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OCTOBER 12, 1898.

Railways in the Soudan.

In view of the interesting history of the Soudan for the last quarter of a century, and especially of the important events which have recently transpired, some account of the railways of that country will be of general as well as of technical interest. As there is now a strong probability that the country will shortly be subjugated under Anglo-Egyptian rule, railway building in that region may assume an importance hitherto unthought of. The latest and best account we can find of these railways appears in a recent issue of Transport, of London, from which we extract freely, taking from the same source the accompanying map of the country.

It will probably be a matter of surprise to some readers to learn that more than one railway exists in this district, for events have followed one another so rapidly during the last few years that the history of the construction of the military lines has been exceedingly difficult to follow. The project of a railway into the Soudan was first seriously considered by the Khedive Ismail in the early seventies, and in 1873 he employed the eminent English engineer, Mr. (now Sir) John Fowler to make surveys and prepare a scheme. The main Egyptian railroad system then extended from Cairo southward along the bank of the Nile about 180 miles to Roda. Mr. Fowler proposed to commence operations nearly 600 miles further up the Nile, leaving this great intervening space to be got over (pending the gradual extension of the Egyptian Railroad) by river transport. From Wady Halfa by the right bank of the river to Koba, thence by the left bank of the river to Ambukol, and thence across the Bahuida desert to Shendy he proposed to construct a railroad 552 miles in length in all, which might land passengers on the Nile, at a point where it is navigable, within 100 miles of Kartoum.

Ismail took the scheme energetically in hand in 1874 when an ordinary railroad of 4 ft. 8½ in. gage, 9 miles in length, was constructed from the Nile at Assouan to the Nile again at Philae (or Lellal), so that the materials for the line into the Soudan might be got over the first cataract. Then operations were commenced a Wady Halfa, with the result that a 3 ft. 9 in. gage line, of iron rails 50 lbs. to the yard on iron sleepers, was laid for 34½ miles from Wady Halfa to a place called Sarras. At this point it was necessary to leave the bank of the Nile and to follow a much more different course through a mountainous desert, and when about 22 more miles had been constructed on this section, the work had to be stopped owing to Ismail's financial difficulties, and it was never resumed under his regime.

In 1815 the war office decided to make the Red Sea instead of the Nile the future base. In February of that year a contract was hurriedly entered into with the well-known English contractors, Messrs. Lucas and Aird, to build a railroad as quickly as possible from Suakim to Berber, 245 miles across desert, and in March, 1885, a vast quantity of material for the new undertaking was disembarked at Suakim. At the same time, in response to Lord Wolsley's urgent representations, the work on the line from Wady Halfa was continued. In April, 1885, Mr. Gladstone's government announced the practical evacuation of the Soudan; work on the line from Suakim was abandoned, and in May, 1885, transports commenced bringing home the material. On the other hand, the work on the old railroad was persevered with, and on 7th August, 1885, the first train steamed into Akasheh. About 6 miles of the construction was completed towards Ferkeh, and nothing further was done until the present series of campaigns for the subjugation of the Soudan were commenced in March, 1896.

In 1885 the frontier line had been withdrawn to Wady Halfa and the old railroad practically abandoned, but in 1889 Sarras had been re-occupied as an advance post and from that date the 34½ miles of line between Halfa and Sarras had been kept in working order. On the other hand from Sarras southward about 50 miles to the termination of the construction, 6 miles beyond Akasheh, the line had been practically at the mercy of the Derivishes for 10 years. The new expedition found that the amount of damage done was less than might have been anticipated, and considerable sections of it were found quite undisturbed. Akasheh was reached on June 21, 1896, and Koshel, about 20 miles further, on August 4. Here a large piece of land adjacent to the river was laid out with sidings. In September Dongola was captured, and its object having been achieved, the expedition of 1896 returned.

Prior to its return, however, the railway construction was extended from Koshel to Abu Fatmeh, and in the following year (1897) the second expeditionary force carried it still further to Kermeh, a place just below the third cataract, where begins a long stretch of easily navigable river extending past Dongola to Merowe. By this route the expedition of 1897 reached and captured Abu Hamed, and then the way was clear for the construction of the second Soudan railway—the direct line across the desert, saving at least 400



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Gentlemen,—My wife was most terribly afflicted with protruding piles, and contemplated a surgical operation. A friend of ours recommended the use of Dr. Chase's Ointment, and less than one box effected a complete cure. We were so pleased with the ointment that I tried it myself, as I have been troubled with an unsightly skin affliction which covered the lower part of my face.

For 25 years I suffered untold agony, and was treated by the best medical skill in the United States. I consider Dr. Chase's Ointment worth its weight in gold for piles and skin disease.

Dr. Chase's large-size recipe book, cloth-bound, sent to any address on receipt of 50 cents, by addressing Dr. Chase's Company, Toronto or Buffalo, N. Y.

miles on the through journey.

