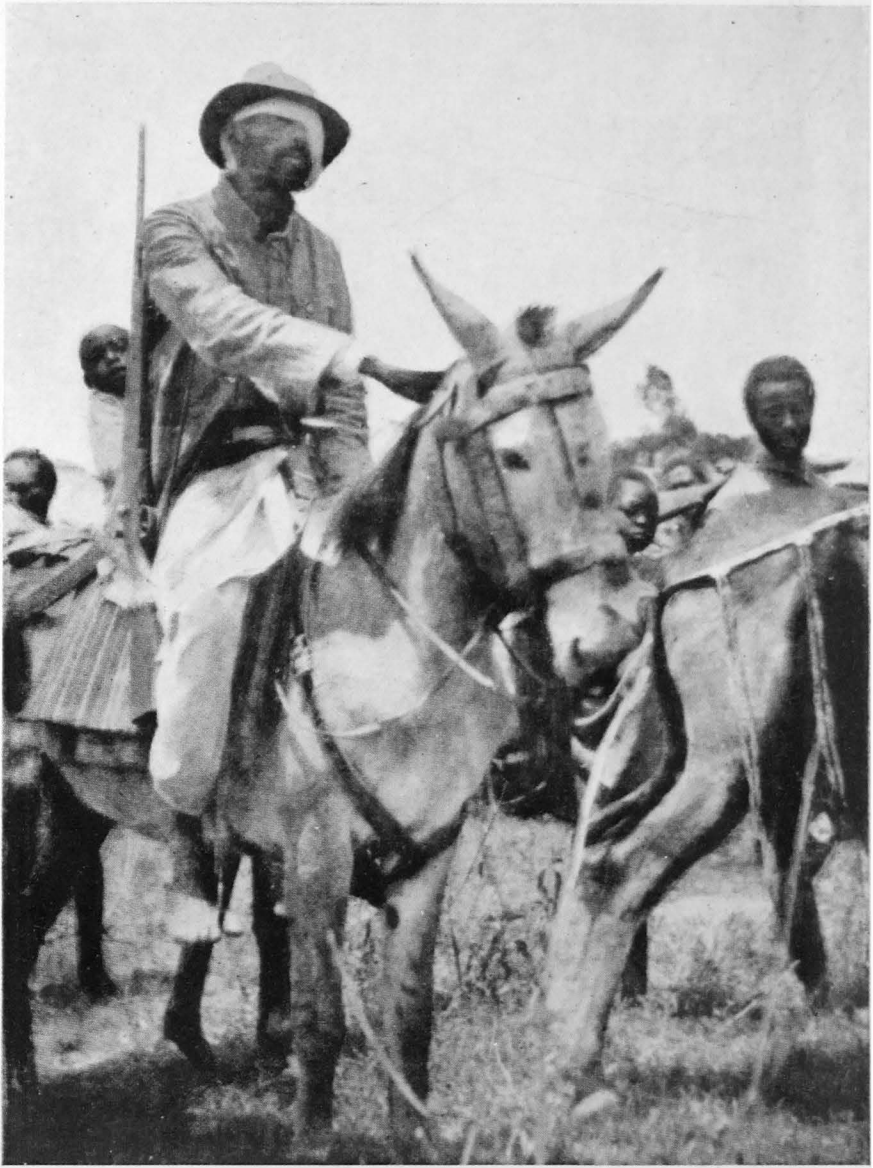


SLAVES AND IVORY





AN ABYSSINIAN SLAVE—TRADER RETURNING AFTER A SUCCESSFUL RAID.
(*Frontispiece*)

SLAVES AND IVORY

*A RECORD OF ADVENTURE AND EXPLORATION
IN THE UNKNOWN SUDAN, AND
AMONG THE ABYSSINIAN SLAVE-RAIDERS*

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

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Dedicated

to

*All those who have suffered and who
suffer at the hands of a race with
strength but without knowledge of mercy*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

It has been considered advisable that a short explanatory statement of facts regarding Abyssinia, and particularly the relations of Great Britain with that country, should preface this first-hand narrative of occurrences in that region, in order that the British public may be able to obtain a just appreciation of the general situation.

In Abyssinia we find an ancient civilization which has stagnated for hundreds of years, and is still in what may be termed the "barbaric era." This is mainly due to the geography of the country, and its natural position, for it is a mountainous region with a surface much broken by deep valleys ; it is also surrounded on every side by arid semi-desert country, and it has no sea-board.

It has, from the mists of time, been the scene of internal struggles for domination by chieftains of old descent, or by upstarts who have come to the fore by natural ability.

In the main the people are of Asiatic origin, and belong to the Cushite branch of what is generally known as the Hamitic stock. Widely intermixed with the Cushites, we, however, find other races, the Gallas being the most numerous ; they also belong to the Hamitic group, but are probably descendants of a still earlier migration from Asia. Then come the Somalis and Danakils ; the original home of their ancestors being probably the Yemen region of Arabia. Lastly we have the

Shankallas (Amharic for " negro "). These are a congeries of people of mixed Hamitic and negro blood ; they are either pagan or Mohammedan, and probably represent the effect of the original impact of the Hamitic stock upon the aboriginal African races in very early times.

Estimates of the population vary from four to eight millions ; in the absence, however, of any statistical organization it is doubtful if the government of the country has any precise knowledge of the number of its subjects.

In very early times some form of the Jewish religion seems to have been introduced into Abyssinia, but about 450 A.D. what is termed the monophysite form of Christianity, which maintains the single nature of Christ, was introduced, eventually being accepted by all the Cushite Abyssinians as the religion of the country : and the Abuna, or religious head, is always appointed by the Coptic Patriarch in Egypt.

At the same time, in the ceremonial of the Abyssinian Church relics of ancient Jewish observances have survived up to the present day.

The leading figure of recent years was the Negus (or Emperor) Menelik, who reigned from 1889-1908. Acquiring great prestige by his defeat of the Italian force at Adowa in 1896, he henceforth stood out as the first ruler for many years who was able to control the turbulent provincial governors, thus eventually assuring a measure of peace within his borders.

He concluded a series of treaties with the European Powers concerned, defining the boundaries of his kingdom with Italian, French and British Somaliland, the Sudan, and also Kenya Colony ; in return the three Powers concerned agreed to maintain the integrity of Abyssinia.

A commercial treaty with Great Britain was concluded in 1897 and 1902 in which rights of travel and trade were conceded, the usual "most favoured nation" clause appears, and further Menelik agreed not to construct or allow to be constructed works on the Blue Nile or Sobat which would interfere with the flow of Nile water; he also agreed to allow the British and Sudan Governments to construct a railway through Abyssinia to connect the Sudan with Uganda. Treaties on similar lines were also concluded with France and Germany.

Since Menelik's death in 1908 the political events in the country have been quite in accordance with its past history. Shortly before his death he nominated the son of Ras Mikael, one Lij Yasu, a boy of twelve as his successor, and appointed Ras Tesamma as Regent. The dowager Empress Taitu, however, had other views, and commenced to intrigue on behalf of a daughter of the late Negus named Waizaro Nauditu, who was married to Taitu's nephew. This brought her into conflict with the great Rases; they were too strong for her, and Lij Yasu's authority was established, but he was never crowned. An era of revolts and turmoil then commenced, Lij Yasu alienated the sympathy of his people by leanings towards Mohammedanism, and in 1916 he was deposed.

Taitu's protégée, Waizaro Nauditu, was then proclaimed Empress, with Ras Taffari (the son of the great Ras Makonnen) as Regent and heir to the throne, and this brings us up to the present day.

Under the feudal despotism of Abyssinia, as in Europe in the mediaeval era, one of the great difficulties of the central government is to control effectively the acts of the provincial governors,

who, by analogy, can be compared to the great barons of Norman times. At the same time the semi-independent attitude of their chieftains undoubtedly provides a convenient excuse for the non-performance of undertakings to the Powers.

The great source of friction with the British dependencies to the West and South, viz. the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya has for years past been the periodic raids for slaves, stock, ivory and anything else of a portable nature. The character of such raids is vividly described in Major Darley's story. The pure Cushite Abyssinian despises all forms of manual labour, and the other sections of Hamitic strain reluctantly do a little work for their own subsistence. The work of the country thus rests to a great extent either on slave labour or that of serfs.

At the instigation of the representatives of the European Powers (particularly Britain) Menelik in 1889 decreed the abolition of slavery throughout his Empire, with the exception of prisoners taken in war. As however for the next decade he was conducting military forays against the people on his frontiers the supply of prisoners nullified the effect of the proclamation. So it has gone on ; the demand for labour to produce food for a people who look upon all work, except military service, as beneath their dignity keeps slave raiding and serfdom alive. The visitation of that terrible scourge, the influenza epidemic in 1919, swept off many thousands of slaves. After its close the recurrence of raids into the outlying parts of the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya soon became more marked, and large tracts have undoubtedly been laid waste—the supply of slaves had to be replenished to enable the country to continue its traditional life. Not content with the supply of slaves

for service in the country a sporadic slave trade with Arabia still continues by sea.

For many years past British consular agents have been stationed in S.W. Abyssinia to watch events and report the facts, and the influence of men like Athill, Hawkins and Hodson has been good. It is well known that the task of these officers has been one of the greatest difficulty, and their reports would make interesting reading; but, in spite of questions in Parliament, successive Governments have consistently declined to publish them on the grounds that publicity would close their sources of information.

Detachments of the King's African Rifles patrol the Northern frontier of Kenya and Uganda, and a considerable force of armed constabulary is maintained at heavy expense to check the bands of raiders which periodically descend and ravage the lowlands. Every few months a brief paragraph appears in the Press that a patrol has come into conflict with one of these bands.

The Sudan report of 1923 (the last available) contains reference to a series of raids between Maji and the Sudan frontier on the Shangalla tribes, and some of the raiding parties crossed over into Mongalla Province. A force of Abyssinians made a descent on the Burun tribe in Sudan territory, the natives fled before it, but ten were killed. A police patrol encountered a small band of poachers from Abyssinia on the Atbara, and bands were also active in the Eastern portion of Mongalla Province. The terse official records of these incidents however give an inadequate idea of the terror which prevails among the few native survivors resident on the confines of the territories which are nominally under our control, but unfortunately are accessible to these predatory

bands. The report of the debate in the House of Lords on May 13th, 1925, contains some interesting information on this question (see footnote, p. xiii).

It is not alleged that these raids are initiated with the consent of the so-called Central Government, but the public opinion of the country is not adverse, for any human captives are only too welcome. In 1914 the Sudan Government decided to mobilize a strong force to occupy effectively its eastern frontier, but the outbreak of the great war unfortunately interrupted this action, and since the war it is said that comparatively little effort has been made to cope with the frontier situation, for, like most local governments, it has had its post-war difficulties.

Since the defeat of the Italians the arrogance of the Abyssinians and their contempt for Europeans has been steadily growing, for they have come to realize that no effective action is ever taken, and that the Powers confine themselves to diplomatic representations. The weight of these depends to some extent on the personal influence of a Minister with the powers that be, and the prestige of Britain was probably at its height when Sir John Harrington was our representative at Addis Abeba, for he had great influence for good over Menelik. It depends more, however, on whether the Negus and his Rases consider that any action will be taken to penalize a default.

Rās Taffari claims to be progressive and anxious to make reforms, he has even joined the League of Nations, which some consider a sign of grace; others suggest that it may be a device to render any effective intervention more difficult. By a decree issued in September, 1923, it was enacted that any person is liable to the death penalty who,

without the King's authorization, and except in case of war, seizes any person by violence with the object of enslaving him. This proclamation has, it is believed, made the traffic less public, but its effectiveness is open to doubt.

The patience of the Foreign Office and its reticence are quite understandable, and may perhaps be attributed to two reasons: firstly the suspicion of the other powers concerned, who are too often prone to attribute sinister designs to any action which might be taken by us, and secondly in view of Ras Taffari's protestations the Government is probably reluctant to do anything which may impair his position, and cause his downfall, at the hands of those who are frankly reactionary, for doubtless his chances of succession to the throne are none too sure.

