Adelaide has to thank Mr. Harold Wylde for the marked impetus given by him to interest in organ music. At student concerts it is evident that there are some promising young organists coming on. Mr. Wylde's own playing is always markedly popular, and the compositions presented by him on Monday evening had an added interest owing to their variation from works by that great master of the past, Bach, to quite modern writings. Mr. Harold Wylde's first organ solos were two compositions by Bach. First, the "Prelude in C," rendered with great delicacy. Then came the "Toccata in F," full of technical difficulties and the elaborate sound-embroidery for which the great composer was noted. Mr. Wylde's interpretation showed a thorough command of the king of instruments. The elaborate and exacting pedal passages were especially notable, and as towards the close the organ speaks with full voice the effect was really fine. His next bracket opened with a descriptive writing, "The sun's even-song" (Karg-Elart), which was particularly striking, having a marked character of its own. It seemed to picture a vivid sunset. "Chant de Mai," by Jongen, came as a pleasing contrast; then, in yet another mood, there followed "Capriccio," by John Ireland, strongly characteristic and making considerable demands upon the organist. Mendelssohn's "First sonata" gave yet further opportunity for varied tonal colouring. The opening movement, "Alergo moderato e serioso," with the suggestion of church music heard at intervals through the storm. The first theme was finely handled, and through each succeeding movement right up to the striking and dramatic climax impressiveness and effect of the work increased. It made a fitting close to a fine recital. Mr. Wylde also accompanied the vocal numbers, his intuition and sympathetic playing being delightful.

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THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN.

A Triumph of British Administration.

I.—By Cecil T. Madigan, M.A.

Prior to becoming Lecturer in Geology in the University of Adelaide, the writer of this article and another which will follow it was Assistant Geologist to the Sudan Geological Survey. His duties in that connection carried him from the headquarters at Khartoum into Abyssinia and down the Red Sea coast, and included three protracted reconnaissances executed during 1920 and 1921, which involved some 2,000 miles of camel treking. Mr. Madigan is therefore well qualified to discuss the Sudanese question now at issue between Britain and Egypt.

Every one with a knowledge of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan will have read with great satisfaction that the present British Government means to retain firmly its administration in the Sudan. The recently acquired independence of Egypt has complicated the position in the Sudan, and it was obvious that the whole question of the Sudan would be reopened by the Egyptians with the hope of increasing their powers there. To the Egyptian the Sudan is merely a place from which wealth can be extorted. Any lessening of British control there would be disastrous to the Sudanese, who realize this only too well. The last Egyptian administration is remembered with horror by many living Sudanese, and the very last thing they desire is a return to it in any form. The Egyptians and Sudanese are hereditary enemies, and the story of the Sudan is one of continual struggle with the invading Egyptians, who have been alternately driven out and again firmly established.

Historical Review.

It is interesting at this point to glance over the latter part of the history of Egypt and the Sudan. In the 7th century there was a great Mohammedan invasion of Northern Africa. The Romans were driven out, and the Arabs spread all along the Mediterranean to Morocco and up the Nile into the Sudan. Long ere this all traces of the old Egyptian families had disappeared, and soon only a small sect—the Copts—who had embraced Christianity, remained of the ancient Egyptians. Saracen power was at its height in the 12th century under Selah et Din, or Saladin, the famous opponent of the Crusaders. Their rule continued up to the 16th century, when Egypt was subjugated by the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim, and the Turks held sway till early in the 19th century, when Mohammed Ali arose and succeeded in obtaining partial independence from Turkey. An annual tribute only was paid to Turkey, and this continued up to the outbreak of the Great War, when all connection with Turkey was broken. The successors of Mohammed Ali soon threw Egypt into hopeless financial chaos through typical Egyptian administration, which consists in all officials obtaining all they can for themselves and the devil take the hindmost. Self-seeking, bribery, and corruption are the keynote of their methods. European interests were deeply involved in the financial ruin of Egypt, and, the French refusing to join, the British in 1882 took action to extricate the Khedive (Tewfik) from his difficulties, as his Minister of War (Arabi Bey) was in open rebellion against European influences. The bombardment of Alexandria and the battle of Tel-el-Kebir followed. English officials were placed at the head of departments, where they have remained till quite recently.

Mahdi and Khalifa.