Such a line had actually been commenced by Sir Herbert Kitchener in 1896, the route chosen being the caravan track from Korosko via Murat Wells to Abu Hammed was chosen this having the further advantage that Wady Halfa was already a railway terminus with considerable workshops and other accessories. To lay a desert line of 3 ft. 6 in. gage from this point to Abu Hammed presented no engineering difficulties, the route being over hard, smooth sand, and the expeditionary force of 1897 found it possible to carry on the work at the average rate of 1½ miles a day. Not content with bridging over with his line the 232 miles of desert from Wady Halfa to Abu Hammed, Kitchener carried the work on for more than another 100 miles to Berber, and thence to the Dahila Fort at the junction of the Nile with the Atbara, a distance in all of 385 miles, and it has been by means of this railway that the expedition of the present year has been so speedily concentrated upon Omdurman.

One result, of course, is that the old river line from Wady Halfa to Kermeh has been to a large extent superseded for military purposes, but it is quite possible that in the near future it may be thought worth while to carry out Ismail's plan by extending this to Ambukol and thence across the desert to Berber or Shendy. Then, if the much-talked-of Suakim-Berber line were made—which for commercial purposes is very desirable—the Soudan would have a railway system, under which its industrial development should proceed rapidly. There are also enormous possibilities of railway extension southwards, the final goal of which would, of course, be a junction with railways springing from the Cape and the realization of Mr. Rhodes' dream—a trans-African trunk line.—Railway News.

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"It's the devil for any one to tell me a secret, for it is sure to come out in print."—HAZLITT.

"No man is a hero to his valet," is a motto which is understood, when it is remembered that a valet sees his hero, in unbecoming attire. We are impressed very much with the clothes a man wears, even, although we may pretend we are not. For this reason a man in business is apt to remark that it pays to wear good clothes. Certainly a traveller who comes into town to sell goods, clad in untidy wearing apparel, does not command the same respect as his fellow who is neatly and tastily rigged out.

Take the question of our courts as compared with the courts on the other side of the line. Our Judge is dressed in a silk gown and wears white bands. Lawyers are supposed to wear black suits, and always do wear a white tie, and the conventional black gown. There is no doubt that this distinct dress of bench and bar inspires respect. It is fitting with the dignity which we attach to the superior courts of law. However democratic we are, and however democratic we may become, we are not likely to divest our judges and lawyers of their long robes. In his Sartan Resartus Carlyle deals quite exhaustively with this question of clothes. There is one thing quite certain, we cannot go without clothes, if only for climatic reasons. Moreover, the savage, who wears as little clothing as possible, when he becomes high in office, tatters, himself and, if he does not put on swell clothes, adorns his hide to show his superiority to his fellows. And so it is.

Some people like cats and some like dogs, some people like both and some like neither. The Chatterer in the Boston Herald says:—

Queen Victoria's antipathy to cats is well known and deplored by many of her worthy subjects, who in their turn have no love for dogs, of whom her majesty is enthusiastically fond. So the other day, when the royal train drew up at Torry Hill station, and a black cat walked sedately across the platform a shudder must have run through the officials there assembled, but fortunately puss was captured before she made further advance to the sovereign lady. One reason the Queen gives for her partiality for dogs is their companionship, and the love they have for outdoor life. Cats cannot be picked up and toted from pillar to post, while the canine rather enjoys change of scene. In fact, the pet dog is always on the wrong side of the door and is never happy unless he is either coming in or going out. Now the Wales royalties, though good to all animals are especially devoted to cats and even the prince has been seen to caress a kitten belonging to one of his daughters while the Princess of Wales never loses the chance to photograph pussies or to secure some new claimant to her favor. There is one thing about it in Woodstock. A home for cats is the more economical admiration. There is no tax on cats.

I will bet anything that every man will be talking politics this morning and talking it for all he is worth. There was a bit of a lull between the coming of the big guns of the opposing forces, during which we got sentimental on the evils of intemperance. But plebiscite and prohibition will cut but little ice, when party politics are the fashion. The big speeches for the conservative side will be over when this reaches my readers. As I write no man is bothering his head with politics, but as the old song goes "oh, what a difference in the morning."

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A British farmer advocates bran water as a milk stimulant for dairy cows. Here is his recipe. If you desire to get a large yield of rich milk, give your cows every day water, slightly warmed and slightly salted, in which bran has been stirred at the rate of one quart to two gallons of water. You will find, if you have tried this daily practice, that your cow will give twenty-five per cent more milk immediately under the effects of it, and that she will become so attached to the diet that she will refuse to drink clear water unless very thirsty. But this mess she will drink at any time, and ask for more. The amount of this drink necessary is an ordinary water-pail at a time—morning, noon and night.

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