How long this barbaric state can persist no one can foresee. A military occupation of Abyssinia as a prelude to the establishment of a settled Government on modern lines is at present unthinkable, but if only the Powers could agree, a warning that the next raid would be followed up by some definite action, such as a Customs blockade at the coast ports, on all goods destined for the country would cause the Abyssinian authorities to speedily realize that the Powers could no longer be trifled with. It is also imperative that the arms and ammunition traffic into Abyssinia should be stopped, but this again can only be effective by whole hearted co-operation among the Powers; without ammunition these predatory excursions would soon cease.

The Abyssinians now look upon themselves as unconquerable, and there is little doubt that many still hold the belief that they are entitled to establish dominion over the portion of Africa

to which Menelik referred in his famous circular to the Powers, viz. "I shall endeavour if God grants me life and strength to re-establish the ancient frontiers of Ethiopia as far as Khartoum and up to the Nyanza Lake, with the country of the Gallas." Needless to say, this claim is quite devoid of any historical sanction.

The only obstacles between both the native tribes and European farms on the Elgon-Laikipia line in Kenya Colony and the Abyssiniān raiders are a wide stretch of semi-desert, the routes across which are well known, and a very thin line of K.A.R. It is not anticipated that an organized Abyssinian raiding party would venture as far afield, for an operation so far from their base could not take place without the direct backing of the Regent, and it is hardly conceivable that he would imperil the autonomy of his country by such an act. For all that, an atmosphere of insecurity prevails. Great hopes at the moment are raised by the proceedings of the Slavery Commission of the League of Nations, and the result of its deliberations on this question is awaited with some interest.

This introductory note cannot be closed without a word about the gallant Yorkshireman who is the author of this thrilling story. He is a man of the blonde Nordic Viking type to whom adventure is the salt of life. Such men are often impatient of authority, and love to roam in unknown lands; but, alas, the sphere available for their activities is now becoming restricted. Britain however owes much to men of this breed, even though at times they fall foul of colonial governments through disregard of local regulations and possibly the inability to fully assess the difficulties of the situation when international questions are

involved. Even as this is written Major Darley, impelled by "wanderlust," is roaming about somewhere in the heart of his beloved continent. If any corroboration is needed of the state of affairs described by the author the reader should refer to the paper read by Major L. F. I. Athill, R.F.A., before the Royal Geographical Society in June, 1920, and entitled "Through South West Abyssinia to the Nile" (published in the *Geographical Journal*, Nov. 1920).* He closed his lecture by the following tribute to Major Darley, which I feel sure he will allow to be quoted.

"Major Darley possesses to a high degree the qualities of courage, sympathy and unswerving honour which have built up the reputation enjoyed by our countrymen throughout Africa. For many years he has lived among some of the most backward tribes with no support or protection except that of his own personality, and when the time comes for those tribes to be brought under effective administration the Governments on whom the task is laid will find how great is the debt which they will owe to the work and example of Major Henry Darley."

C. W. H.

October, 1925.

* Extracts from the paper referred to are given in an Appendix to this book.

Since the above was written another debate on the slavery question has taken place in the House of Lords (December 16th, 1905). Viscount Cecil stated that a paper has been laid which showed that while raids in search of ivory had occurred and it might be that slaves had sometime been taken in the process—so far as information went there had been no slave raids. There is a diplomatic subtlety about this reply which is unfortunate; the distinction is too fine for ordinary minds; surely when an ivory raiding party collects slaves it becomes a slave raiding expedition, and it appears as difficult as ever to obtain official information as to whether slaves have been captured by these bands which invade our territories.—C.W.H.

For date 1905 in above paragraph read 1925

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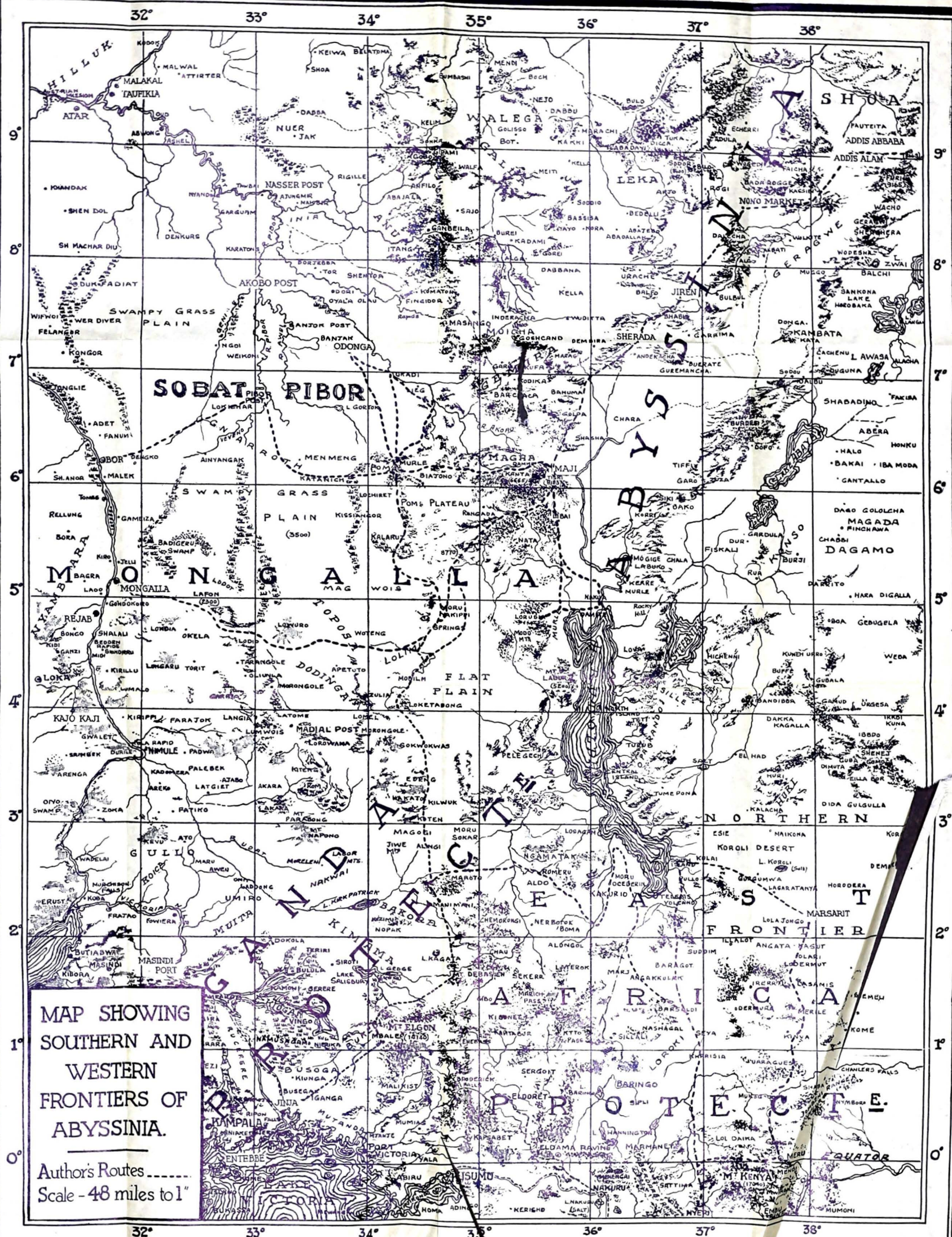
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MAP SHOWING
SOUTHERN AND
WESTERN
FRONTIERS OF
ABYSSINIA.

Author's Routes
Scale - 48 miles to 1"

CHAPTER I

INTO THE "BLUE"

It was in 1907 that I started out for the almost unknown territory North of Mount Elgon in Uganda, with the intention in the back of my mind of reaching Abyssinia, by a route which had not previously been traversed by any white party.

Some time previously I had received permission from the then British Consul in Abyssinia to penetrate that country from the Uganda side—if I could get that far. I also held a permit from the Governor of Uganda to enter the "closed area" between the Protectorate and the frontiers of Abyssinia. This permit, I may say, was, for some reason of which I am still unaware, cancelled some six months later, on the accession of another governor to Uganda. I had no official notice of the cancellation of my permit until 1919 when Major Athill arrived in Addis Abeba, capital of Abyssinia, and was put in my care, if I may so express it, to be piloted across the desert lands to the Nile.

Major Athill then remarked to the head of the Legation that he had had a warrant for my arrest in his pocket for five years, for being in a closed area without a permit. Needless to say, he did not execute the warrant!

Previous to that I had had advice from my own sources of native information that my name

was put up in a list of persons to be apprehended. However, as I did not return to Uganda, the arrest has never been carried into effect.

Having now cleared the ground as to my credentials, and also my purpose in exploring in this practically unknown area, I will proceed with my story.

The most Northerly station of the Uganda Government was, at the time I am speaking of, a place called Mbale, directly under the slopes of Mount Elgon, the inhabitants of which were cannibals, and still unsubdued.

It was quite customary at that time for these people to stand on the hill, just above the Government quarters, each morning, and shout insults to the white man in charge, invariably finishing up by declaring their intention of eating him at an early date. Doubtless they had their own native version of the old English nursery rhyme—

“Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive, or be he dead, I’ll grind his bones to make
my bread.”

All through Africa, however, hunters and traders can go where an army finds obstacles, so I had no difficulty with them, and brought all the food necessary for the first month’s journey into Karamjo, which is the name of the territory lying due North of Mount Elgon.

Uganda is, in certain parts, unhealthy, and I soon had an example of this, as I went down with a bad attack of “spirillum” fever, from which I nearly died, while still only seven days’ march from Mbale.

After about a month of this, I came to the conclusion that if I stopped there any longer I should only go into my grave, so I gave orders

to my men to cut a pole, and tie my blankets to it, and in this primitive hammock I started out again due North, being much too weak to walk. It was a case of "If we go back, we die. If we go forward we die. It is better to go forward."

Much of the time I was half unconscious, but invariably better each morning.

The third day, just after we had started out, we were going steadily along when the boys stopped suddenly, and told me that there was an elephant standing asleep under a tree about half a mile ahead, so I gave orders for them to carry me on in his direction. Arriving within a few hundred yards, I crawled out of my blankets, seized my .450 rifle and staggered towards him. The wind being just right, he slept on. Getting within sixty yards, I sat down on the ground, and fired both barrels at him, one after the other, aiming behind the shoulder.

The concussion of the heavy rifle knocked me down and out, and the next thing I can remember was waking up in bed in camp. The elephant was dead, and all was well, and the men were very pleased, for now they knew their wages were being carried along with them in the shape of the tusks of ivory.

I went slowly forward for some sixteen days in this fashion, until I reached a camp called Chudi Chudi, where I saw running water for the first time since leaving Mount Elgon, so decided to stop there.

I remained at this spot for over a year, making trips in every direction in pursuit of the nimble elephant, but found that bands of Swahilis, Egyptians, Greeks, Arabs, and Baluchis, all hunting in this district, had nearly finished them off.

Eventually, a number of Abyssinian gun-runners arrived in my camp, which had by that time come to be the trade centre for that area. This meant that I must leave, as I did not wish to be associated with these law breakers, so I determined to go on further to a place called Toposa, which was said to be about ten days' march further on.

It was not a popular spot with the Baluchis, as two of their greatest men, Shundi and Chambi, had only recently been killed there by the natives, and, at first, my porters absolutely refused to start. Luck, however, was with me in an unforeseen fashion.

I was sitting under a big, spreading, wild-fig tree, while my porters and I argued about the matter. Eventually they went off by themselves to "throw their bones," for by this means they foretell the future. Having finished, they returned to tell me their decision, which, I could see, was in the negative. Just as their headman stood up to speak, a little green tree snake dropped out of the tree under which I was sitting in my camp chair, right on to my lap. He twisted about there for a moment, while I sat perfectly still, and then wriggled over my thigh to the ground, and vanished.

There was dead silence at this omen, and the porters, without a word, retired to have a further consultation. They soon returned, saying that they would go anywhere with me now, for the snake had shown them that danger would come near me, but that it would never harm me.

