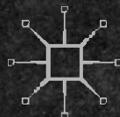


Kitchener  
as Proconsul  
of Egypt,  
1911–1914

GEORGE H. CASSAR



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*To the memory of my parents*

## PREFACE

This is my third major work on Kitchener, not to mention that I also wrote an equal number of books in which he was one of the principal characters. If he has absorbed my attention for much of my professional career, it is because I can think of no other figure in British Imperial history as well known, fascinating and controversial. He became a legend in his lifetime through his spectacular achievements in the outer outposts of the Empire and exercised a hold over the British public such as few Englishmen since Wellington have enjoyed. When Britain entered the war in August 1914, Kitchener was appointed Secretary for War. Although in office for only two years before his tragic death, he already had laid the foundations for the eventual victory of the Allies.

As might be expected, there have been numerous biographies on Kitchener and studies concentrating on aspects of his life, but one important period that continued to be neglected was his tenure as Consul-General in Egypt between 1911 and 1914. It was for that reason that I undertook this study. I had three objectives in mind when I began my research. The first obviously was to cast additional light on an area overlooked in Kitchener's life and service. The second was to draw attention to his major contribution to a chapter in the history of modern Egypt. The third was to depict the role he played in the Arab-speaking areas of the Ottoman Empire until he left Egypt in the summer of 1914. His following activities in that part of the world deepened but lie outside the scope of this study. I eventually hope to produce a full account of Kitchener's involvement in the Middle East, focusing on the period between 1914 and 1916 and concluding by analyzing his impact in shaping the post-war

history of the Middle East. The rise of the Middle East in world affairs began during World War I and Kitchener played a decisive role in that ascendancy.

A seasoned and successful military campaigner, Kitchener was equally at ease as a diplomat and administrator. As an avowed imperialist, he saw no conflict between the interests of Britain and the aspirations of the people it governed. He was scrupulously honest, fair-minded, patient, unpretentious and accessible to all elements of Egyptian society. He cared about the development of Egypt, worked hard and successfully to improve the welfare of the poor and, in carrying out his administrative responsibilities, respected the culture and religion of the people. He arrived in Egypt when British prestige was at a low point on account of his predecessor's unpopular policies. He quickly restored political stability, created conditions that bolstered the economy, and introduced a wave of reforms that has rarely, if ever, been matched in any comparable period in the history of modern Egypt. It is important to bear in mind that his lengthy list of accomplishments occurred within a three-year term which makes his legacy all the more remarkable. Praised and revered by the native population, he was remembered nostalgically long after his death.

For someone who had such an active life in the service of king and country, it is regrettable that Kitchener did not make more of an effort to preserve important papers. He was careless with his personal and official correspondence and what letters he kept seemed to be based more on chance than on design. The one thing that strikes a researcher poring over his collection at the British National Archives is the paucity of material during certain periods of his career. Unfortunately this is the case for the packet of papers covering his time in Egypt as Proconsul. Indeed it would have been impossible to write this study without the almost daily exchange of memos and private messages between him and Sir Edward Grey of the Foreign Office and, to a lesser extent, his letters to intimate friends and the observation of his trusted subordinates in correspondence with their relatives.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals and institutions have contributed to the preparation of this study. While I would like to think that I am as familiar with Kitchener as anyone living today, I am, by comparison, a relative novice when it comes to the history of Egypt under British Occupation. My main guide as the work progressed was Dr. Janice Terry, a long-time colleague and dear friend and one of the leading authorities on the history of modern Egypt. She was always available to answer questions or provide advice and frequently brought to my attention scholarship in related fields. Moreover, she read a late draft of this work, offered detailed marginal corrections and comments and helped me redefine and develop my ideas. I owe her an immense debt of gratitude. Needless to say she is not responsible in any way for the opinions and conclusions I expressed in this book.

Others provided assistance as well. I am obliged to my professional colleagues Dr. Steven Ramold, Dr. John Knight, Dr. Jesse Kauffman, Dr. Roger Long, and Dr. Russell Jones for assisting in a variety of ways. Renowned scholar Professor Arthur Goldschmidt kindly took the trouble to supply me with valuable ideas, information and suggestions, as well as a long list of recently published sources on Egyptian history that related to the Kitchener era. My former student assistant for many years, Matt Penix (now a PhD candidate) wrote a first rate MA thesis on the pre-war Ottoman Empire from which I greatly benefited and during the summer break from the university carried out a number of mundane but time-consuming tasks on my behalf. Although I do not know Dr. Ann Elizabeth Mayer, I consulted her lengthy and well-researched PhD thesis at the University of Michigan, and the least I can do is to express

my gratitude to her here. Her work is the only detailed study of Abbas Hilmi in English and was especially helpful in one of my chapters. Mrs. Rachel M. Trudell-Jones drew the maps with great care, thought and diligence. Jack Etsweiler, Senior Secretary of the Department, and Rachele Marshall, Assistant Secretary, showed extraordinary patience in carrying out my endless requests. My son Michael assembled the illustrations and John Shubsda enhanced the quality of those that required it. The late and last Lord Kitchener was always eager to assist whenever I approached him and his niece Lady Emma Kitchener Fellowes extended the same courtesy by making it possible for me to contact the descendants of the Field Marshal's siblings. Finally I would like to thank the anonymous reader for his helpful comments.