A year before this the Mahdi had started his revolution against the Egyptians in the Sudan. He proclaimed himself the expected Messiah, and soon obtained a large following. Religious fanaticism, however, was by no means the only reason for the great rally of the tribes to his cause, many of them never believing that he was the true Messiah. The chief cause of the success of the insurrection was hatred of the Government and the venality of the Egyptian officials, with their oppressive methods of collecting taxes. The Mahdi (Arabic for "Guide") was a clever and able leader, and made full use of his hatred. He practically ended the Egyptian power by the annihilation of Gen. Hicks's army of 10,000 in 1883, when the Governor-General of the Sudan (Ala el Din) and Gen. Hicks himself were killed. In 1884 Gen. Gordon was reappointed Governor-General of the Sudan, having held the position before from 1877 to 1879. He had retired from the service at the time of this appointment. He was the first European to be Governor-General, all others having been Egyptians. Gordon was sent down to carry out the evacuation of the Sudan. Up to the time of Kitchener's expedition no British troops had been used in the Sudan, though there were many European officers in the Egyptian Army. The story of the siege of Khartoum and the murder of Gordon in 1885 is well known.

After the fall of Khartoum a terrible reign of fire and sword began, which lasted 14 years and decimated the population of the Sudan. It transcended even the worst doings of the Egyptians— or of the Turks, for many of the higher military and administrative officers on the Egyptian services were Turks. Many tribes broke away from the Mahdi, and many had never intended to bow beneath him, though anxious to be rid of the Egyptians. All who did not follow his religion and all who opposed him were to be destroyed. He enforced by terrible punishment a most strict moral code based on the Koran. Punishment was by death or mutilation, and degrees of punishment were by the number of limbs cut off the offender. Smoking was punishable by having a hand cut off. There were dozens of executions daily in Khartoum, and the country literally ran blood. The Mahdi died a natural death, and was succeeded by the Khalifa, who governed on similar lines.

Deliverance from Bondage.

When conditions were finally stabilized in Egypt, a joint British and Egyptian Expeditionary Force under Kitchener was sent up the Nile to free the Sudan from this reign of terror. The Khalifa's forces were routed at Omdurman in 1898, and peace was soon restored, a peace such as no Sudanese had ever before known. It is only 26 years since those black and bloody times, yet hardly a trace remains. Where once large armed parties went out spreading fear and often death, to exact everything possible from the scattered villages, now the British official goes peacefully alone with his half-dozen camels, and is met and welcomed by the sheikh and people.

The present state of the Sudan is a perfect triumph of British administration over naitve races. The best class of young Briton has always been chosen for the civil service—many from Oxford and Cambridge. The finest traditions were set up by the first Government, and have been faithfully followed. All the experience of British rule in India and over other coloured races was brought to bear in this new field, and the administration was made a model one. At first it was entirely a military administration, organized by Kitchener, who did not remain long in the Sudan. Sir Reginald Wingate was Governor-General from 1899 to 1917, when Major-General Sir H. Lee Stack was appointed; and he still holds the position.

The military officers have gradually been replaced in the administration by civilians, and now only six of the 15 Governors of provinces are military officers, while almost all the remaining officials are British civilians. Only one battalion of British troops is now stationed in the Sudan, at Khartoum. There are seven Sudanese battalions of the Egyptian Army, and most of the Egyptian Army proper, stationed in the various military districts of the Sudan.

Great Achievements.

The country is divided into 15 provinces, each under a governor, and the provinces are subdivided into districts under the control of inspectors. British officials from among whom the governors are chosen as vacancies occur. In each district there are one or more Marmurias in charge of a Marmur. The Marmur is an Egyptian, directly responsible to the inspector. He has powers comparable with those of a country Magistrate in South Australia, and is the highest Egyptian official in the service. His duties are laid down for him, and he assists in an administartion in the framing of which he can take no part. Everything he does is carefully supervised by the inspector, who himself deals with all but trivial routine matters. The influence of Egypt in the administration since Kitchener's time has been negligible.

In the short period of 26 years of the British control, order, peace and prosperity have grown out of chaos. Agriculture almost ceased under the Mahdi and Khalifa; wells were filled in all over the country; and whole villages disappeared. Many devastated areas are now re-settled. In many cases the well sites had been lost, and patient search had to be carried out to re-locate them, when Government assistance would be given to sink new wells, often with the help of well-boring machinery. Fifteen thousand miles of railway have been built; a main north and south line from Wadi Halfa in the north to El Obeid in the south, with an eastern branch to Port Sudan, where a well-equipped harbour has been constructed, giving a much better outlet to the Sudan than the long journey, including over 200 miles of river, to Mediterranean ports. Khartoum has been entirely rebuilt. Since the Great War loans have been raised for building dams in both the Blue and White Niles, with a view to regulating the water supply to Egypt and also irrigating in the Sudan. The Blue Nile dam is practically completed and the White Nile one well on its way. Large areas have been reticulated for growing cotton. Six millions was raised in England for the Blue Nile scheme alone.

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SALTBUSH.

Professor Osborn's Lecture.

Points for Pastoralists.

Pastoralists and naturalists will be interested in the following lecture on "The saltbush," delivered by Professor T. G. B. Osborn, D.Sc., at the Prince of Wales Theatre, University Building, on Tuesday evening. The lecturer emphasized the danger of the extermination of this valuable and peculiar plant through indiscriminate grazing, and explained how it survived under abnormally dry conditions.