Without further delay, off we started for the unknown, passing, after a few days, the last, and the most advanced hunting headquarters of the Baluchis. They dared go no further afield, as the Toposans, for whose country we were heading,

had a noted reputation as fighting men. The Baluchi hunters however were more raiders than hunters, being in the habit of backing one chief against another, and so getting their share of loot and cattle, with which they bought ivory. White men, on the contrary, had a good character, as none of them had ever been known to indulge in this practice. One man in particular, Bell by name, had stopped this raiding, and in certainly one instance had returned looted cattle to their proper owners.

In the attempt to take advantage of this reputation for honesty, many native hunters, the Baluchis in particular, dressed as white men, and tried to pass as such, but with little success, for no one is quicker than a native to discern the difference between races.

After leaving the last camp of these rascals we marched on into country quite new to us, having been so fortunate as to engage the services of a native who knew the road into the country of the dreaded Toposans.

Each night, for better security, we built a large thorn fence all round us, which took some time, as our party consisted of about sixty porters, fifty donkeys, and twenty-five head of cattle. The Toposans were famous for night attacks, and their feat of wiping out the Baluchis, Shundi, and Chambi, and their party consisting of some three hundred souls, including well-armed men, and numerous women and children, had completely awed the whole mob of raiders, of whom Shundi had been easily the bravest, and most adventurous. Strange to say, although this man had passed as a Baluchi, he was really a Kavirondo from the Victoria Nyanza region, who had been enslaved as a child, and by sheer force of character

had become the leader of the band. A fine fellow, he was like a lion among jackals, but of course with the African point of view, namely that he takes who has the power, and he keeps who can. Having himself been a slave, the suppression of the slave trade horrified him, and his one idea had always been to find a country where slavery was permitted. He had a rooted dislike to the British Government for having been instrumental in freeing two of his own slaves.

NOTE.—The man Shundi above referred to was a remarkable character. He is said to have been a son of the great Kavirondo chief Sundu, who is referred to at length by Joseph Thomson in his famous work, "Through Masailand." Shundi was, as is above described, abducted by some Swahili traders and sold to a chief of the Wa-Chagga on Kilimanjaro. As he grew up, the forceful character of his father developed in the son; he became a leader of ivory trading caravans, and until the Pax Britannica was established did a little slave-trading as well. He returned to Kavirondo about 1896 and made his base at Mumias, where his blood kin lived. I knew him well and, according to his lights, he was a fine character. He was, as Capt. Darley states, a brave man, generous, and if fortune had so willed it he would have made a great paramount chief, and ruled his people well.—C.W.H.

CHAPTER II

ELEPHANTS AND LIONS

Four or five days after leaving the last outposts we arrived at a place called Lolimi. Here the signs of former native villages, and also of warfare, were to be seen on every hand.

In the evening, during the usual quiet which broods o'er the land at sundown, we were hailed by a voice from the nearest hillock, asking us who we were, and what we wanted. We explained that we were a white hunting expedition, and that we sought elephants.

Next morning we were visited by some of the Toposans, who, having assured themselves that we were telling the truth, guided us some two days' march further into their country, till we arrived at the river Lokulan.

Here we were met by a large concourse, consisting of nearly all the chiefs of the country, with some four or five thousand warriors, and completely surrounded. Our intentions were again discussed, and we were most plainly told that if we wished to steal cattle, the skulls of the Baluchis, which were still to be seen in every direction, would indicate that this was not a healthy thing to do. We had been brought to this place, where the Baluchis had died, to show us the result of such action.

We explained, as well as we could, that all we wanted was elephants.

“In that case,” said the head chief, “there is a herd of elephants just over that rise in front of you. Go and kill one, and we will believe you.”

I hated to leave my men behind, for they were naturally frightened of this threatening mob; but necessity knows no law, so off I went, accompanied by my gun-bearer, one Loinya, a native of the adjoining tribe of Dodinga, who acted as my interpreter, and was a very brave man.

After about half an hour we crossed the rise, and, sure enough, the natives had told the truth, for there, standing underneath two big trees right out in the open, was a herd of elephants, and, a little to one side, two big bulls.

We were escorted by about four hundred warriors, who guided us into a good position for our attack, and then sat down solemnly on the ground to watch our proceedings.

I must confess I felt far from comfortable. Behind us were four hundred of the most savage-looking warriors imaginable, and about three hundred yards off, in front, was a herd of elephants. Neither of these prospects looked very inviting!

Loinya, however, looked forward, then back, and laughed right out, a thing heseldom did, saying that as we were in the lion's mouth, we had better tear the throat out of it. So we advanced, to all appearances much amused at our little jest.

The elephants, which were evidently accustomed to the sight of man, were not disturbed by our approach, and, by great good fortune, I got both bulls with a right and left.

I stood and jerked out my cartridges preparatory to putting in fresh ones. At that moment I heard a noise like thunder behind me. It was the feet of the warriors beating on the hard ground as they rushed past me on the prey. In a moment

the two elephants were completely covered by them, and they commenced cutting them up. Not a soul paid any more attention to us two, as we remained, rooted to the spot, and gazing at this phenomenon.

After watching for a few minutes, I handed my rifle to Loinya, and we walked back to camp, passing on the way every one of the suspicious crowd which had previously surrounded us, now, in a trice, converted into the best of friends, and all convinced that I was really a white man.

Arriving in camp I found my men quite happy, pitching the tents, and cooking their food. The general remark was that my "medecine" was very strong, and that the snake had told the truth.

Next morning I sent off some of my men to see if the natives had finished with the elephants. All they found were the bare skulls with the tusks sticking out of them. Every other bit of skin, meat, and bone had been carried off for food, and even the perforated bone in the front part of the skulls had been cut out. I believe it makes very good soup.

Loinya had talked about tearing out the lion's throat, but it seemed to me as if we had fed the beast instead!

Here I will digress, with the reader's permission, in order to narrate one or two instances of native bravery and courage which have come under my observation.

I have the greatest respect and regard for the native of Africa. He is a first-rate fellow, happy as the day is long, brave as the proverbial lion, and, until he is spoilt, one of the easiest people in the world to get along with.

How he dares to wander through desert and bush, all full of dangerous beasts, armed with

nothing but an old spear of soft iron, I never could understand!

I remember on one occasion, I was camped under El Donyo L'ol Pisyān, a high hill of the General Matthews range of mountains, close to the kraal of some sheep-owning people called Samburu.

One day they came to me and complained that a lioness had broken into their kraal at night, and had carried off several of their sheep. I could not get round to them for a day or two, but when I did, they told me that this lioness had broken in on each of the preceding three nights.

Wanting to help them, I strolled down to their village just about sundown, and found that they had built an enormous thorn fence right round their sheep yard, but in spite of that the lioness had gone through or over it. I should not have considered this possible; no horse could have jumped the fence, nor could any man have got through it, but the fright the natives were all in satisfied me that they were telling the truth.

I went and stood at the gate while the sheep were being driven in. At that moment, all in a flash, the lioness jumped out of a bush by the roadside, into the middle of the flock, and, striking out right and left, killed several sheep. I shouted for my gun-bearer, who, as he fancied himself with the fair sex, was talking to some of the girls, and did not see what was occurring.

Now, the little boy herding the sheep was armed with a small spear, and a shield made of wicker-work, about eighteen inches long by nine inches wide—a sort of toy shield. He ran straight up to the lioness, and holding his shield in front of him, speared her in the neck, just as

she rose on her hind legs to claw his left arm with both forepaws almost from shoulder to wrist. Undeterred, the boy speared her again. The lioness turned round, went a few paces, then curled up and died.

There was dead silence, for by now all were looking on.

The boy went over to the lioness, satisfied himself that she was dead, and then, walking straight up to me, and holding out his arm, streaming with blood, without a change of countenance, said: "Give me some 'dawa' (medicine) for these scratches." I was amazed at his fortitude, but curtly replied: "Go up to camp, there is plenty there."

He turned round, went up again to the lioness, cut her tail off, and arrived in camp before I did. I found him there perfectly happy, filling himself up with meat, as well as he could, with one hand. The other natives said not one word, and acted as if it was an ordinary proceeding, a thing which I can hardly believe.

Another instance of bravery was as follows:—

An old man and his grandson, two Wanderobo, lived under Mount Guargues. Like all other Wanderobo, they existed on a diet of meat and honey, for these people keep neither cattle nor sheep, and eat no flour. When they kill, or find a dead animal, they camp beside it until they have devoured it. Of course, their idea of bliss is a large-sized dead elephant, so they follow all white hunters about, and help them in every possible way.

This grandson, who was about sixteen years of age, was cumbered with much serving, as his father was dead, and his grandsire was much too old to climb trees, or do much work. A quiet

most subdued little boy he was, as the weight of the household was on his shoulders.

Further up the mountain lived another old man, who, still in his prime, and with his three big, strong sons was always giving this little lad trouble by stealing his honey pots, or hives. This is a most heinous sin among these people, as their hives take the place of fields, or cattle, in their economy.

One day, as this old man and his little boy were visiting their preserves, they caught the other natives in the act of stealing their property.

As soon as they caught sight of each other, the despoilers cried out: "Let us kill this old man and the child, and then all the honey pots will be ours," and forthwith attacked.

The first one rushed at the old man, paying no attention to the boy, who, lunging with his spear as he passed, pierced him through the heart. Down he fell. The second son stumbled on the body of his brother, and again the youth's spear went home in his neck, and down he went, too. The third son drove at the boy, but he stepped to one side, and made his thrust, but this time only succeeded in inflicting a big gash along his opponent's neck and shoulder (which I had the pleasure of sewing up afterwards); but that was sufficient for the attackers, and he and his father fled, quite determined to have no more to do with such a warrior.

I saw the youngster a few days afterwards, and congratulated him on his prowess. His answer amazed me. "How do you suppose it possible," said he, "that a little boy like I am could kill two big men, and wound another unaided? It was the act of God ("shauri ya Mungu"), for they were doing evil."

ELEPHANTS AND LIONS

13

Now this lad was neither Christian nor Moham-
medan, but only what we call a little pagan. But
I have found that all people who live near Nature
believe in God. Usually those who claim they
do not do so are those ultra-civilized people
who are too well fed, and are provided with a
stout policeman near at hand in case they should
get into trouble at any time.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT MIGRATION ROUTES

To return to Toposa. This was a splendid district for elephants, and the inhabitants the very best ; but, indeed, so are all African natives unless ruined by contact with civilization. Naturally, they think themselves every bit as good as we are, until we show them we are superior, which is not a very difficult thing to do with the white man's weapons and knowledge.

The uncivilized native is a real good fellow, brave and honest. Yet one of the most extraordinary things I know is the way he reverts to his former state of life, even after years spent at school, and in white men's towns. I have even seen American negroes, who have come to Africa, return to the mode of life of their forefathers with perfect contentment.

From the ethnological point of view the natives of Africa consist of many different races, which have generally, so one gathers, come in waves from the North, overcoming the former inhabitants, and settling down, have in turn been overcome themselves.

One imagines that the original inhabitants of Africa, as far as is known, must have been the pigmy of the Congo, or the bushman of South Africa.

These original tribes still exist in different



TYPES OF SLAVES WITH THE ABYSSINIANS.

parts of the continent, mostly in inaccessible places, such as Mount Agoro in Uganda, the Kalahari desert, and the forest of the Congo.

Mount Agoro is a remarkable case in point. Perched right on the top of the mountain live these aboriginals; half way down, another race tills the soil; while, at the foot, the Nilotic tribes pasture their flocks and herds.

Up to the time of the occupation, and administration of this part of Africa by the British Government, all these three tribes were in a state of constant warfare, and of course had been so for unknown generations.

The Toposa tribe is a part of that wave which I may call the Masai spear, which stretches across Africa from the Dinkas of the Nile, near Khartoum, to the Masai on the East side of Kilimanjaro, formerly German East Africa, now Tanganyika Territory.

