far better staff and equipment are needed if industrial education is to keep pace with the growing demand for learning. The changes foreseen more than twenty years ago are altering the face of the country and a much more thorough and comprehensive programme is required now if the Sudanese boys are to be equipped for the future.

The Nilotic tribes lack houses, roads, railroads, bridges, boats, all types of vehicles, farming implements, machinery, household utensils, most of which through a development of western civilization in the country will within the next generation certainly be demanded by the people themselves. Converts to Christianity must be fitted to take their place in a growing national life. The leadership of the future may easily be in the hands of the Christian communities if they are given with their new faith the training that will prepare them for the new demands of a new age.

In describing the growth of education in the Sudan Mission we begin with the simple village school commonly known as the "bush" school. To-day this is the simplest form of education, and although primitive in the extreme, faulty possibly in many ways, these schools are an important part of the educational system. They are catechetical centres for evangelism, and as such they have helped to break new ground, to establish contacts with tribes in outlying districts, to disseminate Christian teaching where there is no settled congregation, and to give a simple vernacular education where

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

the people are entirely illiterate. These schools are not government-aided and possibly never will be, but the officials encourage them on the ground that they are recruiting centres for the next grade—the elementary vernacular schools—and the missionaries find them a valuable line of advance.

Above the bush school comes the elementary vernacular school with a four years' course. Practically all these schools receive government grants-in-aid and are regularly inspected. They are situated at mission stations and are under European control. Above this grade comes the intermediate school with a six years' course. As the boys are drawn from many tribes and speak different languages the medium of education is English.

The scheme briefly outlined above is a simple one. At each station where there are resident missionaries is an elementary vernacular school, and around it at varying distances there are a number of bush schools run by native teachers and visited from time to time by the missionary. The training centre from which the teaching staff is drawn is the intermediate school. In addition to this there is an industrial school with a trained technical teacher in charge.

In 1918 the Director of Education wrote to the C.M.S. asking for a school to be started in the Mongalla Province, and offering to open no school that could compete with it but to do all in his power to encourage the natives to send their boys to the school. The proposal, sent home by Archdeacon Shaw, was that a boarding school should be started for sons of the chiefs near Rejaf on similar lines to the schools at Budo and Ng'ora.

Out of this proposal there has developed the intermediate school at Juba. It would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of this school. The missionaries are few in number, but they have in their care fifty-two boys drawn from twelve different tribes and speaking as many languages. They are winning boys from areas where no work is being carried on, and these are spreading the gospel story. In 1923 the first baptisms in the school took place.

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

The training is thorough and practical. The boys are taught carpentry and many forms of social service. They gave valuable help in medical work in 1925 during an outbreak of dysentery, assisting at the injections and thus learning the value of medical science. Others have been trained as clerks in government service and in the last few years an increasing number have come forward for baptism.

In this connexion it should be remembered that in the Southern Sudan there is no educational system except that of the mission schools. The Government, as it develops its organization through these pagan tribes, requires an increasing number of young men for office work. The source of supply is twofold. Men may be drawn from the north where all are Moslems, and if employed in pagan areas they would be an Islamic influence. On the other hand, if men are drawn from a Christian school they would be witnessing to the Gospel, and thus the knowledge of Christ would spread into many areas far beyond the actual missionary districts.

No section of the British Empire has shown a greater sense of trusteeship in regard to the native races than has the Sudan administration. The missionaries commenced their work in early days and what education there was among the tribes was carried on by them. It was inevitable that sooner or later the Government would develop a "concern" for the education of the pagans of the Sudan. The financial help given to the high school was a friendly gesture, but the policy to be adopted had yet to be worked out.

The Phelps-Stokes Commissions to West and East Africa marked a turning-point in the policy of native education, and the Governments in Africa responded heartily to the proposal that education should be co-operative, carried on through the missions with financial help from Governments. The old idea that the African need not be educated was finally abandoned. The future of Africa depended to a large extent upon its people being given the right kind of education, and the missions were afforded a unique opportunity when Governments offered to work through them. The C.M.S. more than any other British society was involved in this scheme. The



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

alternative was secular education—a method to be avoided at all costs.

The standard of education is mainly of the elementary vernacular type, and exactly the sort of education that a mission would wish to give to a primitive people emerging from the long night of pagan superstition into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Mission policy and government policy in this coincide, and there is thus afforded to missions an opportunity of a rapid expansion and growth that is not superficial but permanent, and based upon the solid foundations of character building. The new schools to be opened are therefore much more than an increase of facilities for education. They are real contributions to Church building and are steps towards the day when a Sudan Church shall be part of a one great African Church.

The Sudanese have a capacity to achieve national advance. Their manly and independent qualities mark them out for greater things in days to come. Development is in the air. The Sudan is leaping into new life every day and the question before us is this: Can the future new life be Christian life? Can the onward march of civilization be paralleled by a corresponding growth of the Church? The answer depends not only upon advance but upon the principles upon which advance is made.

Whatever may be said of the weakness or failure of missions in Africa all are agreed that the missionaries are second to none in their desire for the uplift of these primitive people. Apart from other considerations their work has been a tremendous asset to western civilization. They have given themselves in altruistic service for the good of others. They have not been content merely to write and talk about Africa's needs. They have literally gone out to places where diseases raged, heat burned, and famine was abroad. They have put into practice the principle that humanity is the primary consideration in good government. They have been the interpreters of native languages and customs. They have known as no others the conditions in African homes, the lot of the women in the tribes. They have stood for healthful

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

recreation in contrast to the demoralizing customs around them. They have striven, in an uphill fight with slender resources, to impart the influences of education and to open the door to the discoveries of civilization. They have been inspired with high ideals, great faith, and great truths, and they have produced results that are profoundly affecting the whole of Africa to-day. It was therefore to the missionaries that Governments turned in an effort to fulfil their trusteeship of the child races.

