

KHARTUM.

THE NEW CAPITAL OF THE SUDAN AND ITS
REMARKABLE GROWTH.

The Chicago of Central Africa and the Country it Rules—An Oasis City—Destroyed by The Mahdi, Rebuilt by Lord Kitchener—Business and How it is Done—The New Mosque—Queer Features of Labor and Wages—Women Who Work for One Cent an Hour—An American Brickmaker.

from \$150 to \$300 per acre, and some even more.

THE CHICAGO OF THE SUDAN.

Khartum is found in the Chicago of the Sudan. It lies here at the junction of two of the greatest rivers of north Africa, giving it navigable high-ways to Abyssinia and to the rich lands along the watershed of the Nile. It has a railroad connecting it with the Mediterranean, and with the exception of one stretch of less than 500 miles, where the railroads are, it has the main freight route of the Nile. It gives it cheap freight rates to Europe. Within the past year or so it has opened a railroad to Sudan, and a Red Sea, and in time it will be one of the great stations on the main route by steamer and rail from Cairo to the cape.

Khartum is the capital of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. I wonder if you know what that means. If you do you are wiser than most men, not on the ground. This country is a world in itself, and it is, to a large extent, unexplored. It is a vast area, extending at the upper end of Egypt and reaches to Uganda and the Belgian Congo, or farther than from New York to the Mississippi. It is more than 1,500 miles wide, and it covers almost as much territory as France and Germany combined. It is more than one-fourth as large as the United States with Alaska and the Philippines added thereto, and it has some lands which are richer than almost any part of our country. The province of the Gezira, to which I have referred, could be irrigated and form a country more fertile and bigger than Egypt, and there are regions of good rainfall in the south which are susceptible of cultivation. The Sudan has vast forests and rich deposits of iron and other minerals. It has extensive grazing lands and at the time when the mahdi began his wars against the khedive and the Christians, it contained a population of more than 12,000,000. It would probably support 10 times that number, although it has only about 2,000,000 today. This country is all tributary to Khartum. The best parts of it are reached by the Nile system, and the other region will be tapped by railroads, some of which are already planned and some to be built.

THE STORY OF KHARTUM.

I called upon the governor of Khartum this afternoon and asked him to tell me the story of the city. Said he: "The buildings which you see here are all new, but the town is older than some of the mushroom cities of the United States. It was born before Chicago, being founded by Mohammed Ali in 1821. It grew with remarkable rapidity, and along about 10 years later it was made the seat of the government of the Sudan and became an important commercial center. It was just before the insurrection of the mahdi occurred, and it was here that Gordon ruled and here that he was killed. He was butchered on the steps of a building on the site of the

present governor's palace. After that the mahdi declared that Khartum should be wiped out. He destroyed all the houses and made the inhabitants come to his new capital, Omdurman, which he had laid out on the other side of the White Nile, about five miles to the southward. When the people left they were off the roads and carried out the doors of their houses and carried them along to use in their new houses at Omdurman.

After that, for years, and until Kitchener came, Khartum was nothing but a big pile and a dust heap. Omdurman had swallowed up not only its whole population, but that of a great part of the Sudan. The mahdi forced the tribes to come there to live, in order that he might have their arms and ready for his army in times of war, and the result was that Omdurman had more than a half million inhabitants, while Khartum had nothing.

"Then we had the war with the khedive, and we finally conquered him," the governor continued. "We reduced the greater part of Omdurman to ruins, and then began planning the building of a great city. The idea at first was to force the people to move from Omdurman to Khartum, but it was finally decided that it would be far better to have a native city there, and to make this place the government and foreign center, with a manufacturing and commercial life. The Khartum of today was laid out after somewhat the same plan as your capital at Washington, at least, the reasons that determined the plan were the same. Washington city was planned at about the time of the French revolution, and its architect was L'Enfant, a French engineer. He planned the city so that it could be easily defended in case of a rebellion and at the same time be beautiful. For that reason the streets were made to cut one another at right angles with avenues running diagonally through them, forming squares and circles, where one cannon could command many streets. Lord Kitchener had the same idea as to Khartum. He directed his architects to make the streets wide, with several large squares, and to have the whole so arranged that gatling guns placed at the chief crossings could command the whole city and the result was the Khartum as you now see it.