This wave includes the Dinkas, the Rotillas, the Toposans, the Turkana, and numerous other small sub-tribes, all of whom speak different "patois" of the Masai language.

Many are the theories about the Masai, and numerous the books which have been written about them by people whom I would not dare to criticize, but, personally, I venture the suggestion that the original Masai consisted largely of the ancestors of the Galla, an unknown race, which came from nobody knows where, and settled in the desolated parts of Abyssinia laid waste by Mohammed Gran.

I believe that the extermination of tribes took place much more rapidly, and completely, in ancient times than it does at present, and also that, when a tribe for any reason left its former home, it left *en masse*, but few, if any, remaining

behind, as was the case with the Children of Israel.

The present destruction of the Shangalla tribes, who live on the Southern borders of Abyssinia, would have been effected in days gone by much more rapidly than at present, as their complete extermination has been checked by the difficulty of disposing of so many valuable slaves, a difficulty unheard of till the last century.

The country of the Toposa people has partially escaped the slave raiders of Abyssinia, but, even so, it is plain to any traveller that they once inhabited a tract of country much further North than their present habitat. I found many place names here in the pure Masai tongue, while the Toposas themselves speak a language very different to Masai, although akin to it.

These place-names, while only names to the Toposans, call attention to the characteristics of each place. I may mention particularly Li-Oro (the he-goat), Ol Bugoi (the place of sansevieria).*

I have been much struck with the way in which names of places become changed. On one occasion I was talking to a number of Toposans about my route to the Boma plateau. One of those present was a very old man, who claimed to have lived there with the tribe as a boy. When I told him I intended to go by way of a hill called Moro Yakippi, he exclaimed: "Oh, yes, and from there you go under El Donyo Kapel" (the hill of the wild geese)—giving the pure Masai word and pronunciation.

"Where is that?" asked one of the young men. "Surely the right road is *via* such and such a place"—giving the same name, but so slurred and mispronounced that at first neither recognized the fact that the word was identical. However, it was easy to see that they were both speaking

*Sansevieria—an aloe used for making rope.

of the same place, as the geese at times flock there in thousands.

Toposa, besides being a most remunerative country from an ivory point of view, was most interesting for other reasons. It formed a sort of backwater, which neither the raiders from Mbale nor the Abyssinians dared to invade. One could realize, however, that it was only a question of time before one or other of these parties would make a serious attempt upon it, and the Toposa chiefs fully recognized this fact.

For this reason they welcomed any white man who might come amongst them, for, thanks to Sir George Clerk, and Bell (commonly known as "Karamojo" Bell), they recognized that the white man was not a robber, and that the other bands feared him.

It was Sir George Clerk who descended the Abyssinian hills with a large following of Abyssinians, in pursuit of an Abyssinian pillager who had been raiding the whole country. Sir George was alone, as the representative of the British Government, in the midst of at least a thousand Abyssinians.

When his party arrived in Toposa, the soldiers at once started raiding slaves, as is their custom. Sir George heard of this. He immediately visited every tent in camp, seized the captives, and set them free to return to their homes.

All this he had to do personally, as he had no British subjects with him. Moreover, on his return to Maji, from which place he had started out, he heard that there were still some raided slaves in the band. Now the way to Maji lies up a steep hill, and the narrow trail runs along the knife-edge crest of a ridge. It is stated, and the statement is very likely true, that he sat down on

this trail with his rifle across his knees, took each slave as he passed him, and sent them all home.

As he was all by himself, and hundreds of miles from any other Government official, anything might have happened to him. The Abyssinians named him "The Buffalo," for, said they, "when he gets his head set, nothing turns him but death."

With all his extraordinary pluck, he must have often wondered how long his luck would hold, for if a sad accident had occurred, by the explosion of a rifle, or a nasty taste in his morning coffee, I do not suppose any action could have been taken by the representatives of the British Government.

Sir George Clerk.—Salaam, Sana !

"Karamojo" Bell had acted in like manner to the Mbale raiders, returning slaves and cattle to their proper owners.

It is always to the interest of a hunter, or trader, to be the friend and protector of any tribe with which he may be living. This very natural sentiment was not apparently recognized by the B.E.A. and Uganda Governments, who allowed raiding to go on unchecked for years, and refuse even now to allow white men to pass freely into these "closed areas."*

To keep this part of Africa officially "closed" will mean the eventual extermination of the people in it. It is true that the frontier is

* The object of the Uganda and Kenya Governments in declaring, by order in the Official Gazettes, these inaccessible areas as "closed districts" was to check the entry of those who desired to roam about therein shooting elephant in contravention of the game laws, and also oppress outlying native settlements who were beyond effective protection. The policy has not proved an unqualified success, for, as the author describes, bodies of undesirable Swahili and Baluchi ruffians for a long time successfully evaded the efforts of the border posts to check their incursions.—C.W.H.

“policed,” in parts. Also that raids are punished by the police and military by “punitive expeditions”—which, to the native mind, bear little or no difference from the ordinary raids—but, by one means or the other, the country gradually becomes depopulated. The easiest and quickest method of stemming the ebbing tide of life is to throw the country open. For where the white man goes, law and order comes at last.

With Clerk and Bell’s example before my eyes, and still more before the eyes of the Abyssinian and Mbale bands, my life in Toposa was peaceable and almost without excitement, except for the chase of the nimble bull elephant, which generally took all my time. On these occasions the Toposa natives followed me in crowds, cutting up each animal as it fell, and leaving nothing for the hyenas and vultures. Not an inch of skin, even, was wasted, and, as they said, “Even the women now wear shoes.”

So my life among this dreaded tribe passed pleasantly enough, but on the outskirts of Toposa it was none too safe to roam about.

There was an old chief who lived near a hill called Logiza. He was a most interesting old fellow. During the reign of the Mahdi at Khartoum, he had got into touch with and eventually visited him there, and he managed to secure quite a number of the old “Brown Bess” Tower muskets, which we had given to the Turks after the Crimean war. What a tale these old rifles could tell if they could only speak, and of what good stuff they must have been made! They had drifted out to Egypt, and from there to the Sudan, to end up in this district of the Upper Nile. Their price had always been—one rifle, one slave, so this old chief had evidently been in the slave business.

He had a wholesome respect for the white man, for he could never understand how our people defeated the Dervishes at the battle of Omdurman, and he had firmly made up his mind to be friendly with any of them who might wander in his direction. This good intention was by no means followed by his son and heir, who held quite opposite opinions. In fact, this offspring of his broke away from his father's influence altogether, seceded with about half the tribe, and took up other quarters near by, attacking any white man's "safari" which came along.

I have since heard that in the end he paid for his temerity with his life.

In Toposa I soon got all the ivory I could conveniently arrange to carry, and besides, though ivory helps to pay the piper, the tune I love best is "over the hills, and far, far away," and new country, and new, untrodden trails have a resistless appeal.

Before leaving the subject of elephant hunting I must say a few words on the subject of this splendid animal. I have found in my experience that there is nothing which stirs the cockles of the heart so profoundly as the sight of a good bunch of bull elephants. Old Jorrocks may sing of fox hunting, and good sport that is, but if he had known anything about elephant hunting, I am sure he would have given it pride of place!

Yet indeed, nowadays, the chase of the larger animal is not so hazardous as it used to be. For the heavy penetrating cordite shells of the present day have an immense advantage over the old black powder guns of our fathers, who really were brave men, and took their lives in their hands. Nowadays there is not so much in it. Of course, in my wanderings I have killed many, but I

have not wished to weary the reader with accounts of my hunting, unless there happened to be something interesting mixed up with it.

Apart from hunting, a matter worth mentioning is the ancient rumour of elephant cemeteries, where the animals go to die. I heard of one of these places and visited it, just under the Boma plateau, in the Sudan area, at Moro Yakippi.

Here the heap of elephant skulls was evidently the result of these animals drinking the water, which becomes poisonous during a drought.

I also found, on the Tarash river in Turkana, a row of dead elephants, not close together, but scattered over a distance of some miles. These were the remains of one complete herd, which had died while following down the Tarash river. The natives declared they had died from the same sickness which had killed their cattle, and that was rinderpest, which was rife at the time. The ivory was collected by an old Swahili trader called Idi Bin Rajabu, and brought into the Government station at Mbale in Uganda about the year 1905.

The great question now was whether we should go on to Abyssinia, or return to Uganda.

I had heard that the Uganda Government wanted to arrest me, and confiscate my ivory, though of course, they did not interfere with the native raiders so much nearer to them. I also heard that two officials had visited my old camp at Chudi Chudi, but had found the bird flown, the only relics of my occupation being a whisky bottle, suspended over the door, and a notice I had facetiously hung up: "To Government Officials, Traders, and other unfortunates. Help yourselves, and pass the bottle!"

Unfortunately for them, perhaps, the bottle

was empty when they got there, as somebody had helped himself to the contents.

The country ahead was almost unknown, and the rumours concerning the Abyssinians were really frightening. But, as Uganda appeared to be blocked to us, and as my men did not seem to mind where we went, we secured a guide who claimed he knew the road, and started off towards Abyssinia, carrying most of our ivory, and all of us in good heart.

The country from our camp due North was at that time periodically visited by Abyssinian raiding parties in pursuit of slaves, even as it is to-day (1925), and so for ten days' march or so we expected to see nobody, except perhaps slave raiders, and we hoped, in that case, they would not be stronger than we were.

CHAPTER IV

AN ABYSSINIAN " ARMY "

Leaving Toposa for Abyssinia was like stepping out of a house into the rain.

In Toposa alone was safety and peace.* Southwards, the robbers from Mbale held sway, while to the East not only was the main road travelled by both these parties, but the dreaded Turkana, armed with rifles by the Abyssinians, were a menace to all, even to those of the same tribe as themselves.

No wonder my men were somewhat nervous, for the slaving proclivities of the Abyssinians were well known, and they had no desire to finish their lives as slaves.

Their belief in my " medicine " was still strong however, so off we marched quite happily, and for five days after leaving the outskirts of Toposa saw no recent signs of human life, with the exception of the bodies of about a dozen Abyssinians who had died of thirst about twenty miles south of the famous Moro Akippi. We found their bodies scattered along an elephant track which they had evidently mistaken for the main road, and by so doing had missed the only water hole in the country. From this water hole to Moro Akippi (hill of water) is about twelve

* Now alas ! in 1925, Toposa has been raided and its people crushed under the heel of Abyssinia, for the Sudan Government still sleeps along the Nile.—H.D.

hours journey over an almost level plain, with a solitary hill as a landmark, known to the natives as Moro Karu (hill of thirst), which name speaks for itself.

Moro Akippi was a most noted place among the traders, as a sort of fabled mountain where all riches, including gold, were rumoured to exist. But, for myself, I do not believe there is any gold there, and certainly I found none. All we did find was a large number of burnt-out camps, the signs of cultivation, and a small band of Abyssinians, who were even more frightened of us than we were of them! The Arab proverb, "In the desert all men are enemies until they are proved to be friends" proved as great a truism in this portion of British Territory in 1910, as it is to-day in 1925.

On we went from day to day, the land rising gradually higher all the time, until, at the end of the eighth day after passing Moro Akippi, we arrived at the edge of the Boma plateau; and, across a large river called the Keibesh our guide pointed out, in the distance, the position of Maji, the rumoured outpost of the Abyssinians, and even then noted as the home of the slavers and robbers who still infest the country between there and the Nile.

We hardened our hearts, and pressed forwards. For days we had not seen a soul except one or two naked savages, who vanished into the *ewigkeit* at the mere glimpse of our party, and who paid no attention to our calls, or peace signs. Prior to this, in no part of our long journey had the universal sign of peace, namely, the plucking and waving of grass, been disregarded, but here all men appeared to be enemies.

On we trudged, until we arrived at last under

the almost precipitous cliff on which stands Maji. Here a few of the aborigines of the country met us, scared, humble, and absolutely naked. Our conversation was of necessity limited and confined itself to " nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles " on our part, while these unhappy folk stood round for a few moments, and then fled up-hill, carrying, we surmised, news of our approach to their masters and owners.