The Government of the Sudan spent some years in a survey of the problem and the new policy of co-operation with missions was announced formally at the Rejaf Language Conference held in 1927. It had been stated officially in 1925 that "a comprehensive scheme of education in co-operation with the missionary societies is under consideration."

A landmark in government policy was therefore registered in 1927 when the Rejaf Language Conference was held. This gathering was composed of officials, language experts, and missionaries, and it was there stated that "it is the policy of the Sudan Government that English should as soon as possible become the language of official correspondence in the Southern Sudan, and steps are being taken to put this into effect as circumstances permit." It was decided that Roman characters should be used for writing and that Arabic should be replaced by English "as the language for correspondence and accounts in government offices." Arabic is as much a foreign language as English in the pagan areas and there is no *lingua franca* throughout the Southern Sudan.

The Governor-General in a message to the Conference said: "I look upon this Conference as a significant sign of that spirit of co-operation between Government and missions which I believe to be a definite result of the recommendation made in 1924." This recommendation was given by the Director of Education who advised the Government to work in education through the missionary societies.

Here was a challenge to the C.M.S. Under the policy of co-operation there were to be no restrictions whatever upon religious teaching in pagan areas, and the offer of financial

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

assistance in education was not in any way to interfere with the evangelistic work of the missionaries. They were free to teach the Christian faith as heretofore. When one remembers that in a pagan area like this the greatest evangelistic opportunities come through the schools where the boys, learning to read, can be brought under Christian influence from the first, it will be realized how great is the opportunity before the Society if the right men can be found for the work.

In the following year (1928) the writer was invited by the Government to visit the Sudan to discuss this new situation. Government grants to C.M.S. at that time amounted to £1950 and it was proposed that two new centres should be opened, one on the Uganda border, called Kajo Kaji, and the other in the Dinka area to the north, called Rumbek. The C.M.S. was asked to develop work in these two places at once. Both were untouched pagan districts. Both were asking for schools. Both were being brought commercially under European influence through the development of cotton growing, and both held out a promising field for missionary evangelization. How could the C.M.S. advance, incur extra expenditure, send out four men recruits, and undertake new work at a time of financial stringency? Every aspect of the situation showed how urgent was the call. The open door lay before us. Dare we hold back and say that it could not be done? Ways and means were carefully considered and the Government agreed to raise their grants if we would go forward.

The total sum offered to us was £3600, nearly double our previous grant. This from a financial point of view made our way clear, and the Society decided to accept the very generous offer of help from Government and to go forward.

A new situation, I said, had arisen. I venture to think it is unique in the history of missions. The fields that for years Archdeacon Shaw has wanted to enter are now made accessible. Bishop Gwynne, who was present throughout the Conference with Government, said: "This is a most wonderful answer to prayer. God is in this and we must go forward."

In order to give a complete sketch of educational development

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

I have traced the story of the schools through to the present day. We must now retrace our steps to follow out another line of advance. It will be remembered that one of the original party was a doctor. Unfortunately ill-health compelled him to retire from the Southern Sudan and the Mission was left for the next twenty years without a doctor. This was not due to any policy of the Society in regard to the Mission, but was simply owing to the small number of doctors who were offering for missionary service and the necessity of staffing existing hospitals. Some of the missionaries before sailing undertook a course of medical training at Livingstone College, and although they were not qualified doctors they could not shut their eyes to the appeal of suffering. Simple dispensaries were opened in each station and people came from far and near for treatment. A little knowledge is said to be a dangerous thing, but in this case the benefits more than justified the risks. In one year nearly 7000 patients passed through the dispensary at Malek, and in Yambio the numbers for the same period were 10,000. Can we recapture the scene? A clearing near the river fringed by forest, a blazing hot day, a missionary steps out of his bungalow and immediately there is a buzz of excitement. Sick and suffering folk had been squatting on the ground with their friends, others were just emerging from the forest, spears were waving in the air, for the natives never travel without their weapons for fear of wild animals. The dispensary door is opened and one by one the patients are admitted. Their faith in the missionary is unbounded and they eagerly pour out their troubles. Years of service have borne fruit and no longer has the missionary to do all the evangelistic work. The Christians of the station mix among the patients and teaching soon begins. Even those being prepared for baptism lend a hand and pass on what they have learned. Those who have been to school read the gospel stories, and although the number of patients is large every one who comes to the dispensary hears something of the love of God, some for the first time.

These dispensaries were maintained for twenty years. It was no easy task for the missionary, but he held on to his

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

medical work, hoping every year that a doctor would be sent out. Each year came the report: "No doctor available." What volumes might be written of those years, accounts of suffering that no unqualified man could relieve, tales of joyful triumph when the sick were restored to health!

In 1921 the long looked for recruit was found, and a new forward movement was initiated when Dr. and Mrs. Fraser reached the Sudan. The question of location came up. Each of the stations would have shouted for joy could they have had a medical man located to them, but the little band surveyed the field, there was much land still to be possessed, and so they each agreed to carry on the dispensaries as before and to ask the doctor to break new ground. Dr. and Mrs. Fraser were located to one of the hitherto unreached tribes called the Moru, whose language none of the missionaries knew.

The Moru Country lies about a thousand miles south of Khartoum and a hundred miles west of Mongalla, right in the heart of Africa. Dr. Fraser chose as his centre an important village called Lui. He arrived with a plentiful supply of drugs and surgical appliances, but the only equipment he possessed for building a new station was less than a dozen spades, six hatchets, one small hammer, and a hand-saw. The task before him was the erection of a missionary's house, a hospital, a school, and other buildings, and, in the western meaning of the word, not a builder was in sight! Nothing daunted, he set to work to provide accommodation by erecting huts of native wattle and daub. Commenting on this Dr. Fraser says: "Thus we were able at the very beginning to do the work that mattered instead of wasting time and energy on the erection of expensive and imposing buildings. Moreover, if any one wants to make the Africans thoroughly miserable all that is required is to herd them in a large and costly ward."

