

policy to prevent the tomb from becoming a place of pilgrimage, thus keeping alive Gervile's superstition.

A leading Conservative asked in the House of Commons whether no one has been recommended for "this horrible and ghastly outrage." No answer was given, though the inquiry was loudly applauded. The whole matter is to be raised in formal debate, and meanwhile at Liberal meetings in the country the government is charged with "body-snatching," an epithet that seems likely to stick.

#### Khalifa's Graves Apprehension.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

London, Feb. 25.—The news that the Khalifa is gathering a host, varying in number from 15,000 to 20,000 men, and is marching on Khartoum, came with a rude shock to the people of Great Britain, who were under the impression that he was almost a solitary wanderer in the desert.

Official circles, however, express satisfaction at the fact that the Khalifa is apparently determined to make another onslaught on the Anglo-Egyptian forces, as they are confident he will easily be defeated.

Major General Sir Archibald Hunter, the Governor of Omdurman, is quoted as saying in an interview:

"I regard the Khalifa as a nuisance. He is no longer dangerous, and it will greatly simplify matters if he comes out and fights."

In the meanwhile detachments of British troops have been ordered to get ready to return to Omdurman from lower Egypt, and a strong expedition will be formed and advanced to meet the Khalifa.

## FATE OF THE MAHDI'S HEAD.

Body of the Soudanese Prophet Dismembered and Distributed Among British Officers as Souvenirs.

SPECIAL CABLE TO THE NEW YORK JOURNAL AND THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.  
London, Feb. 25.—What has become of the Mahdi's head? is one of the leading questions that will come up for debate in Parliament in a few days. The subject of the massing of dervishes after the battle of Omdurman will be added to this unpleasant subject for the benefit of the conscientious public.

Mr. John Morley, one of the leaders of the Liberals, plainly indicated in the course of the Soudan debate in the Commons last night he would not let the matter rest, whatever reproach it might attach to England's name.

After the defeat of the Khalifa and his horde of fanatics last September at Omdurman, Lord Kitchener and the British demolished the tomb of the Mahdi, and the body of the dead prophet was exhumed. The head was cut off and given to Major Gordon, nephew of General Gordon, whom the Mahdi killed when Khartoum fell. Other officers cut off the dead prophet's fingers for souvenirs.

In Sloane's Museum in London there are several similar disgusting relics of the Soudan campaign, including the skeletons and heads of several chiefs in the Khalifa's army. It is supposed that the Mahdi's head is also in the museum, but the keepers deny having it. Major Gordon is now in England, but denies keeping the head. He refuses to say what he did with it.

Men of every shade of opinion unite in regretting that Lord Kitchener considered the dispersal of the Mahdi's remains necessary. His apologists suggest that in the process of growing thoroughly imbued with sentiments of the East Lord Kitchener has lost touch with the feelings and ideas of the West. They further plead that in order to lessen the dangers of a recrudescence of Arabian fanaticism the Sirdar took the only course known to Eastern administrators as effective.

In truth, however, English sentiment has not been much moved over the matter. Mr. Morley may get a mild reproof of a majority in Commons, but if a vote inferring censure on Lord Kitchener or the troops should be taken a large majority would favor their action.

Englishmen have outgrown the time when the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were exhumed and their heads exhibited till carried off by relic hunters, but the country has not outgrown treating revolting Sepoys or Soudanese after the old-time fashion, as being the most suitable and effective means.

#### Making It a Political Issue.

SPECIAL CABLE TO THE NEW YORK JOURNAL AND THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE.  
London, Feb. 25.—The fate of the Mahdi's head has become a dangerous topic for Lord Salisbury's government. When Khartoum was captured the Mahdi's mausoleum was destroyed and the prophet's embalmed body, wrested from the sarcophagus, dismembered, and cast into the Nile. The head was presented to Major Gordon, a nephew of the Mahdi's famous victim, who expressed his intention of presenting it to the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

This desecration of the Mahdi's grave was condemned feebly at the time, but now that the glamour of the Omdurman victory is passing away, and its completeness jeopardized by the reappearance of the Khalifa in strong force, necessitating probably another expedition, some disposition is evinced to regard the desecration as deeply censurable.

Lord Cromer has justified it as an act of