Night drew on. It was bitterly cold, and sleep was difficult, for, besides the low temperature, we did not know how our future hosts would receive us. In fact, a volley from the cliff which frowned above would not have surprised us.

However, next morning we climbed the hill, which in after times we thought nothing of, and reaching a plateau on the top, we saw stretched before us a small army of about a thousand Abyssinians, all clothed in white, and evidently ready for business.

My men sat down, and I rode forward to introduce myself.

In the middle of the road a number of chiefs were grouped together. Their soldiers stretched to their right and left as far as I could see, and as their portion of the little plateau was above us, they could watch our every movement.

Approaching to within about a hundred yards, and seeing that the soldiers were beginning to handle their rifles in what appeared to be a somewhat nervous manner, I slipped off my mule, and went forward alone. Still nothing happened!

Arriving at the spot where the chiefs stood, it was not difficult to pick out their leader. I addressed myself to him, and said " Jambo ! " (How do you do !). He answered me in like manner, so I held out my hand and laughed, looking first

at him, and then at his line of soldiery. He gripped my hand, and, before releasing it, held it for quite a while, looking me straight in the eye, as if to read my thoughts.

Just then, another of the crowd, evidently a Swahili, addressed me, and we all sat down on the grass by the road-side, and had a chat, the chief meantime having made a sign to his men to go home, which they did without more ado.

Then we rode on into the town of Maji, the best of friends. I was shown a house for myself, and huts for my boys, and for some days I had a good rest, getting rid of the dysentery with which I had been bothered for some time. Of course we were rather like prisoners for the first month or so, until the chief had received a reply to the report which he sent to his feudal superior, some fifteen days' journey away; but I sold some of my ivory at a fair price, so we had money, and paid our way without difficulty.

Maji was, and is, a lovely place, about eight thousand feet above sea level. It has a cool climate, and the rough country was clothed with short grass, and bracken fern. There was an abundance of food for both man and beast, and wheat, barley, potatoes, and maize were all plentiful.

The head chief was away in Addis Abeba, but he was expected back shortly. He had been called to the capital by Menelik, for the Emperor summoned all his chiefs there every year or two, and the behaviour of the sub-chiefs at Maji left nothing to be desired.

The country, indeed, seemed just as well run as our own part of Africa, such at least was my impression at the time.

For six weeks we were detained in Maji, until

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a permit arrived from the Prince, or " Ras " of South West Abyssinia, allowing us to proceed to Addis Abeba if we wished to do so. Of course we had grumbled at being detained so long, but actually the delay was most fortunate for us, as it gave us all a good opportunity of learning, not only a few words of the Abyssinian language, but also the method of government which obtained in the country. This is, of course, most necessary knowledge for anybody who wishes to live there, and without it, residence, or trade, is almost impossible.

CHAPTER V

ABYSSINIAN ADMINISTRATION

May I here venture to ask my readers to tolerate a slight digression from the actual incidents of my journey, for it is, I think, essential to an understanding of the narrative that some explanation of the system of government should be given at this juncture.

Abyssinia is still ruled under a Feudal System, and during Menelik's reign this system was splendidly carried out, its application was most effective. A child could leave Addis Abeba with his cow, and drive it to the furthest confines of his country without fear or molestation.

“ Quam bene Menelik vivebant rege priusquam ! ”

Abyssinia is divided into several large districts, and the governors of these districts were all loyal supporters of the Emperor, but nevertheless, his custom was to call them to the capital every year or two, ostensibly for consultation, but really to remind them of his power.

The sub-governors of these districts were appointed by the Emperor's nominees, and they in turn appointed their own officers. In case of any dispute each man had the right of appeal against the decision of his chief to that chief's superior, and, in serious cases, to Menelik himself. I believe in the old days in Europe the cry of “ In the King's name ! ” was sufficient to arrest

anybody. It was so in Abyssinia, when the injunction was made formally, and before witnesses. Menelik himself was most determined on the right of all to this appeal, and compelled all his princes to acknowledge it, although the Abyssinian is most opposed to control of any sort, and strives to take the first opportunity which may come to him to be independent. There is an Abyssinian proverb which says: "Give an Abyssinian two glasses of wine, and his head will swell until he thinks he is as strong as two people." This being the main characteristic of the Abyssinian people, each chief constantly aims at promotion by any means, and intrigue is rife.

There is scarcely a "Ras" who does not hope to be King, and scarcely a chief who does not hope to be Ras.

One remarkable feature of Abyssinia is that there are few, if any, roads, only trails through the bush, and there are hundreds of square miles of unoccupied territory, all of which were once inhabited, but have been laid waste by the civil wars which were and are, the constant curse of the country, both prior to, and since, the reign of Menelik, and not least, by the devastating effect of the feudal system of the sort obtaining to-day in the country.

A proverb well known in this land says: "The King of Abyssinia wades in blood to his throne."

As will presently be seen, there never was a truer proverb coined.

When the ruling Emperor wishes to give a territory to one of his supporters, he addresses the fortunate person as follows: "Go to such and such a country, and eat."

The newly appointed governor leaves the presence, and must himself search for chiefs,

soldiers, and weapons, besides having to transport himself and his people from the capital to his new command. This meantime will have been thoroughly and systematically evacuated by the supporters of the out-going governor, who carry off with them in their removal everything portable, including in the same category both man and beast, and livestock of all kinds. They leave nothing but a waste for the new-comer, who must search for food, and live as best he can until the crops are sown and reaped, and until he gets some money from the Customs houses, which take their toll on every road leading to his district.

Then only can he consider himself established, and can sit down and "eat" in peace.

As may easily be understood, this system tends to the economic ruin of the country, and that it has stood it so long is only a sign of its extraordinary fertility. But, with no population, or with a population constantly on the decrease, this must come to an end sooner or later, and the Shangallas, who are the original inhabitants of the Southern and Western parts of the country, have been almost exterminated.

These Shangallas were first conquered by Menelik, who destroyed about half of them during his operations. Being a judicious conqueror and ruler, however, he realized that if they were completely exterminated, there would be nobody left to do his soldiers' work, or to grow their food, for no Abyssinian will work at manual labour. They are soldiers, and look down on all workers, and traders. So he called a halt in the extermination process, and gave orders that no Shangalla was to be removed from his own country.

The governors of the Southern, and South Western parts of the kingdom used to divide these

Shangalla serfs among their soldiers and sub-chiefs. They were called "Gubbar" (serfs), and though, in Menelik's time, they were not allowed to be sold off the land, of late years all is changed, and they are called "Barias" (slaves) and are treated as such, while slavery has become the chief source of income of the Abyssinians.

This, however, is rapidly coming, or has come, to an end, for the Shangallas, as has been pointed out, have almost ceased to exist, and the Abyssinians do not know where to turn, either for food or money.

Seated, as they are, on the hills overlooking the plains of Kenya and the Sudan, and gazing out over that expanse, they see thousand of natives, rich in cattle and sheep, herding them in peace, protected only by a negligible force of a few white men, with a few armed natives of the same race as these despised slaves. What is more, long stretches of the British frontier are quite unprotected.

The logical and natural result is that the slave-raiding gangs help themselves. Nothing is easier. They have but to make their arrangements with the governor of the province into which they return with their loot, and he, in his turn, settles with the head power above him.

As all the provincial governors must pay taxes to the head power at the capital, the ruler gets his share of whatever comes, whether in money, gold, cattle, or slaves.

It would be interesting to know how many slaves the present holder of power in Addis Abeba has acquired during his reign. He is quite a civilized personage, and appreciates many of the advantages of civilization, so much so that he approves of vaccination, and has each new

batch of slaves operated upon by the doctors attached to one or other of the Legations which are accredited to this Christian Power in Addis Abeba.

Money, actual hard cash, is very scarce, as the Abyssinian Government does not approve of exporting corn, cattle, or other produce out of their country. Their idea is that such action would bring starvation to themselves, knowing, as they do, that they are surrounded on all sides by desert country where little or nothing can be produced agriculturally. The result is that nobody grows more than they want for their own use, and away from the capital food of all sorts is extraordinarily cheap.

It is hardly necessary to point out, that, given safe means of communication with the lowlands surrounding Abyssinia, a very large trade would spring up. I myself have eaten flour imported from India on the West side of the country; in the Sudan, flour with which the Sudan Government fed their troops, while literally in sight was a country flowing with milk and honey, and abounding in grain, the while this native grain and flour was almost valueless. But the refusal of the Abyssinians to export anything they could use themselves stopped all trade, and kept them poor.

The Abyssinian chiefs pay their soldiers with money in Addis Abeba only. In the out provinces each soldier gets two shirts, two pairs of trousers, and one blanket every year. He also draws a ration, if one may so express it, of two or three Shangallas, who grow his food, build his houses, do his housework, and in their spare time feed themselves. What he can get out of his slaves is the soldier's own affair. The Shangallas get nothing

but a good thrashing every now and then, and if they do not give their master what he considers sufficient, are liable to be tied up and starved until they hand over one of their children to their master as a slave.

It is most difficult to get a real Abyssinian for a servant, as they are all soldiers and despise any other occupation, nor will they carry even the smallest load.

The Gallas, one of the largest subject tribes in the country, usually provide the Europeans in Addis Abeba with servants. They are the traders of the country, first-class agriculturists and make excellent servants.

Following out the feudal system, an Abyssinian without a master or chief is known as a masterless man, and if he should get into trouble has no one to whom to appeal except his own right hand.

Prior to the battle of Adowa, between the Abyssinians and the Italians, in 1896, Abyssinia consisted only of Amhara, Shoa, and Tigre. Menelik succeeded in combining these three warring tribes, and at the same time, by playing off the French against the Italians, succeeded in purchasing large numbers of modern rifles and ammunition. These rifles he used in his victory at Adowa, when 7,550 Italian troops were killed and wounded and about 2,000 taken prisoners.

Immediately after this victory, Menelik sent his troops to occupy the Southern and Western parts of what is now Abyssinia.

Now all is turmoil again. At Menelik's death, his grandson, Lij Yasu, was appointed king. He turned Mohammedan, and a short and savage civil war was the result, during the time of the Great War, when he was defeated, and Menelik's daughter

was appointed Queen, with Ras Taffari as Regent. At the Queen's death Taffari is said to be the next in succession, but whether he will be able to attain his object is a matter of speculation.

The accession to power of every different King or Regent has meant a new lot of rules throughout Abyssinia, and in the Southern or Western part of the country each change of Government has meant a fresh slaughter of the population, and so it will go on, until the complaisance of the various foreign Powers towards a barbarous Government, founded on an impossible and archaic system, and carried on by unblushing slavery, comes to an end.

During the Great War the slave raiders worked unhindered, and now that the attention of the world is likely to be turned in its direction, Abyssinia has joined the League of Nations, an act which has given its rulers a fresh lease of life and time to complete the depopulation of this area, and even of regions further afield in British territory.

The visit of Ras Taffari to Europe in 1924 it is believed was mainly to endeavour to obtain more arms and ammunition, with which to ensure the success of his claim to the throne, for his ammunition supply was getting low.

If no more arms and ammunition are shipped into the country, peace may be achieved. Let the reverse be the case, and not only will civil war be imminent, but the neighbouring countries will learn from bitter experience what raids really mean.

I say this with full intent. For since the inhabitants in what the British Foreign Office call "the slave producing areas of Abyssinia" have almost ceased to exist, the raiders must

ABYSSINIAN ADMINISTRATION 35

perforce turn their attention further afield. The "slave producing areas" of the future must be the lowlands lying between Abyssinia, and the Nile to the West, and Kenya to the South.

How long Abyssinia will exist in this state of essential barbarism I do not venture to prophesy, but it would seem that a country which can feed the whole of the desert countries surrounding it will not for ever be allowed to check the progress of humanity and its economic welfare.

Abyssinia should be the heart of North East Africa, but all the veins or roads, which should supply the rest of the starving body with nourishment are blocked by the Abyssinian policy, abysmal and suicidal, of depopulation, retrogression, and racial extermination.