The work was not made easier by the fact that neither the doctor nor his wife knew a word of the language. A few sentences were soon learned, but the sympathetic touch of the human hand on the throbbing abscess or ugly sore proved more effective than the most eloquent sermons. Cases requiring major operations soon began to come in and at first

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

the dining table had to be requisitioned for the purpose. Operations had to be performed in the open before a crowd of mystified people. One can imagine the speechless wonder of the tribe as they witnessed deep incisions of the knife yet without pain.

The spirit of service so sincerely manifested by the doctor and his wife soon won the day and the people took them to their hearts. The language was acquired word by word and reduced to writing, and with the medical work there commenced definite evangelism. One bright lad came out and declared himself a Christian. His quiet, consistent life attracted others until an earnest band of seekers were under regular instruction. This lad is now the hospital anæsthetist and a great help to the doctor.

The problem facing the medical missionary in the Sudan is not only the diseases that are prevalent such as smallpox, spotted fever, and leprosy, but also the presence and power of the witch doctor. He is found in every village and is a sinister figure who sells malign fetishes and charms. To him comes the seeker for vengeance, the woman spurned by her husband, the sick in body and mind; and he pretends to work cures. He stands to-day as the greatest opponent to medical missionary service throughout the Sudan.

In spite of opposition from witch doctors, three mud buildings were erected at Lui by hundreds of willing hands, a house, a hospital, and a school. The early efforts at building provided what could only be a temporary home; but they served the purpose, and now there are more desirable and permanent buildings, in the erection of which the doctor took his share in carpentry and brickmaking.

The training of a hospital staff was the next problem and male nurses were taught with infinite patience until to-day, when they have become capable and trustworthy, they actually carry out minor surgical treatment. For some years the doctor and his wife were alone at their station. During that time a hospital grew up that spread life and healing throughout a wide area and won the admiration of every government official who saw it.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

In the government report on the administration of the Sudan for 1925 this work is mentioned. "At Lui, in the Moru Country," says the Governor-General, "where work was only started in 1921, there is now a hospital with an average daily attendance of ninety-eight, a school of fifty-one boys, a church with a congregation of 400, and a permanent hospital in process of erection."

In addition to ordinary medical work Mrs. Fraser has carried on a valuable child-welfare centre which has saved many lives and has introduced into the home life of the people new ideas of motherhood and hygiene.

As we look at the Sudan with all its problems and suffering, sickness and ignorance, we see how impossible it is to build up the Church without the introduction of a new yet truly African home life, or without the example of loving care for the body as well as the soul. The cheapness of human life in a pagan country is one of the greatest obstacles to true growth, and medical missions create in the minds of these simple people a new sense of the value of life. Service for others that is disinterested does not spring up of its own accord; it has to be taught by living example, and the Church has to learn that the spirit of Christ is the spirit of self-sacrificing love and service for all. Medical mission policy is therefore something much bigger than merely an opportunity for evangelism, great as this is. It is the introduction into the new Christian life of the community of entirely different aims, cleansed ideals, and a purpose in life that is not the inherent one of self. Without this no Church can grow strong and no people can learn the greatness of the Gospel committed in trust to it. There are not lacking signs that the example of the missionaries in medical service is finding a fruitful response among the Sudanese. They are learning of a Gospel that is for the whole man and that must permeate every department of life.

The Governor-General's statement that at Lui there is a congregation of 400 will help us to realize the wonderful progress made in evangelism, and this is true not only of Lui but also of all the other stations. The first convert to be baptized in the Mission was in 1916, just ten years after the

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

opening of the work, and it was not until 1920 that the first confirmation service was held. Beautiful African churches have been built at each of the stations, and slowly a Church of the Sudan is being formed from the wild tribes of the south.

The Diocese of Egypt and the Sudan stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the borders of Uganda, and Bishop Gwynne found it impossible to cope with all the claims of so vast an area. The growing Church in the south required episcopal supervision, but the most the Bishop was able to do was to pay a visit every two years. Obviously the time had come to carve out a new diocese, and this was done by adding the pagan areas of the Sudan to the eastern half of the Uganda Diocese. The Upper Nile Diocese was thus formed, leaving the Egypt and Sudan Diocese within the Moslem area. Bishop Kitching was consecrated on June 29, 1926, as the first Bishop of the Upper Nile Diocese. Had any bishop ever to face more varied conditions and conflicting problems? In the Uganda section, known as the Elgon Mission, the Christian community numbers over 60,000 and in one year there were 8766 baptisms. The pupils in the schools number 56,280 and form fifteen per cent of the whole school attendance of C.M.S. schools all over the world.

In the Southern Sudan part of the diocese the work is, as we have seen, primitive and pioneer, and whole areas are still entirely untouched by any Christian influence at all.

Whatever be the methods adopted by a missionary society, whether educational, medical, or evangelistic, the success or failure of the work depends upon the personality of the missionary, and it may help us to understand the human problem that lies behind every effort if we look for a moment at one of the men who gave his life gladly for the Sudan.

In 1898 I was helping in some evangelistic work at Levenshulme, near Manchester. One night we held an open-air meeting and Willie Haddow was present. Our message may have been crudely worded, for we were all youngsters, but Haddow, who was training to be an engineer, made his decision for Christ that night. His conversion wrought a veritable revolution in his life, and from then onwards he lived



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

for the extension of the Kingdom of God. A number of us were members of a cycling club and Haddow joined us. We used to cycle out on Saturday afternoons, for we were all in business offices in those days, and hold open-air meetings in some village in Cheshire or Derbyshire. We all wanted to be foreign missionaries, and round the teatable the latest news from different parts of the world was discussed. The band gradually scattered, one going to India, another to Egypt, while some carried on the work in England. Haddow offered to the C.M.S. and was trained at Islington. In 1913 he sailed for the Southern Sudan. At Shambe on the Nile he was joined by Archdeacon Shaw, and together they began the long trek of three hundred miles to Yambio. This station had been opened about a year when Haddow arrived. The Rev. E. C. Gore was alone during that time and great was his joy when a colleague arrived. Together they laboured for the evangelization of the Azande people.

