

and the rebellion collapsed. Arabi and his chief supporters were captured and exiled to Ceylon, and the Khedive was replaced on his throne. But an English army of occupation remained in Egypt, though Gladstone promised the French and the Sultan that they should be removed when order and good government were restored—a most unwise pledge.

Circumstances, however, were too strong for the Liberal cabinet, or the promise would probably have been fulfilled.

But even before Arabi's rise, a rebellion had broken out in the Egyptian provinces in the Soudan. A fanatic from Dongola, named Mohammed Ahmed, had put himself at the

Rise of the
Mahdi—
Abandon-
ment of the
Soudan.

head of the Arab tribes of the south, who were groaning under the bitter oppression of their Egyptian taskmasters. He proclaimed himself to be the *Mahdi*, the prophet whom all Mussulmans expect to appear just before the Last Judgment, and announced that he was the destined conqueror of the world. His first successes caused the whole Soudan to rally round him, and his "dervishes" drove the Egyptian troops into their fortresses. To stay his progress, General Hicks was sent to Khartoum with a raw native force, hastily raised from the wreck of Arabi's army. But as he marched towards Kordofan Hicks was surrounded and cut to pieces with the whole of his host (October 3, 1883). Gladstone then determined to abandon the Soudan, believing that the dervishes were an oppressed population struggling for a not-undeserved freedom, and not seeing that they were desperate fanatics bent on the conquest of the whole world, and set on slaying every one who refused to acknowledge their Mahdi.

To withdraw the Egyptian troops from the Soudan, Charles Gordon, a brave and pious engineer officer, who had once governed the country in the days of the Khedive Ismail, was sent to Khartoum. On his arrival there he found that the rebellion had gone much further than he had expected, and that it was impossible to

Gordon at
Khartoum.