CHAPTER VI

THROUGH A DEVASTATED LAND

When we left Maji, which we did without leaving a man behind, we were under the impression that there would be plenty of towns like Maji en route to the capital, but we found we were much mistaken.

For twelve days we wandered through forests which were inhabited by thousands of Shangallas, all of whom were cultivating for their masters, and there was every sign of peace and prosperity. There were over 4,000 families around Maji itself, in 1919 there were not more than forty.

To-day there is hardly a soul left alive in that region, and the height of the new bush growing up in what were formerly cultivated fields gives a good idea of the time since this tribe was destroyed. When we first went there, as the reader will remember, Menelik was still alive, and his iron hand was over all. To-day the robber and slave dealer alone reign in this glorious part of the country, and the Government "official" works hand in glove with both.

The population has ceased to exist.

In 1909, however, peace and plenty reigned, and food was so cheap that one dollar, or two shillings, bought enough flour for seventy men. The climate is magnificent and the soil of unrivalled fertility. The roads, such as they were, were

kept in fair order, and we were thoroughly happy until we reached Sherada, when the first rains caught us, and we began to realize the difference between Abyssinia in the rains, and the same country in the dry season.

On we went, however, and soon reached Jimma, or Jiren, the one fair-sized town with a few shops which we had seen since leaving Maji. Here we rested for a few days, but, as I wanted to get to Addis Abeba to renew my stores and trade goods, we soon resumed our journey.

After five days we arrived on the banks of the Gibeh river, and found it bank high, some one hundred yards wide, thirty feet deep, and with a current like a mill race. This river is called the Omo in its lower reaches.

Here we were held up. The country was quite uninhabited, as the former residents of the near side of the river had been raided and dispersed by a gang of robbers who were living somewhere nearby in the bush. For that reason we did not consider it prudent to stop there, particularly as there was no food for my caravan. I went and stood on the banks of the river, and pondered over our position. I hated the thought of going back, but how could I go forward?

As I stood there, I heard a cry in the middle of the river. Looking up, I saw the head of a swimmer whirling down towards me, and in a few moments he crawled out, and stood on the bank by my side. He had been carrying a goatskin bag under his arm. Opening it, out came his clothes, as dry as a bone.

This gave me an idea. I sent off my swimmer friend to purchase similar bags, and, to make a long story short, transported my whole caravan across without losing a man. Those who could

not swim were tied to the sacks, and pushed across. The pack mules, led by an old white horse, crossed most successfully. I waited until everything was safely on the far side. By that time the far bank was crowded with onlookers, much interested by our manoeuvres. Many of their best swimmers helped me with my ivory. Two boys carried a load of 140 lbs. across quite safely. The ivory was all in loads of this weight, and of course it got wet, but that did not matter.

Just before I myself crossed, I perceived a white man on the other bank. I shouted, but could not make myself heard. Putting my clothes and boots in one of the useful bags, and carrying it under my arm, in I plunged, and landed at the feet of the white man on the far side.

He turned out to be a German ex-cavalry officer, who was going to try the crossing, but the current was too much for him. As he said: "If I had my charger here, I would swim across with my hand on his tail, but not with a goatskin bag."

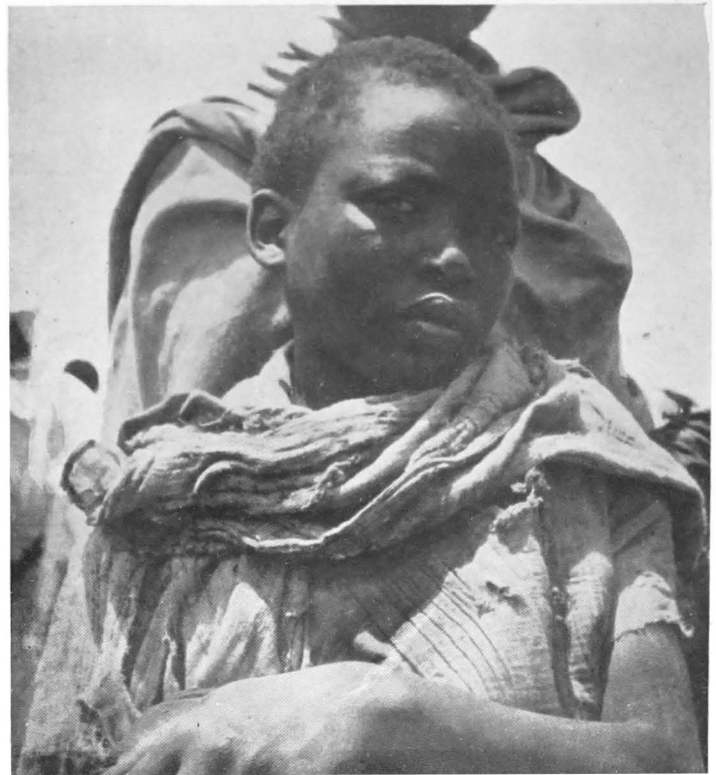
But he stood me a good dinner, and rode back in my company for a few days, until he left the main road, to go to a place where there was a boat.

He was most entertaining, and we fought the future battle of London over every night. His idea of the next war was that both British and German fleets would sink each other, and then the Germans would cross the channel at their ease. He was so sure of the result that he had elected to live at Maidenhead, and had chosen the hotel opposite Murray's as his private residence.

The last few days on the trail into Addis Abeba were the worst we had experienced for some months. The road leads over a vast alluvial



A SLAVE GIRL JUST AFTER CAPTURE.



A CAPTURED BOY.

plain, with scarcely a stone, and without a tree. One could put a tractor in at one end, and plough straight on for twenty miles without a break, but the wind was bitterly cold, and at night especially it was difficult to get warm. All the firewood had been cut down, and brought into Addis Abeba. So much has the country round about the capital been depleted of firewood, that Menelik had been seriously considering the removal of his capital to some other place nearer a timber supply, and would certainly have effected this but for the remonstrances of the different foreign Ministers, whose Governments had built large and expensive Legations. So the Emperor gave orders that all were to plant blue gums, and to-day the town is embowered in a forest of this timber, solely owing to his foresight. In 1909, however, for three days' march in any direction, there was hardly a tree to be seen.

There is coal in abundance near at hand, and Menelik imported several traction engines for the transport of this fuel. It might have been thought that this same coal, which is conveniently near to the railway, would have been used on the line, but that is not the case. The reason is that it would be useless to exploit any of these mines, for as soon as they were developed the Abyssinians would be certain to make so much trouble that the capital would be lost.

The same applies to any development schemes in the country. There is a saying among the traders and business men that it is necessary for a new-comer to lose all his original capital before he begins to make money. This, as far as I can see, is absolutely true.

All new-comers, on their first arrival, seem to think that they alone have any business acumen,

and that all those who are resident there have none. They arrive with European ideas, and usually begin their career by offering the ruler of the country a share in the business they intend to start, with the idea that if they do so he will assist them to make the business pay. No idea could be more erroneous.

The ruler wants his price immediately, not in the dim and distant future. He himself never knows how long he will be safe in his position, and all he wants is money at once, and after he has received it has no further concern whatever in the new-comer, or his business.

It would be of some academic interest to obtain even an approximate idea of the amount of money lost in mining schemes alone. The country abounds in coal, copper, gold, iron, and other minerals, and every Greek trader in the country will show the confiding stranger a rich reef for cash down. Some ask more than others. When I was in Addis Abeba in 1920, a certain gentleman, whose name I have forgotten, came to see me, and offered to show me a really rich gold reef for £5000, cash down, before he left the capital! Few, I must say, are so optimistic, and £5 would go a long way in the location of reefs.

Many new arrivals go to the reigning power, and ask for a concession, for which they are prepared to pay.

After several months' delay—this initial delay is invariable—and after the expenditure of a large sum of money in "squaring" all the local hangers-on, the concessionaire may perhaps secure his grant, but even then he has got nothing.

All he has obtained is permission to go to that part of the country in which he proposes to start mining. On his arrival there, he will

find a completely new selection of kings, and court officials, just as hungry as the first lot, and all of them stoutly denying the right of the Emperor to give away any of their privileges.

If the concessionaire is so unfortunate as to be able to "square" these as well, he is still "as you were," for the intention of every Abyssinian is to keep the white man out, and to prevent, by every means in his power, the development of his country. An appeal to the reigning power is quite useless, for all he says is: "I am very sorry."

If the worst comes to the worst, and the concessionaire has at last succeeded in buying out everybody, they get up a little "war" for his benefit, and the country he intends to operate in is declared dangerous, and he will be forcibly prevented from entering it.

The irony of the situation is centred in the fact that the Abyssinians themselves have only just conquered the main part of the country.

To return to the story of my travels. On this, my first trip to Addis Abeba, Menelik was still alive, and I must acknowledge that we all felt rather triumphant on our arrival, for we were the first European expedition to get through from Uganda.

On reaching Addis Abeba I found plenty of hotels, and some too are very comfortable. I sold my ivory, called at the Legation, had dinner with Menelik, together with all the Legation officials, while before our eyes were several thousand soldiers, all devouring raw meat. A most interesting meal!

My main object was to secure some more rifles and ammunition. At that time there was an idea among our people that it was immoral to

import weapons and ammunition into the country, but this certainly did not hinder business people.

While ordinary shopkeepers found some difficulty in importing weapons, no hindrance could be offered to Menelik himself, as he was a reigning power. He therefore was in the habit of importing more than he required, and the surplus he would distribute among the shopkeepers of his capital.

Most of the shops thus had a good supply of rifles of every sort, and I found no difficulty in outfitting with everything I needed.

Without much trouble, therefore, I packed up, and started back for Maji and the frontier, intending, if possible, to try and get through to the Nile, from the North end of Lake Rudolf.

CHAPTER VII

ABYSSINIAN IDEA OF HUMOUR.

THE TRAGIC EFFECTS OF MENELIK'S DEATH

Our journey to Maji was uneventful, and we arrived without mishap. I have already referred to the Boma plateau which we had crossed before getting to Maji on our way from Uganda. This plateau is a small continuation of the Abyssinian hills, which drop away to the flat plains some five thousand feet below Maji. Half of the plateau is British territory, as the boundary line—an artificial line by the way—runs across the middle of it. Being far away from the nearest British posts, it is unadministered. Yet it is the key to all the lower districts, and is the back door into Abyssinia. From the gap which leads up to Maji pour the raiding gangs, to sweep the plains, and enslave the British "protected" population. But that is speaking of to-day. At the time I am now describing Menelik was still alive, and all the country was at peace.

It was the last peace that unhappy country was to know for many years. The Shangallas were treated as human beings even if many were serfs. I have already spoken of these people, who were the original inhabitants of the country, before the advent of the warlike Abyssinians. They are a tribe very much like the Kikuyu of Kenya

Colony, and fell easy victims to their conquerors.

The underlying factor of the whole Abyssinian policy is that the Abyssinian will not work. He is a fighting man and work is beneath his dignity. Once this fact is grasped, it is plain to understand the reason for the necessity which drives him on his present course of raiding, and slaving.

Even Menelik himself, when he wished to make a road in Addis Abeba, had to go out of his palace, put a stone on his shoulder, and carry it to its place, before any of his subjects could be persuaded to follow his example.

It was the same with ploughing, or cutting the crops all over the country. Menelik and his sub-chiefs were compelled to go out and start the work themselves, before any Abyssinian would put his hand to it.

The conquest of the Southern part of Abyssinia introduced them to the possibilities of the Shangalla tribe as serfs and labourers, a possibility they realized, and took advantage of without delay. It also introduced to the Abyssinians the beauties and profits of slavery, and slave dealing, which they had not fully realized before.

Menelik, however, realizing that to sell the goods to make an immediate profit would deprive his soldiers of the golden eggs, was wise enough to prohibit the removal of his newly conquered subjects from their homes, and his chiefs soon came to appreciate his policy.

In spite of this, however, there were always bands of "shiftas," or robbers, who, moving by night, stole Shangallas, and sold them at a good profit in the Northern part of Abyssinia. It was always dangerous for a Shangalla to send his children to water in the evening, as he could never be sure that they would return.