In 1915 Haddow had an experience he never forgot. He was sitting one evening reading letters from home when he became conscious of some one standing near him. Looking round he saw four Azande boys who said: "God is affecting us. We want to follow Jesus and forsake heathenism for ever." The lads then told of their desire to follow Christ. Very simply they answered questions and their sincerity was obvious. Just as the Holy Spirit years before had led Haddow himself from darkness to light so here in the heart of pagan Africa there were the same unmistakable signs of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Christ Who could save from sin a young engineer in Manchester was the same Christ in the Azande tribe, and these lads came out boldly as Christians, and their conversion proved to be the firstfruits of a rich harvest.

After a brief visit to England in 1917 Haddow returned to the Sudan and took up work once more in Yambio. He was to have been joined by a colleague from Lau, but a rebellion broke out and the road was blocked, so these two men, 260 miles apart, had to sit tight and wait for the clouds to lift. We often speak of the loneliness of country clergy in England,

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

but what of a man in the heart of Africa, surrounded by paganism, a war in progress not very far away, the haunting roar of wild animals at night? It was not the quiet isolation in which one can withdraw into spiritual meditation, but a loneliness where a man feels he is surrounded by the powers of evil and darkness. The deadening atmosphere of heathenism oppressed his soul, and in those days faith in the living Christ was tested to its foundations. Conflict was met by a deep prayer life, and Haddow had the joy of seeing the power of God in the lives of some of the young men. One Sunday morning a man rose in the congregation. Very nervously he walked up the aisle and turning to the people said: "The Holy Spirit has spoken to me. I know it. I cannot stand it any longer. I have sinned. I know God's Word is true. I am different inside and I want you all to know it. I am full of joy. All of you, O come to Jesus Christ." The sermon had not yet been preached. There was nothing of emotional excitement, only the "still small voice" of the Spirit of God leading a soul into the radiance of abundant life in Christ.

Any one who has tried to maintain his spiritual life in such surroundings as these with the constant buzz of the mosquitoes, the dirt and repulsiveness of much in the daily life of the people, the entirely uncongenial environment, will know how difficult it is. The tendency is for the little things to play upon the nerves and for the routine of work to "get on top" of the worker. But Haddow found in his solitude the way through his environment to life in Christ. It was not by throwing off the fettering difficulties, but by drawing upon God's resources for life as he had to face it. Writing about this time he said: "It is there [in the African bush] that the invisible becomes visible, it is there the still voice is heard and the being of man receives a divine impulse and glows with the fire of God. Such lonely secret places have been the very gate of heaven."

In 1921 Haddow took up his new work at Maridi, an outstation of Yambio. Here he had to begin again at the beginning, and we find him maintaining his cheery good

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

humour while digging wells and building huts. For two years he toiled in an effort to establish the work and he was able to report that about eighty people were coming to the services and forty boys were attending school. His untiring energy never seemed to flag, but the strain of these years began to tell. He had a severe attack of dysentery and in his letters home in 1923 there is an intense and an appealing note. He wrote begging others to come out and join him. Wistfully he looked at England with its great army of Christian workers. Did no one care for Africa? His last circular letter was an appeal for recruits.

Early in 1924 Dr. Fraser at Lui received a pencilled note from Haddow saying he was down with "blackwater." Dr. Fraser was himself ill with malaria, but he rushed off on his motor cycle to the aid of his friend. His fever getting worse, the doctor found he could no longer control the machine, so abandoning it he was carried the rest of the journey by porters in relays night and day. He arrived at Maridi on January 30, four days after Haddow's death.

Alone in the heart of Africa, with no white man near, he passed into the Master's presence. His life had been literally blazed out for God. It was a great adventure, and he never regretted having given himself for the Sudan. It was through such men as Haddow that this Mission held on through disaster and won a place for the Gospel among those who were held fast in all the degradations of heathenism.

It is a far cry from 1906 when the *Endeavour* first moored alongside a high bank with thick scrub. Tall negroes then looked on with surprise as the ground was cleared and the small tents erected. Bishop Gwynne tells how "the headman asked why they had come, were they Government? No. Were they traders? No. They had come to make friends with them, to learn their language, to teach them of God, to lift them up to a higher state of civilization. "We have heard that before," said the native spokesman. "The Arabs used to make promises like these to win our confidence and suddenly one night they would bring out their guns, surround our villages, kill our old people and carry the rest into slavery."

## PAGAN TRIBES AND THE GOSPEL

The only answer to that was : " Give us your confidence and you shall see."<sup>1</sup>

That was the reception the little party received. The going was heavy. The place swarmed with mosquitoes, robberies were frequent, and wild beasts prowled round at night and took toll of their sheep. One after another the missionaries were attacked by malaria and friendly advisers recommended them to give in and go home. The long hours spent in mastering a language never before reduced to writing had little of romance in them. In the schools they taught the natives to read, to make bricks, to work in the garden and to grow things they had never seen before. They were taught to use tools, to play football, and, above all, they were taught of the redeeming love of Christ.

Year after year the missionaries battled on against tremendous odds, and in the past twenty-three years seven mission stations have been established. An African Church in the Sudan is now in being, and the men who refused to admit defeat have won a permanent place for the Gospel in the life of the Sudan and an abiding affection in the hearts of the people. This chapter has been the story of consolidation, but it would be a mistake to imagine that the battle is won. Twenty odd years of labour have only touched the smallest fringe of the problem. An open door lies before us and each year seems to add to the responsibility. And now we are summoned once more to advance.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Gwynne in the *Empire Review*, quoted in *Public Opinion*, January 11, 1924.