Professor Osborn said the plants known as saltbush are some of the most characteristic subjects of arid Australia. A number of conditions went to make up what was termed an arid climate. Of these the existence of a low rainfall was most important. A rough definition might be that an arid area was one having a 10.00 in. or under annual rainfall. On such a distinction no less than five-sixths of South Australia was arid. In round figures, out of our total area of 380,000 square miles, no fewer than 317,000 had only 10.00 in. of rain or under a year. This feature of our climate was either ignored by many people or regarded as something uncomplimentary to our State, and as such not to be mentioned by good patriots. These attitudes were believed by him to be mistaken, knowing that the considerable part of the State's wealth was derived from the exploitation of arid lands. The proper study of their vegetation was believed to be of great importance, not only because of its scientific interest, but also because of the economic conditions that would result. Plant societies that grew under arid conditions led a precarious existence. If human interference, whether direct or by the grazing of animals, pressed too hardly upon these plant societies they were destroyed. Plants growing naturally disappeared, and those that could take their place were less valuable. An efficient exploitation of arid areas from the grazing point of view meant that the natural vegetation must suffer as little as possible. Throughout much of arid South Australia grew the well-known salt and blue bushes. Especially was this so in a belt of country extending from the Nullarbor Plain on the west, across the whole width of the State to the Barrier Range, and including much of the Murray basin—the north-east district. This country was far from being a "desert," for it had a remarkably rich flora, even in those portions which were as yet unsettled—for example, the western part of the Barrier. Occupation, however, was not on account of lack of fodder plants.

Three Classes of Plant Life.

Plant life in the saltbush country might be conveniently grouped in three classes, the professor pointed out. First there were the natural grasses and flowering herbs. These grew in amazing numbers after suitably heavy rains. However, they as quickly died away, and passing into seed they formed no permanent plant societies to fix the soil. The abundance of natural grasses after suitable rains was a characteristic feature of many true deserts. Valuable as such grasses might be for feed, it was merely temporary. To maintain a large animal population in the area longer-lived fodder plants were needed. This was especially true where, in much of arid South Australia, we had drought extending over a period of years, and not a regular alternation of wet and dry seasons. Secondly, there were many low trees and woody shrubs. Many of these were edible, such as the mulga and sandalwood (Myoporum). The combined effect of sheep and rabbits had been to destroy the seedlings of these plants. Unless some measures could be taken to allow of seedlings to be established, the ultimate extermination of such valuable plants as the mulga and sandalwood could only be a matter of time, particularly as mistletoes of various kinds had become thick on old plants. Less palatable shrubs, on the other hand, did not suffer to the same degree. Lastly, there were many kinds of half-shrubby juicy-leafed plants—salt and blue bushes. These formed the most important plant covering on sometimes vast areas. They were all more or less edible, but varied greatly in their palatability and feeding value.

Danger of Extermination.

Therefore, if heavily grazed, the more nutritious kinds tended to be eaten out because they were more palatable. In extreme cases they might wholly disappear. When this was so, inedible plants, such as mallee weeds (Zygophyllum) took the place of saltbush, or even no permanent vegetation might grow. The effect of eating out saltbush did, it was true, make room for more grasses, but as these were only annuals there might be long periods when the area was little better than a "desert." The term "desert" was rightly unpopular with Australians when applied to most of our interior. It was certainly a slander on our saltbush country, so far as its natural condition went, but heavy stocking might so seriously alter the plant communities that a condition very close to that of drought might result.

Why Saltbush is Salt!

It was a widespread mistake to presume that saltbush was salt because of the salt in the soil, the lecturer said. Analyses showed that the best kinds of saltbushes flourished in soils containing very little salt only. There might not be more than .05 per cent. The quantity of salt—sometimes a surprisingly great quantity—was found in the leaves of saltbushes. There might be as much as 30 per cent. of the dry weight. This indicated that these plants had a remarkable power of extracting salt from the soil. This salt in the leaves had been shown by experiments conducted in the Adelaide University botanical department to aid the plants in absorbing water through their leaves from dew or very light rains. Saltbushes were thus able to benefit by rainfalls that were too small in amount to affect the roots. Many of the plants growing in arid regions of South Africa and the United States of America commonly stored water in their leaves or stems, which thus became very fleshy. Such succulences were surprisingly rare in arid South Australia. However, the Australian saltbushes, because of their remarkable power to take water through the leaves could utilize the light falls of rain that were such features of our arid areas.

Views of Saltbush Country.

The lecturer illustrated his remarks by interesting lantern slides from photographs taken by him at Ooldea on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain, portion of the Quorn district, in the north-east ranging from the Murray up to Lake Frome, and also during a trip from Maree to Cooper's Creek.