I remember on one trip I made to Addis Abeba from Maji, I had a Swahili boy of about sixteen years of age with me. He was a stupid and obstinate lad, and would never take advice from anybody. One morning I found he was absent, and I was told that an Abyssinian, who had camped with us the night before, had been trying to persuade him to leave the white man, and go and live with them.

He had evidently gone off with this man, so, as I was near the palace of Ras Waldo Gorgis, the ruler of the district, and cousin to Menelik, I rode over to him and complained.

The Prince was at first amused, and incredulous, but when he had made a few enquiries, and found that I was correct, he became extremely angry to think that I should have been treated in this manner, and told me to go on to Addis Abeba, but on my return to call on him again.

This I did about two months afterwards. About an hour's march away from his palace, on my way to visit him, I was told to camp, "as the Ras was away, and would not be home until to-morrow," so I obeyed orders.

Early the next morning more messengers arrived, asking me to travel by another road, and not by the ordinary high-road, at the request of the Ras.

As it made no difference which road I used, and a new road being always a joy to me, I again obeyed orders. The messengers rode in front. I came next, and behind me the rest of my caravan. We passed through dense forest, along a narrow track. I began to wonder where we were going, when we came out into an open glade on the top of a hill with a single tall tree in the middle. The guides rode on straight under this tree, looking

neither to right nor left, and I followed them. Suddenly, from one of the branches, just over my head, I saw, hanging, the body of a man.

I cantered up to my guides and asked them who it was. At first they pretended not to know, and then, as if they had just remembered, said that it must be the body of an Abyssinian slave dealer, who had stolen a servant from a white man some time ago.

This was their idea, I suppose, of "pulling my leg."

Arriving shortly afterwards at the Ras's town, he handed my Swahili boy over to me, recommending me at the same time to give him a good hiding, which I might have done, but for the sight of his back, a mass of stripes and bruises, inflicted by his temporary master when he objected to the status of slave. He never ran away again.

But I must return to my journey.

It was the season in 1911 when the rains were over. I had made up my mind to follow down the Boma plateau, and from its Westerly side to make a dash due West to try and see if I could reach the Nile. Nobody had done it before, so care was necessary. It was well over two hundred miles to my objective, and I had heard that no food except meat was procurable until one arrived on the Nile bank, and that, even then, it was scarce and dear. I therefore purchased fifty donkeys for transport, and together with my fifty men, and ten mules, started out, thinking that, with good luck, I ought to be able to get through all right.

Leaving Maji I dropped down to the Boma plateau, travelling almost due West. The real name of this plateau is Pom, and it is so called after a great snake which is worshipped by the

tribe living there. This snake is an enormous python which actually lives among a mass of rocks on the edge of the escarpment looking down over the flat, treeless plains of the Sudan. The tribe venerates this snake, and sacrifices sheep, chickens, and other food to it regularly, which the snake consumes. They are called "The people of the Snake, whose name is Pom."*

The men and women of this tribe are noted for cutting holes in their underlips, which are stretched until they will hold a circular tobacco tin, or similar objects. They told me it was to prevent the Abyssinians from taking a fancy to any of their women. I should think it would prove a most effectual precaution.

This is the last of the hills leading down from the Abyssinian ranges. It is supposed to be British territory, but for years has been "administered" by the Abyssinians, whose sole conception of government consists in raiding regularly, and collecting food, sheep, and slaves whenever they can. The existence of this tribe is most precarious, and they are always ready to rush into the forest which surrounds them, at a moment's notice.

Some year or two previously I had here fallen in with the "safari" of some Swahilis who had been hunting and trading in the Sudan territory, which stretches, flat and unbroken, from here to the Nile. They had been caught by the rains, and had undergone great hardships, arriving at my camp starving and worn out. They told how the Abyssinian rivers, in flood, empty themselves on to these open plains, which then become a

* The Nilotic Kavirondo to the West of Kisumu also assert that a great snake periodically comes out of the Nyanza and is fed with chickens by the people. After a short stay on land it is said to return to the Lake.—C.W.H.

quagmire, and almost impossible to travel over. Even the game moves away at the first rainfall to the drier land near the plateau. They explained that they had been living on the meat of their transport donkeys for weeks, and as the Swahili are a grain-eating people, this diet was disastrous for them, and they died like flies.

I at once gave them half a pound a-piece of flour, and told them to be careful to make "uji" only, that is thin porridge, and not to over-eat. However, they succeeded in buying some more food from the natives, and gorged themselves to such an extent that seven of them died during that night and the following day. In Nairobi, not long ago, I met one of this party, and the memory of his sufferings was still most vivid.

At the time of the year when I stepped down off the hills on to these difficult and sometimes treacherous plains, everything seemed auspicious. The rains were over, and all the country had dried up. Game could be seen everywhere. This was evidently the right season for my attempt, so we dropped down the last hill on to the plain below. There I found that what appeared to be a regular seashore surrounded the Abyssinian hills. It was just as if there had been a sea along the foot of the hills, or a great inland lake, which, sinking below the surface out of sight, had left them high and dry.

As for the mud which had so worried our Swahili friends, I subsequently found that this was simply a surface layer. If one dug through it for some six feet, one came on sand and earth without a stone in it as big as one's finger-nail, for over one hundred feet in depth, after which one came to water.

This water was below the level of the Nile,

and of course below the level of all the other rivers which flow through this enormous expanse of territory. Its volume appears to be unaffected by the rains. The Nile, and the other rivers, such as the Sobat, the Aguba, the Kuron, each runs in its basin of mud. This mud is evidently decomposed "sudd," and the "sudd," so well known in the Sudan through which flows the Nile, must at one time have extended up to the Abyssinian hills.

Under all this vast plain there is evidently an enormous reserve of water. At present, when the Abyssinian rains burst, the rivers flow all over the surface, forming an almost impassable barrier to traffic. In times of drought, all the water sinks, and it is difficult to find water anywhere except in a few mud-holes left by the receding rivers. These get so fouled by the thousands of head of game which roam here that it is necessary to strain the water before drinking, and often it is so muddy that even that procedure is useless.

There is, however, a plant which grows near every water hole called "Komoiook," which is better than alum for clearing the water. It grows like a large potato, and if a piece of it is cut off, fastened on to the end of a stick, and twirled round in a bucket of this muddy water, the mud, in a few minutes, all sinks to the bottom. Unlike alum, it leaves no taste in the water.

We started cheerfully enough across this somewhat forbidding expanse of country, and after travelling some five days' journey, arrived at a river-bed which held water in holes. It was easy to surmise that there was no other water for a long distance, for all the game in the district drank there, and the elephants arrived

daily, coming over the level plains like ships at sea, marching straight into the water, and drinking their fill, usually moving out again in the morning.

The game indeed was incredibly numerous. At one camp I marked from my tent, almost within rifle range, giraffe, roan, kongoni, ostrich, topi, kob, eland, zebra, and innumerable small buck, all in sight at once. Ducks and geese, too, were there in thousands. The elephants, however, interested me most. They arrived daily, and I took my toll. One had only to sit at the door of the tent, which was pitched on the only hillock in the place, and keep a look-out for what seemed like a moving mountain, cut him off as he approached the water, and give him the *coup de grace* in one act.

I remember once, I had sent my gun-bearer off with my boys to cut out some tusks I had shot in the morning, and I was having a cup of tea at my tent door, when I saw a single old bull bearing down on my camp, so I called for one of my boys, a Kavirondo as it happened, gave him my heavy rifle and belt of cartridges, and catching up my .303, which is first rate for obliterating cripples, ran out to meet my approaching friend.

For some reason or other, as he came to a patch of low thorn scrub, he walked into the middle of it, and stopped to have a rest. The scrub was just high enough to be awkward, and the wind, too, was bothersome. Eventually I got my shot, and he winded me at the same time. Unfortunately, I had only wounded him, so he came straight for me. I fired another shot, but it did not stop him, and he chased me like a terrier, while I felt like a rabbit. I dropped

my cartridges in my excitement, and so was helpless. At last he lost sight and smell of me, and stood meditating what to do next. I ran to where I had left my gun-bearer, and found him on his knees, praying to whatever gods the Kavirondo believe in, raising his hands in the air, and then stroking them down his face and body, bewailing his fate all the time at the top of his voice. The only thing I heard him say as I approached, was: "My master is dead. My master is dead. I shall get no more wages," over and over again. He was so interested in his prayers that he did not hear my approach until I was near enough to apply my boot to his person, after which I had to chase him to get hold of some more ammunition.

He never volunteered again as gun-bearer.

As for me, I filled up with ammunition, and went off after my old friend, whom I found very sick where I had left him, and finished him off without any more trouble.

This was a glorious camp for elephants. I have never known or heard of a better. There was a big pool of water about two miles long, and full of trees, the foliage of which was so thick that in first stepping into their shade after the glaring sunshine outside it seemed quite dark. They stood in about two feet of water, and it was very bad "going" there, as the elephants' footprints had made holes, which, if one stepped in them, brought the water up to, and sometimes over, one's waist.

On one occasion, early in the morning, the natives brought me news that there was a herd in the swamp. Getting the wind right, I went into the water after them. I could not see them at first, but I could hear them splashing about

in the water. They, of course, did not pay any attention to the noise I made, as they only thought it was another elephant. At last I got sight of a good bull. He was quite close to me, and I could only get a shot at his head. The shock of the recoil made me put my foot back to steady myself, and, as luck would have it, into one of their footprints. Down I went flat on my back, clean under the water. I held my rifle up with my left hand. Staggering up, the first thing I saw was my helmet floating merrily away on the water. Strange to say, I thought only of the helmet at the moment, as I had not another one, so I splashed over and caught it up. Then I remembered my elephant, and looking round, there he was, tail end to me, and making the best of his way home. I fired another shot at him, but on he went. I splashed after him as well as I could, but his footprints fetched me down twice, and I lost sight of him. As I was wet through, and the elephant gone, I thought I had better get back to dry land, to find out where the herd had gone to, as the natives would be able to tell me. They had remained behind when I entered the swamp. I came out of the water just opposite my camp, and there was my elephant, standing still, very sick, while all my camp boys were "hitting the high spots" in their endeavour to get to a respectable distance. This elephant had fine tusks I remember, ninety pounds a-piece.

I shot elephants till I was tired of shooting them, but then a fly appeared in the ointment. And not one fly indeed, but battalions of them!

My donkeys died, and my mules died, and my men and I would have died too, but that I had

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provided our party with mosquito nets. I soon saw that it was useless to think of going on in this direction to reach the Nile, so I decided to go back to Maji, refit there, and then to try another road.

CHAPTER VIII

SLAVE RAIDERS AND " BRITISH SUBJECTS "

The return trip to Boma from our camp by the pool was a trying one. Luckily it was only five days away, but treble trekking is no fun.

I walked back with my men carrying food and a few tusks packed on everything left alive, and then had to send the men back to the ivory pile twice before it was cleared.

I had to get back somehow to Maji, and this sort of proceeding was much too slow. So, as I chanced to meet some Abyssinians, I sent a letter by them to the Governor of Maji, asking him to send me a hundred Shangallas to help me with my loads. He acceded to my request, and the Shangallas came into camp one evening. Next morning they each seized a tusk, went off at full speed, and I never saw them again.

When I arrived, ten days later, at Maji, with all the heavy tusks which these men had carefully left behind for us to carry, I found the ivory quite all right. They had brought it safely to the governor, and he had put it all into his store house.

He was a good friend to me, this governor, and quite the best Abyssinian I ever met, though the Abyssinian chiefs are, as a rule, the best of fellows, and my experience of them is that only

the poor ones try to rob the stranger. Of course, association with the lower class of white man tends to spoil them, as it does most natives, but the chiefs of Menelik's day were gentlemen in the best sense of the word.

The governor's name was Dedjasmatch Dumti. I shall have occasion to refer to him again in the course of my story. He must have saved my life dozens of times. My best "salaams" to him!