## CHAPTER VII

### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

IN seeking to see the Sudan in the larger setting of African life as a whole and of missionary policy for the continent, I took down from my shelves a book published in 1834 entitled *Africa Described*. In the chapter on the Sudan I read: "Respecting the history of this country [the Sudan] in former times we are left entirely in the dark; for except a few idle traditions nothing has been handed down; and ancient as the country is, little more is known even at the present day."

I turn from this picture of an unknown, unexplored, and undeveloped country to an article in *Public Opinion* in 1925. It is quoted from the *Westminster Gazette*, and here I read:—

Lancashire must have from somewhere 1,600,000,000 lbs. of raw cotton or her 57,000,000 spindles will cease to spin, and a hundred British industries will be imperilled. Who shall produce this? None of this can be grown by white labour, and the white immigrants can only produce provided they can get control of two things—native land and coloured labour. For the first time in history the people of these territories are waking up to the meaning of the struggle and are demonstrating that they can produce every kind of raw material at a lower price and in greater quantity than under white-owned plantation system. It is no longer possible to assert that the coloured man is only capable up to a point. He is proving that he is capable up to any point, provided that he is properly assisted. Twenty years ago Uganda could only grow £236 worth of cotton. Even ten years ago the Uganda natives could only with difficulty produce £300,000, therefore why bother about Uganda! The war over, the Baganda and other kindred tribes poured into Lancashire first £1,209,000 worth of raw cotton and then leapt forward again to £3,000,000 worth. . . . Peasant proprietorship again!

These two quotations, the one before the opening up of Africa, and the other in modern times, will serve to show what has happened in Africa within the past one hundred years. It will be necessary to go back to the first efforts of the

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

C.M.S. to evangelize East and Central Africa, if we are to understand the significant position of the Sudan in any mission policy.

In 1851, when the interior of Africa was still unexplored, Henry Venn laid down the dictum that "if Africa is to be penetrated by European missionaries, it must be from the East Coast." At that time only two men, Krapf and Rebmann, had attempted to reach the interior from the eastern side. Krapf and his wife arrived in Mombasa in 1844, and Rebmann two years later. Alone and in great weakness these men entered upon one of the greatest tasks ever faced by the Church, praying for strength to hold on "until at least one soul should be saved." A lonely grave, that of Mrs. Krapf, at Frere Town, to-day marks the first occupation of East Africa by the C.M.S.

It was a campaign without an army, an effort with no *human* possibility of success, a venture of faith where two men relied solely upon the work of the Holy Spirit. They were the right type of men, wholly dedicated to their great commission, and they began in a small way, with little or no backing. Heroic souls! How they must rejoice to-day to see the growth of the tree they planted, for there are over 290 C.M.S. missionaries in East and Central Africa. Then there were no converts. Now there are 300,000 church adherents and 106 African clergy. Then one place, Mombasa, was occupied. To-day there are growing and expanding Missions in Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Ruanda, and the Sudan.

The first convert in East Africa was a poor black cripple. Krapf, breathing the true missionary spirit, says: "My poor cripple devoured the words as they fell from my lips, and I saw that they made an impression upon him, and felt happy indeed, for it is at moments like these that one feels the importance of the missionary calling. A missionary who feels the working of the Spirit within him, and is upheld in its manifestation to others is the happiest being upon earth." Such were the men who toiled day and night for the redemption of an unknown people and the missionary occupation of an unknown and unexplored land.

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

Krapf walked one day to the top of a hill and spent some hours in prayer. That day was one of vision and faith. As he looked out across the plain towards the interior he deliberately accepted on behalf of the Church the challenge of a pagan stronghold. Writing about it he said: "In the full reliance upon the promises of God I took possession of this pagan land for the militant Church of Christ." This, remember, at a time when the sources of the Nile were unknown and the lakes of Central Africa were a rumour. Was this the dream of a mere enthusiast or the sober calculation of a wise and far-seeing man of God? Listen again to a letter sent to the C.M.S. in the later years of his life: "The idea of a chain of mission stations will yet be taken up by successive generations and carried out, for the idea is always conceived tens of years before the deed comes to pass. *This idea I bequeath to every missionary coming to East Africa.*"

Vision and planning went hand in hand. The legacy of Krapf was never forgotten. Livingstone, Stanley, Mackay, and others blazed a trail and the vanguard of the Church appeared in Uganda. Events moved rapidly. The sources of the Nile had been discovered, and through communication was established between Cairo and the heart of Africa. The Southern Sudan for the first time was explored, and the blanks on the map of the interior were filled in with names which have become household words in missionary circles.

Livingstone had been dead but five weeks when the slave treaty was signed in 1873, and these two events, the signing of the treaty and the death of the great explorer, inaugurated a new movement in Africa. The London Missionary Society founded their work in Tanganyika, the Scottish Church occupied for Christ the territory around Lake Nyassa. Missionary interest was centred in East Africa, and the first links in Krapf's chain were forged. The C.M.S. pushed ahead into Uganda and was grimly holding on at the court of Mwanga.

General Gordon was in the Sudan fighting the slave trade and establishing contacts with Uganda. His appeal to the C.M.S. in 1878 was a significant step. Explorers, statesmen, and missionaries were agreed that Christ was the one hope of

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Africa. It was many years before the Sudan link in the chain could be forged. It had to be hammered out on the anvil of pagan sufferings and in the furnace of affliction. In the meantime the C.M.S. was carrying on its freed slaves' home in Frere Town. It was built close to Mrs. Krapf's grave, and in 1885, when a fresh accession of slaves were suddenly handed over to the home, it was the freed slaves of ten years before, now baptized and earnest Christians, who fed, clothed, and taught their brothers just liberated.