During my research the personnel in the archives and libraries attended to my requests with unfailing kindness and patience. While it is impossible to mention them all, I would like to single out the following: Colin Harris, Superintendent of the Special Collections Reading Rooms at the Bodleian Library, Oxford; William Spencer, Principal Military Specialist at the British National Archives; Lianne Smith, Archives Service Manager at King's College, London; Pamela Clark, Register at the Royal Archives, Windsor; Anna Sander, College Archivist and Curator of manuscripts at Balliol College, Oxford; Vicki Perry Head of Archives and Historic Collections at Hatfield House; Debbie Usher, Archivist at the Middle East Centre, St Anthony's College, Oxford; Alexandra Healy, Collections Assistant, Mount Stuart Trust, Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute; Andrew Powers, Assistant Librarian at Eastern Michigan University; Jonathan Rogers, Head Near East Division and Sigrid Anderson Cordell, Librarian for English and History, at the Hatcher Library, University of Michigan; and Tim Utter, Manager of the Clark Library (located in the Hatcher Library). To each I owe my heartfelt thanks.

The following institutions have generously given me permission to reproduce quotations from material to which they own the copyright: the Trustees of Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives; the management of the Bodleian Library and the Bute Archive at Mount Stuart. Special thanks are due to Lord Salisbury for allowing me to examine Kitchener's letters to Lady Salisbury. Material from the Royal Archives is reproduced by the gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen; and Crown Copyright material in the British National Archives is reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. I have not been able to trace all the copyright holders and I apologize to any not contacted.

My extensive trips to the UK were made possible by grants from Eastern Michigan University and the Earhart Foundation. Additionally, Eastern bore the costs of the maps and most of the illustrations and provided me with a leave from my teaching responsibilities to enable me to complete the writing phase of this book. For helping to expedite matters at Eastern I would like to express my debt to Dr. Thomas Venner, Dean of Arts and Science.

As usual my wife Mary gets a special note of thanks for her patience during the times when I was abroad doing research, in my office glued to my computer or unable to fulfil my domestic duties.

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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Generally in the text I have followed a simple transliteration of proper Arabic names in the form I am familiar with from my reading over the years and as they appear in most English publications. Moreover, while I recognize that Ottoman rather than Turkish is technically the correct practice when referring to the government or army, I have, like British Imperial officials serving in the Middle East at the time, used the terms interchangeably.

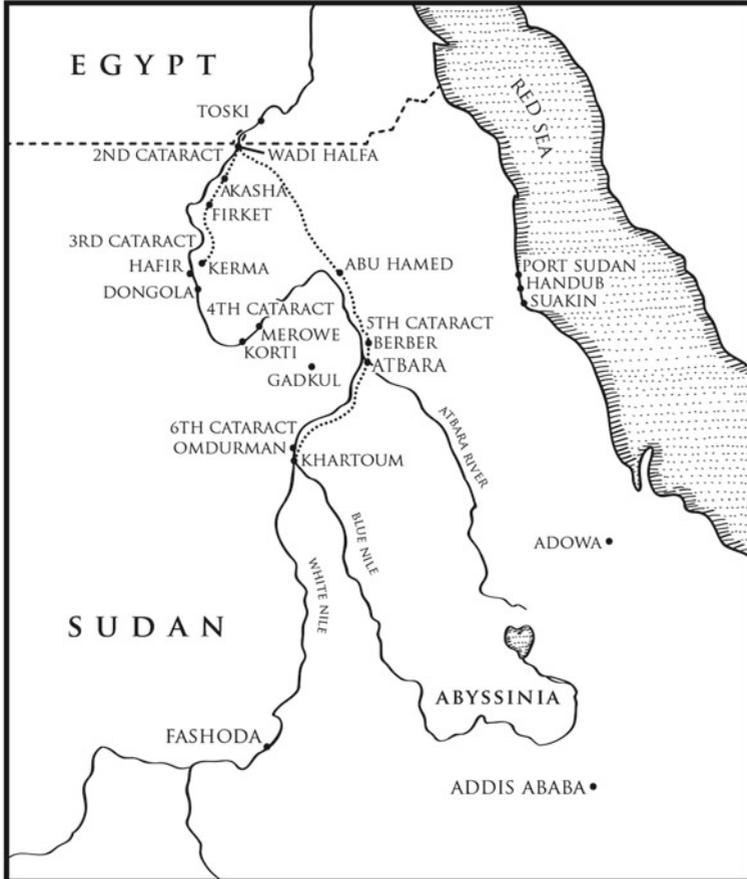
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# MAPS