"The town is laid out in three great sections, and all building plans must first be submitted to the government architects before permits of construction can be issued. The section along the Nile is devoted to the government buildings and the residences of the officials, and to others who can afford good houses. Back of that there are streets where houses of a smaller class may be built, and farther back still and more to the south is a third section of houses for natives. The city is so planned that it can grow along these lines, and we believe that it will some day be one of the largest and most beautiful of the cities of interior Africa."

AN OASIS CITY.

I have now been in Khartum over a week and find it most interesting. The city is a great oasis in the midst of the desert, away off here in the heart of Africa. In coming to it I crossed

the sands and rocks of Nubia, and it was not until I was within a few miles of Halfaya, which lies opposite here on the other bank of the Nile, that I saw signs of vegetation. The train then entered a region of thorn bushes 10 or 15 feet high, beyond which patches of grass bleached by the sun were to be seen, and closer other evidences of cultivation. The Arabs were digging out the thorn bushes on the edge of the desert, and stacking them up in piles for fuel. There were a few animals grazing on the scanty grass, and the country made me think of the Big Bend of Washington state, which is now being turned into farms. There is no desert all about Khartum, and everywhere back from the Nile the lands are nothing but rock and sand.

Out of these bleak and arid surroundings rises a city of green. All along the Nile, for a distance of more than twenty miles, runs a wide avenue shaded by trees and backed by buildings and private houses in beautiful gardens. This avenue is a succession of parks from government residences to the Botanical and Zoological gardens, where all the trees of the tropics and semi-tropics luxuriantly grow, and where one may see the soap tree, the monkey-bread tree and other curious examples of the Sudanese flora. There are several lions and tigers in the garden, and there is also a mighty giraffe, which I photographed this afternoon as he was taking a bite out of a branch at the height of a two-story house.

Next to the Zoological Garden is the Grand Hotel, a long bungalow-shaped structure, and beyond are the two-story houses of many officials, all beautifully shaded by date palms. The first public building on this avenue is the post and telegraph office. Beyond it are the offices of the war department, with public gardens behind them, and further still is the great white palace in which the governor general of the Sudan lives and has his offices. This is the city on the river with a beautiful garden behind it. Farther along the avenue is the Sudan club and the hospital, and away at the south the large buildings of the Gordon Memorial college, with the British barracks at the end of the street. This avenue runs right along the Blue Nile, with beautiful views in sight all the way. On the edge of the river are numerous saw-yards, or huge water wheels, moved around by bullocks with humps on their backs. They raise the water from the river into the ditches and canals, which carry it over the city and make vegetation possible. The saw-yards start at 7 o'clock every morning. Their wheels are never greased and as they move they screech and groan and sigh. There is one in front of the Grand hotel, which serves as my alarm clock, for sleep is murdered at the moment it begins.

BUSINESS KHARTUM.

The business part of Khartum are the streets back from the river and running parallel with it. There is one great square devoted to the markets. This covers ten or more acres, and the Abbas square, in which the mosque stands, a little farther west, is fully twice as large. The business section has two banks and many stores managed chiefly by Greeks. The Italians

also have large establishments. One of the biggest of all is the house of Angelo Caputo, a man who might be called the Marshall Field of the Sudan, for he has a large business here, with branches all over the country and department shops far up the Nile. The stores have covered porches in front of them or they face arcades which keep off the sun.

The new mosque of Khartum, is one of the most beautiful buildings in Africa. It is a great two-story structure of white stone, with minarets rising high above it. The galleries of the minarets have a lacework of stone running around them and the towers are covered with Arabic carvings. The mosque is named after the young khedive, and he has, I am told, furnished much of the money for its erection.

Khartum has also a new Coptic church of large size, as well as a Church of England and the schools and chapels of the United Presbyterian Mission of our country. So you see, it has abundant religious facilities, notwithstanding its position on this far-away part of the globe.

WHERE THE WOMEN DO THE WORK.

I have been interested in watching the women at work in the building of Khartum. New houses and business blocks are now going up almost everywhere, and every mason and mechanic has his women helpers. The laborers come from all parts of the Sudan, and the women of a half dozen tribes may be working on the same building.