While the Church was thus forging ahead, Europe was awakening to the commercial and political value of Africa, and the scramble for Africa commenced. Germany claimed protectorate rights over part of East Africa. British influence around Mombasa and up through Uganda was growing, and the Berlin Congress of 1884-85 literally partitioned Africa among the powers of Europe. The group of statesmen who met in Berlin altered the destinies of a continent, drew Africa into western politics, threw open the black races to the commerce, civilization, education, and culture of Europe, and changed a vast area of the world from being a separated and isolated country to becoming a land of progress where every scientific discovery and invention was to be applied to make the continent yield up to the West its treasures of raw material and resources. Such a change could not be without serious significance to the missionary enterprise nor without its influence upon the policy to be developed.

The Society has always taken its stand upon the power of Christ personally to save men from sin, and because men in Europe believed and had experienced this power they had gone forth in the conviction that only a power outside human nature, a power divine, could ever lift up the sunken lives of Africa. The spiritual forces of the Christian faith were to be applied to the problems of paganism. The basis of all C.M.S. policy in Africa was and is to-day the salvation of Africans through the Cross.

Let us think then of the problem of bringing Christ in His love and power into the lives of men who were wholly illiterate, enslaved by superstition and fear, and many of whom had never



## THE CHANGING SUDAN

previously seen a white man. The simplest explanation was complex and difficult to such a race. The problem became greater through the opening up of Africa. The unsophisticated tribes saw a new world before them. The temptation was simply to imitate the white man. Two things emerged as essential. The objective of evangelism was the building up of a strong, self-supporting, witnessing Church. To accomplish this aim education became a vital necessity. It was soon seen that to baptize men and women who could not read even the gospel story was to admit people into the Church who could not feed their own souls, but who would always depend upon others. The conditions of growth and development of spiritual life demanded that as far as possible the young Church as it grew up should be a literate Church. Young Africans who could not read the word of God for themselves became a prey to the fear of the witch doctors and the terrors of evil spirits. To this situation must be added the fact that these people were receiving an awakening through every white person they met.

The impact of western civilization tended to sweep away tribal loyalties, customs, and heritage that had counted for much in African life. To sweep all this away by the force of materialism and a successful commerce might change the habits of the people, but it could not change the heart.

Something more than commercial civilization was required. The best in African life had to be preserved if the Church of the future was to be thoroughly African and not simply a cheap imitation of Europe. The building up of character in the African is a long process, and divine grace in the redemption of a pagan people works through a long process by which old things pass away, evil customs disappear, ingrained habits are corrected, and fear of evil spirits is overcome. In England Christian parents are very particular to select schools where their children will receive not simply instruction but an education which will lay the foundations of solid character. This is equally true for Africa, and converts and their families, if they are to be built up into the Body of Christ, require far more teaching than preaching. Education, therefore,

has from the outset occupied a large place in missionary policy.

The occupation of Uganda and the conversion of large numbers of pagans through definite evangelism made the problem of building the Church an imperative necessity if subsequent disaster were to be avoided.

Viewed to-day the Missions in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika do not present a completed picture but different stages in the developments of spiritual life. There are tragic failures and wonderful triumphs in all these Missions, and as the Church grows there is an increasing demand for education, social service through hospital and welfare centres, the training of leaders, and the spirit of true evangelism by which the growing Church will maintain its spiritual glow by a living witness to the Gospel.

We have already seen how the Sudan is following the lead given by Uganda in growing cotton. In 1900 the changes we now see before us as achievements of civilization seemed remote and improbable. It is in looking forward into the next fifty years that we shall catch the significance of the present opportunity. The Sennar Dam and the Cotton Syndicate in the north, the efforts of pagan tribes to grow cotton in the south, the scheme for canalization and the drainage of the swamps, the opening up of motor roads, and the education of the Sudanese all point to more startling developments than any that have hitherto taken place. The Sudan is no isolated area of Africa but is an integral part of Central African life and policy. In political and commercial matters it is inter-related with Uganda, Egypt, and all the surrounding countries, and in missionary policy it has its place in a great scheme for the evangelization of the whole of Central Africa.

If we carry a step farther the vision Krapf gave us of a chain of mission stations we shall see that it involves a great African Church stretching right across the continent, and spreading out north and south until it is linked on to Egypt on the one hand and South Africa on the other. In this the Sudan must play an important part. We have seen how the River Nile flows through C.M.S. history, and how this mighty water-

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

way is a strategic line of development for commerce and Islam as well as for Christianity. Moslem influence is spreading south and Christian missions are expanding north. The meeting place and the battle ground to-day is the Sudan. Christianity must either win the pagans of the Sudan for Christ and through them establish a strong witnessing Church, or confess to failure in the face of Moslem aggression.

The swamps of the Bahr el Ghazel Province are a fair illustration of life in the Sudan under pagan superstition and Moslem rule. The swamps have made growth and development impossible. They have been the breeding place of disease and their appearance is a picture of ruinous despair. The river on the other hand gives us the illustration of life abounding and overflowing. The Gospel established at the sources of the Nile is like a river of life flowing through Africa. The Sudan is a critical point in missionary policy to-day and advance is the only possible way to save the situation. What then is our policy for the Southern Sudan ?

In the preceding chapters we have traced the growth of the Sudan Mission and we have seen how development has been determined by local conditions. But a policy of work is necessary which takes into account both the aims of the Mission and the environment in which it is at work. Everything depends upon the foundations laid, upon the application of the Christian faith to native character and custom. "Christianity aims at creating new personality in men and women—a dynamic motive, a renewed will, a higher sense of responsibility towards God and men. It aims at the conversion of individuals and the transformation of society, the building up of nations on the foundation of God's law. This is not to be accomplished in a day nor in a generation."<sup>1</sup>

The Sudanese must not be denationalized in the presentation of the Faith, and the Church of the future must be African, not British. The idea that everything in pagan areas is bad cannot be defended, and the missionaries carry a grave responsibility for the preservation of what is best in African life. African music, purified of its pagan

<sup>1</sup>*The Golden Stool.* E. W. Smith, p. 250.