## Sudan Campaign, 1896–1898



THE SUDAN CAMPAIGN

..... RAILROAD      200 MILES

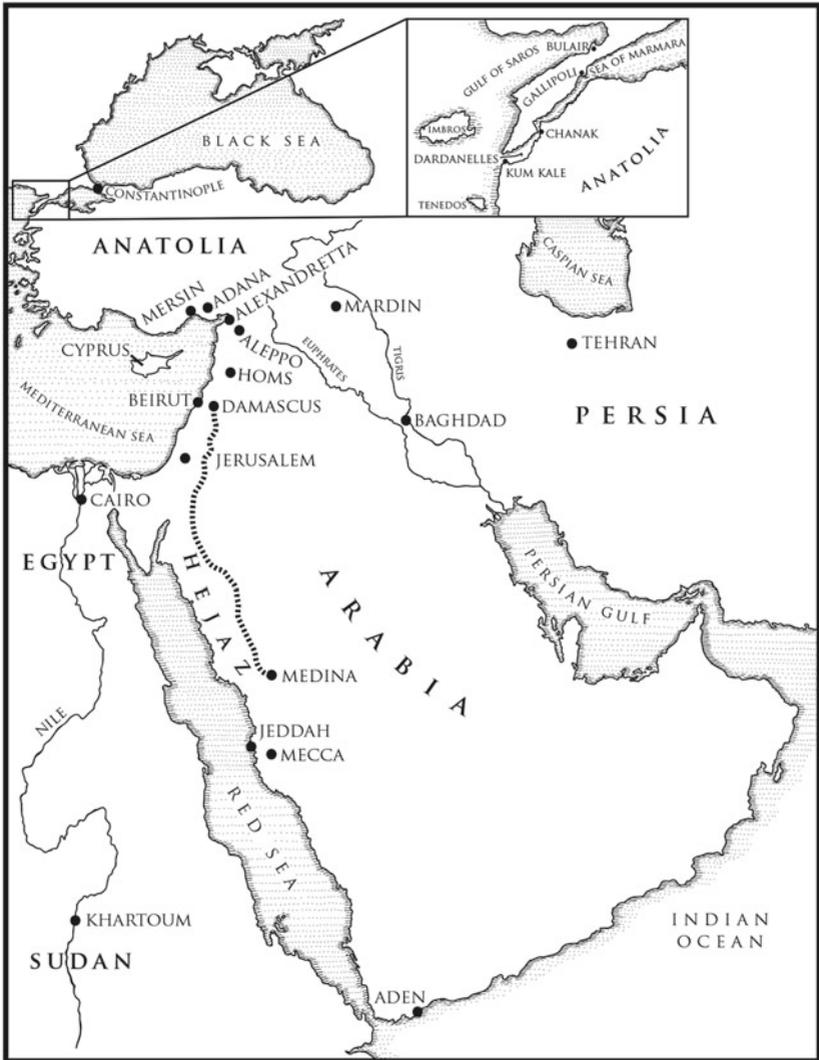
Libya



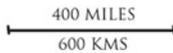
LIBYA 200 MILES



The Hejaz, Arabia, Syria, Anatolia (now Turkey)



THE HEJAZ, ARABIA, SYRIA  
AND ANATOLIA  
(PRESENT DAY TURKEY)



## From Birth to the End of Military Service

Horatio Herbert Kitchener came from a respectable English family of moderate means. His father, Henry Horatio Kitchener, chose the army as his career and saw service in the Indian Army, eventually reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel. At the age of 39, Henry, then a captain, married 19-year-old Frances Anne, nicknamed, “Fanny,” daughter of a Suffolk vicar, in July 1845. As he was on leave, Henry, accompanied by his bride, returned at once to India. The climate of India did not suit Fanny, whose health deteriorated, leading Henry to bring her and their first born back home in 1847 and going on half-pay. Unable to find military employment in England after months of fruitless inquiry, the Colonel sold his commission and decided to start a new life in Ireland. At the time Ireland was still reeling from the failure of the potato crop—the staple food of most of the people—which had brought death, starvation, misery and ruin to hundreds of thousands. As a result the estates of bankrupt landlords were going cheaply. At a cost of £3000 the Colonel secured a 2000 acre estate called Ballygoghlan, near Listowel, County Kerry, in the south of Ireland. It was here that his third child and second son, Horatio Herbert, was born on 24 June, 1850.<sup>1</sup> His first name was borrowed from his father, though the family always called him Herbert.

The Colonel’s estate was run down and the house itself was in such a state of disrepair that it required alterations before the family could move in. The Colonel skillfully managed his property, adding productive land by constructing an efficient drainage system, introducing up-to-date