I wish I could show you some of these women as I see them laboring on the buildings and on the banks of the Nile. They are busy black girls, straight and plump, and so lightly dressed that one can see all the outlines of their forms. Some have but a thin sheet of blue cotton wrapped loosely around their shoulders, and another sound around the waist so that it falls to the feet. The upper garment is off half the time. The girl is then bare to the waist, and her plump bust shows out in the bright sun, as she raises her arms high to steady the load on her head. Her skin shines like polished ebony, and look as close as you please you can see no sign of a hair on any part of her except on the head. These African natives, both men and women, pull all the hair on their bodies out, going over them once a month for this purpose. This custom is common in many parts of the world. It is so with some of the Indians of the Amazon, so with the Jewsesses of Funtia, who are shaved from head to foot just before marriage, and so with the Moros of our Philippine Islands, who carry along with them little tweezers to pull out any stray hair that appears.

LABOR AND WAGES.

The wages these women receive are pitifully low. Ten or 15 cents a day is big money for a woman, and a man can be hired for 20 cents or less. For these wages the women unload the stone boats on the Nile, wading out into the river and coming back up the banks with two or three great rocks piled high on the head. They carry sand in baskets, and spread it over the stones on the roadways, and they sit down on the sides of the roads and break stones for macadamizing. They carry the mortar up the scaffolding to the masons, and quite an army of them is employed in bringing water in 5-gallon coal oil cans up from the Nile. Some of the streets are thus sprinkled, and many of the gardens of Khartum are kept moist in this way. Here, at the Grand hotel, we have a half dozen women who carry water all day long to irrigate the garden. Some of the girls are tall. I had a photograph of my sister standing beside one taken today, and she overtopped

me some inches. She objected to my having her picture, and as she was a truly young negress it was for a time undecided whether I should succeed.

I have asked some questions here as to labor. The builders tell me it is almost impossible to get what they want, and that the more wages they pay the greater the danger of a labor famine. The trouble is the natives will not work if they have money, and when wages are high they work so much the less. All they need is their food, and a family can live on 5 cents and less a family. The food consists chiefly of boiled sorghum meal, and the drink is a native beer which costs almost nothing. A man can get a suit of clothes for a dollar, and a woman can be outfitted for less. When food is cheap the price of labor rises, and when it is dear the price of labor falls. The native reasons that he ought to be paid more for his work when the food prices are low, for in such a case he can easily get food ahead, and when should he work at the ordinary wage food goes up the laborers need the work to pay for it and the competition brings wages down.

AN AMERICAN BRICKMAKER.

Referring to the building up of Khartum, many of the new structures are furnished with brick by a man from Chicago. This man came to Sudan some months ago, intending to start a brick factory there and supply building material for the new port and the Red Sea railway. While he was waiting for the brick-making machine he took a run up to Khartum to see what was going on here. He found the town booming and decided to settle. He has bought a native building several hundred yards from the river, and is now making bricks by hand with a native labor. He started only a month or so ago, and he tells me he has ready contracts for more than 1,000,000 bricks. He is employing several hundred Sudanese men and women at 10 or 20 cents a day, but he says that the labor is so poor and unreliable that the work of six of his natives will not equal that of one good American.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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HE WAS TAKING A BITE OUT OF A BRANCH AT THE HEIGHT OF A TWO STORY HOUSE.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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A real estate boom in the heart of Africa!

Farm lands rising sky high! Town lots selling at fabulous prices! The streets reaching out into the desert!

Residences and business blocks going up, and the people crazy at the increase in values! That is what we have here at Khartum.

I have already told you of the prosperity of the Nile valley, of the mushroom growth of Alexandria and Cairo and how farm lands in the delta are selling from \$50 to \$100 per acre. Similar boom conditions prevail in upper Egypt and farm lands are rising

all along the great river. Assiut, Luxor, Assuan and the towns and villages of lower Nubia are thriving and away up here, as far from the mouth of the Nile by its windings as the Rocky mountains are distant from the mouth of the Hudson, I find the same things going on. Lands on the Island of Tuda in the Blue Nile opposite Khartum are priced out of sight, and real estate speculators are trying to buy all they can in the Gezira, that rich territory between the Blue and the White Niles, which here come together. In Khartum itself building lots are selling at the government auctions for two hundred times what their owners asked for them seven years ago, and in Halfaya, the suburb which lies at the end of the railroad on the opposite side of the river, the farms have been divided into lots and are being sold for manufacturing purposes. Farm lands near the river which not long ago were to be had for \$20 an acre are now worth



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