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

associations, needs to be adapted to Christian worship, and the whole expression of Christianity must be so related to native thought that the African can feel at home in his new faith as soon as possible. However much this point is watched, the fact remains that the conversion of a pagan to Christianity involves a veritable revolution in his life, affecting his social outlook and his relations to the people of his tribe.

A mission must be an integrating factor in Sudanese life in the midst of many growing influences which will make for disintegration. This means that missionary work must be social, as well as individual. The convert must maintain both his place and his influence within the tribe after conversion. Up to recent times the Sudanese recreations have been hunting game and tribal warfare. The killing of game is now restricted and tribal wars are forbidden, and some form of African recreation has to be found. Football and other European games are played, but there are African games also to be developed. The Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements have much in them that can be adapted to the Sudan, and there is room for a wide extension in this direction among both boys and girls. Music is another illustration of the same need. Too often we have introduced our western hymn tunes as the right and proper method of divine worship, but the Africans have a talent for music which is distinctly their own, and to impose our ideas of music upon them is to separate them from much that is dear to them. To adapt the tunes of the land to the Christian worship makes the native feel that this faith is part of the life he knows and not yet another foreign innovation.

In all this work education has a vital contribution to make. The question before the world is no longer whether Africans shall be educated or not, but what type of education shall be given to them. The Sudanese have to be fitted for a new environment. Neither the Government nor the missions can afford to leave the Sudanese uneducated.

Missionaries regard education as an integral part of their work, but this enormous task is beyond the powers of all the

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

combined resources of missionary societies, and the Government decision to work through missions has come at a critical juncture in the life of the Society. The disintegrating factors in native life are as much a problem to Government as to missions. Neither wants to see the Sudanese Europeanized, but all want them to be civilized and the two terms are by no means synonymous. Ultimately, as the Sudan becomes educated, it will build anew its own culture. This goal may be a long way off but every cheap imitation of the West will retard its attainment. The policy to-day is through the presentation of the Christian message to make these people sound Christians and yet to keep them true Africans. The schools are the greatest evangelistic agency in the Mission, the Government therefore has placed before us an opportunity unique, timely, and urgent.

North of the Dinka area between Rumbek and the northern bend of the Bahr el Ghazel lies the swamp area. In it there are living about 60,000 people of the Nuer tribe. They are all within the C.M.S. sphere and they are entirely unreached and unevangelized. At present no advance is possible as there has been tribal warfare recently through the Nuers raiding the Dinka Country. Last year a British official lost his life at the hands of the Nuers, and this part of the country is still the despair of the officials.

It is hoped that in a year or two the way will be open for advance. These tribes are still savages and quite uncivilized. Government administration, though perfectly splendid, has failed to civilize them. Can the Gospel do for them what nothing else can?

Is it not possible to test once again the power and the love of God in this apparently impossible field? It is no more hopeless than was the situation in Uganda when Mackay arrived, and the missionaries are actuated by the same motives and inspired by the same ideals as in earlier days. Faith says it can be done. Caution bids us wait. But dare we wait? The savage tribes are growing cotton. They are in touch at last with western life and they are exposed to all the influences of Islam. The merchant does not obey the

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

demands of "safety first" when he makes his way through swamp and lagoon to buy his cotton. Shall it be said that the Church is afraid to tackle the problem because it is difficult and possibly dangerous? The climate is too unhealthy for the permanent residence of white people, though the proposed drainage scheme may alter all this. What is proposed is that the C.M.S., as soon as the way opens, should buy a steamer fitted out for medical and evangelistic work. Two or three young men, one of whom should be a doctor, will be needed to itinerate at first through this area, establish friendly contacts with the people, and by loving service win their confidence. Thus the way will be prepared for permanent work.

As Nuers are converted and trained they will be able to carry the Gospel to parts where a missionary may not be able to go. Archdeacon Shaw has undertaken to visit this area in the near future and to report upon the possible openings. The Government would place no obstacle in our way but would, when the time came, give us every facility for such an undertaking. It is estimated that a steamer would cost at least £3000 to £4000, and this sum would have to be raised specially in England, together with a larger sum for additional missionary support and equipment.

Here then is a challenge. Not only for advance in two or three directions but for a piece of creative work which may alter the whole future life of a big area of the Sudan, a work which must react in further blessing upon the other African Missions, and a work that will consolidate the gains of Christianity in a strategic centre and lead to further growth of the Church of the future. Some day the urge towards Christian union will bring together the scattered units of the Christian army in Africa and unite them in a unity of purpose and aim for the complete conquest of the continent for the Kingdom of God. Africa was formerly a land of mystery and darkness. It is to-day the continent of all others that speaks of opportunity. When President Roosevelt travelled through Egypt and the Sudan he used the now famous words "get on or get out" in reference to British administration. These words

## THE CHANGING SUDAN

apply to missions to-day in the Sudan. We must either "get on or get out." To "get out" is to haul down the flag and to confess that the Church with all its wealth cannot rise to the call of God and has failed. To "get on" is to take up the challenge anew, and in the faith of those early missionaries to go forward in the name of our Master Who has committed to us the sacred trust of the evangelization of the world.

The great Sudan, which is about 2000 miles in length and 600 miles in breadth, and of which the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan referred to in this book forms a part, is one of the greatest unevangelized areas of the world. In the north there is no witness for the Gospel in Darfur, Kordofan, Kassala, and the Red Sea Province. These great areas are entirely untouched. In the south the missionary occupation is wholly inadequate for the task. God is giving us a unique opportunity now, but it will pass away if we fail in our trust. The Government is more than friendly and ready to co-operate in education. The people have shown a readiness to respond to the message, and the call comes from Africa: "Come over and help us."

One of the pioneer missionaries was sitting in the evening in his grass hut. He was watching the setting sun and writing a letter to Salisbury Square. Let his words suffice as the closing appeal of this little book. He says: "When I began this letter the sun was just setting in magnificent splendour. Suddenly I heard the wail of a woman go up to heaven from across the river. I asked my Dinka boy what it meant, and he told me that a man had died that morning, and his wife was now crying to Deng-dit. The wail continued for some time. I can only tell you that it stirred me more than any missionary meeting at home, and even now as I type this letter I look at my watch in front of me . . . and I see that at this very moment the great annual C.M.S. gathering is being held in the Albert Hall, and probably thousands are present. . . . Would that they all could hear that cry as I heard it—a cry for help, and what was worse, a cry for hope. They would not stay at home for another missionary meeting unless it was clearly God's will that they should."

## INDEX

- Abu Rouf, 39, 40.  
 Abu Simbal, temple of, 1, 2  
 Atbara, school at, 38, 41  
 Azande tribe, 53, 54  
  
 Baker, Sir Samuel, 11, 12  
  
 Cairo, 1, 6, 11, 13, 29, 46, 51, 78  
 Candace, Queen, 4  
 Church: 9, 71, 75, 80-83, 85;  
     early, 4-6  
 Communications, 22-24  
 Cook, Dr. A. R., 48-50  
 Cotton, 4, 20-22, 47, 66, 76, 81,  
     85  
  
 Darfur, 5, 6, 13, 34, 86  
 Dinka tribe, 49-52  
 Dongola, 4-6, 47  
  
 East Africa, C.M.S. in, 77-79  
 Education: 9, 27, 44, 45, 60,  
     80, 81, 83, 84; conscience  
     clause, 38, 39; girls', 24, 25,  
     38-43; Government and, 9,  
     24, 25, 38-41, 62-66, 86; in  
     Southern Sudan, 59-64  
  
 Elgon Mission, 71  
 El Obeid, 23, 25, 26  
  
 Fallata, the, 25, 26  
 Fraser, Dr., 55, 68, 74  
  
 Gairdner, Canon, 41  
 Gezireh, 4, 20-22  
 Gordon College, 25  
 Gordon, General: 3, 10-18, 33;  
     appeal to C.M.S., 13, 53, 78;  
     statue, 10, 24  
 Gore, Rev. E. C., 72  
 Government: appreciation of  
     women missionaries' work, 41;  
     & C.M.S., 13, 28-30, 33, 36-38,  
     52, 53, 62-66, 70, 78, 84-86;  
     Government—*continued.*  
     and education, 9, 24, 25, 38-41,  
     62-66. (*See also* "Reforms,  
     government.")  
     Gwynne, Bishop, 30, 36, 47, 51-  
     53, 59, 66, 71, 74, 75  
  
     Haddow, W., 71-74  
     Hall, Dr., 31, 33, 43; Mrs. Hall,  
     31, 32, 38, 43  
     Harpur, Dr., 30, 31  
     Hospitals: Lui, 68-70; Om-  
     durman, 33-38, 42, 43  
  
     Islam, 19 (*See* "Moslem.")  
  
     Jackson, Miss, 38  
     Juba, 62, 63  
  
     Kajo Kaji, 66  
     Khartoum, 1, 3-5, 7, 10-12, 14,  
     15, 20, 21, 23-26, 28, 30, 32,  
     33, 46, 48, 49; girls' school,  
     38, 39  
     Kitchener, Lord, 3, 18, 25, 28, 32  
     Kitching, Bishop, 71  
     Krapf, 50, 77, 78, 81  
  
     Lau, 53  
     Lavy, Dr., 34  
     Lloyd, Dr., 33, 34, 51  
     Lui, 55, 68-70, 74  
  
     Mahdi, the, 3, 13-15, 18, 21, 25,  
     29, 33, 40, 44  
     Makwar Dam, 4, 21  
     Malek, 67  
     Maridi, 73, 74  
     Meroe, 4  
     Mission, beginning of C.M.S.:  
     in Northern Sudan, 8, 9, 28-  
     31, 33, 42, 43, 45; in Southern  
     Sudan, 46-60  
     Moslem: aggression, 23, 24, 54,  
     55, 82; attitude to Christian-



## INDEX

### Moslem—*continued.*

ity, 26, 27, 31, 36, 37, 39, 42, 43; C.M.S. work among, 29, 30; invasion, 6, 7; rule, 7, 11, 15-19, 54; treaty with Sudanese, 6

Nile, as a highway, 7, 23  
Nuer tribe, 22, 84, 85

Ohrwalder, Father, appeal of, 17  
Omdurman: 15-19, 24, 25, 28, 31, 33, 43; girls' school, 38-41; hospital, 33-38, 42, 43

Port Sudan, 23, 24

Railways, 18, 21-23  
Rameses, statues of, 1-3, 10, 17  
Reforms, government, 9, 19, 21-25, 28, 29, 36, 81. (*See also* "Education, government.")  
Rejaf Language Conference, 65, 66  
Roman Catholic missionaries, 17, 18, 51  
Rumbek, 66, 84

Sahara, 3, 4, 30, 31  
Scamell, Mr. & Mrs., 58  
Scriptures, translation of, 51, 59, 60

Shaw, Archdn. A., 52-54, 62, 66  
Slavery, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11-13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 25, 78

Stones, Dr., 54

Sudan: area & population, 3, 4, 86; communications, 22-24; history, 2, 3, 5-7, 11-19, 76; meaning of name, 6; people, 20, 22, 45, 47, 49, 50, 53; physical features, 4, 6, 7, 47; trade, 25

Treaty, Moslem-Sudanese, 6; slave, 78

United Presbyterian Church of America, 40, 41  
Upper Nile Diocese, 71

Wad Medani, 20, 38, 41  
Wingate, Sir R., 52  
Women, 27, 41, 42, 49  
Worsley, Dr., 34

Yambio, 53, 67, 72