Meantime, as I have explained, I was still heavily laden, as our Shangalla friends had left all the bigger tusks behind. But we were glad to be relieved of part of our load, and we started cheerfully on our way back, all of us very much pleased with our success.

Looking back, it is strange now to remember that the value of this ivory was all spent, a little later, in saving the lowlands from which it had come, from being raided by the Abyssinians.

We had marched along but one day, when we met a party of Abyssinians armed to the teeth, and evidently bent on raiding. I ran right into their party, but, although I knew them, they scarcely spoke to me, and made off, as if possessed.

Naturally, I could not imagine the reason for this behaviour, unless they were out of favour with Dedjasmatch Dumti. But from now on I found that the whole atmosphere seemed to have changed. The Shangallas, who were always accustomed to come into my camp, appeared to have vanished, and we trudged along, wondering what was the matter. All the native huts we passed had been burnt, and this seemed an ominous sign.

At last we came to a gap between two hills, through which we had to pass, and then we heard cries, and heavy firing. The Abyssinians, we discovered, were on the hill to our right hand, and the Shangallas on the hill to our left.

We sat down on our loads, and waited to see what was going on.

At last a Shangalla came to us, and told us that the Abyssinians had suddenly started killing them, and stealing their women and children.

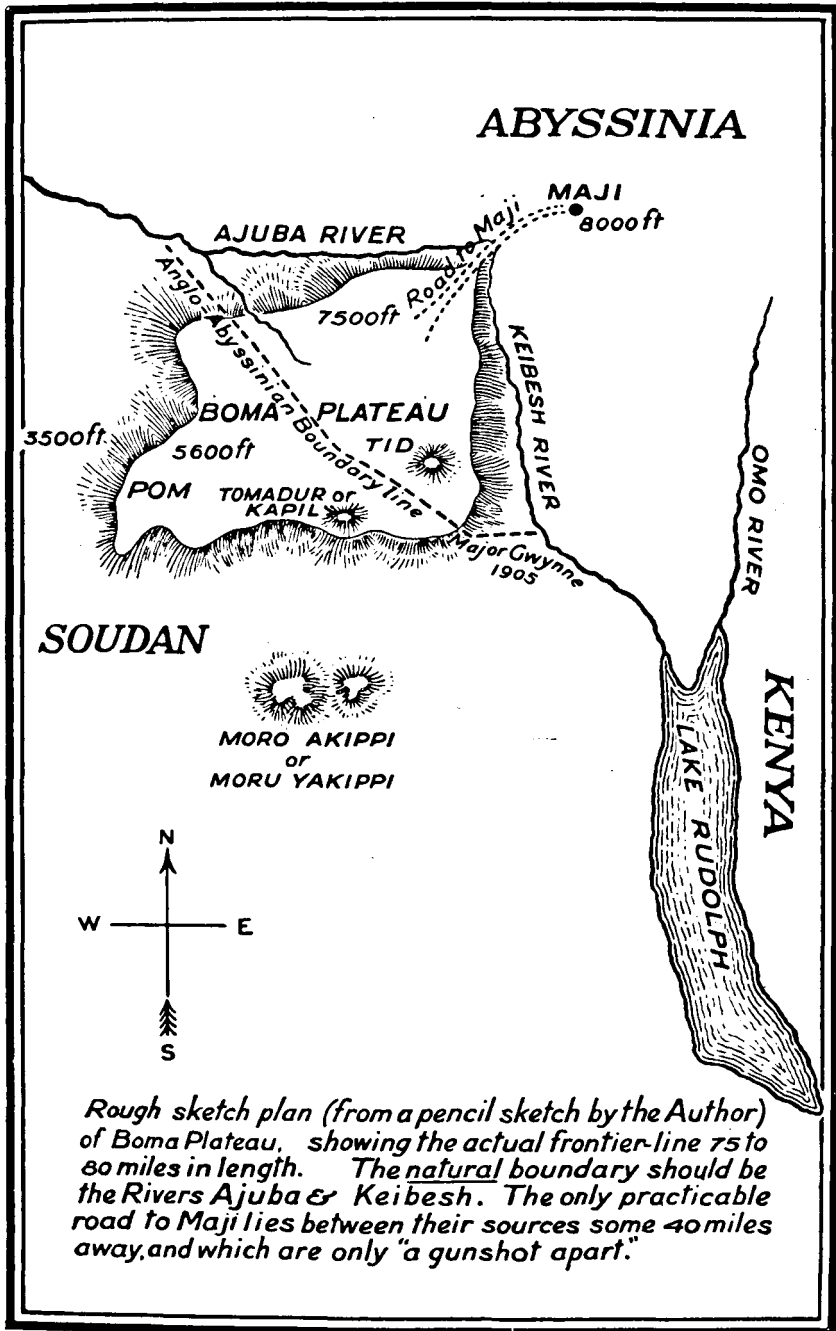
He left again immediately, and after he had vanished the Abyssinians appeared, and their chief told me that Dumti's orders were that I was to go straight on to Maji, as he wished to see me immediately. I asked the reason for all the disturbance, but he replied that he had orders to tell me nothing, and that Dumti would explain everything.

Still I could not understand, although some of my men remarked "Perhaps Menelik is dead." But even that did not enlighten me.

We therefore pushed forward, seeing nobody except scattered natives, who, three months before, had been wont to come in scores into my camp.

At last we arrived in sight of Maji, but still two days march away for my heavily laden caravan. Here I met an escort of Abyssinians with one of the governor's best mules, which he had sent on purpose for me, hearing that I was on foot. The escort refused to say more than that the news was bad. So next morning I mounted the mule, and, accompanied by two others, rode towards Maji.

Not a native was to be seen in what was formerly densely populated country. We laboured



Rough sketch plan (from a pencil sketch by the Author) of Boma Plateau, showing the actual frontier-line 75 to 80 miles in length. The natural boundary should be the Rivers Ajuba & Keibesh. The only practicable road to Maji lies between their sources some 40 miles away, and which are only "a gunshot apart."

up the steep Maji hill, and then heard the sound of rifle fire, screams, and yells.

The Abyssinians were dashing about as if demented, and gangs of Shangallas, roped together, were being driven about like so many cattle. The town was full of sheep and horned stock. Rifles were being constantly fired into the air, and, in fact, everybody seemed to have gone suddenly crazy.

Some strangers even tried to seize my mule, shouting out that everything belonging to the white man was now their property. Of course they were headed off promptly, as the mule belonged to their chief, but the fright my Abyssinian escort was in—not for themselves, of course, but for me—was what impressed me more than anything else.

I rode on, trying to look unconcerned, till we arrived at Dedjasmach Dumti's palace. Inside his compound all was quiet and peaceable. His servants were all busy tying up loads, and it was easy to see that Dumti was leaving, most likely for good, as his wife's servants were also packing up.

I strolled on into the house, where Dumti met me. Like the good fellow he was, he first gave me a square meal, and as he had a first-rate cook, I thoroughly appreciated the attention. I had been travelling ever since daybreak, and I was as hungry as the proverbial hunter.

Food having been disposed of, I lit my pipe, and waited to hear what he had to say.

Now it is very difficult to get any Abyssinian to tell one anything in a straightforward fashion, and for Dumti to tell me simply that his King was dead, would have been too much to expect. He said: "Menelik is very ill. He cannot stand,

and he cannot speak, but he can still see. My master Ras Waldo Gorgis is leaving this country, and is going to a bigger one. I too, am going, and I have waited for you. Some of your people are in trouble, and I have waited for you to come and settle their affairs. I also hear that all your donkeys and mules are dead. Come and see your ivory, and after you have arranged the affairs of your people, I will carry your ivory for you as far as Jimma."

Jimma, the reader will remember, is half way to Addis Abeba.

Dumti explained that by "my people" he meant the Baluchis, Arabs, Swahilis, Persians, and others, who were British subjects, and he added that he considered I ought to look after them.

As most of these people were much more my enemies than my friends, I am afraid I did not quite see eye to eye with him on the subject. The Baluchis particularly had been most hostile. They had told me that they were no longer British subjects, and that they intended to do as they liked, which meant gun-running, and slave catching in British territory.

As we were all outlaws alike, since the warrant for my apprehension had been issued in Uganda, my position was somewhat peculiar, to say the least of it. But my point of view has always been that anybody who sells natives a rifle is a fool, as he will most likely get shot in the back by it himself, therefore I had always set my face against the practice ; as for catching these raw aborigines, who were supposed to be under the protection of the British flag, and selling them to the gentle Abyssinians, that I was determined to prevent, and I had declared my intention of

going to any extremities with these Baluchis if ever I caught them at it.

Be that as it might, however, it was evidently up to me to do what I could for them, and I realized that I should have to shoulder the usual "white man's burden." I therefore thanked this best of fellows for his advice, shook hands with him, and strolled out of his house towards my compound.

As I walked across, I pondered over Dumti's information. Menelik, so I gathered, must be dead. I knew that it was not the custom in Abyssinia for the death of the ruler to be declared immediately. The news is most carefully concealed until the successor to the throne has his foot firmly in the stirrup. As a matter of fact, in the case of Menelik his demise was concealed for months.

With the death of the ruler, all his sub-chiefs have to relinquish their posts automatically, and they must be dispossessed of the districts they had been ruling, sometimes by peaceful means, sometimes forcibly and often by intrigue and poison. I believe that this is the procedure in most Mohammedan countries.

Abyssinia, it is true, is a Christian country, but the feudal system which still obtains there is responsible for the custom.

The erstwhile chiefs of the dead Emperor having been turned out, their positions are taken by the supporters of the new regime. Naturally, it would never do for the incoming and outgoing parties to meet on the road, as "incidents" might occur, so the outlying stations are left, sometimes for months, without a ruler, as it was in this case.

The discharged officials do not know if they

are going to get another post, and there is no pension system under the Abyssinian Government. They therefore make hay as fast as they can before the total setting of their sun, and clean up the country they are leaving, so as to have something on which to retire into private life.

This accounted for the scenes of robbery, murder, and general disorder which were taking place, and I now quite realized the position, or believed I did.

No Abyssinian could possibly understand the peaceful passing of a monarch, of their own, or of any other country. In his mind the death of a king must automatically bring in its train the dislocation of all authority, especially in the outlying regions, with spoliation and capture by the strong hand which for the moment at least is supreme.

This attitude of mind must be grasped by the reader, in order that he may obtain the proper perspective, and understand what led to certain events which I shall relate in due course.

But now to return to my "British subjects," of variegated hue, and truculent proclivities, whom I found waiting for me in my compound. There was the whole mob of them, and when I appeared they all rushed at me, and began kissing the "skirts of my clothing." This was indeed a change! I was evidently "on top," as far as they were concerned, and as in the ring it is a good rule to stay "on top" as long as possible, I put on my most important air, and said—

"Haithuru, si-ogopa, mzungu hiko, utapona." Which, being interpreted, means: "Fear nothing, a white man is here, you will be saved."

I now sent for a chair from Dumti's house, and told them to sit down round it, and we would discuss things, which they did, after crying out "Inshallah!" for about ten minutes.

I do not suppose they felt at all comfortable, as they were surrounded by an escort of the wildest looking Abyssinians I had ever seen, all armed to the teeth. Luckily the escort was silent, as it was their chief's compound, and Dumti ruled his people like a man, but outside the compound the noise never ceased for a moment, so my true-blue Britishers must have been reminded that they were still in the lion's mouth, if indeed they were likely to forget it.

Dumti came out at this moment, smiled on the scene, and took me away to show me where my ivory was deposited in safety, then leaving me to deal with the affairs of my badly scared refugees.

I must confess I wondered why they were in such distress. Dumti would not tell me, and I could not imagine what was the matter. Any little incident, such as murder or robbery, could easily be squared, but I was soon to find out that it was something much more serious, namely debt.

Now, by the Abyssinian law, the debtor, if he cannot pay, becomes automatically the slave of his creditor. So these people, men, women, and children, had all been seized by their creditors, and until the moment of my arrival had been tied up ready for transport into the remote North-West of Abyssinia, where the price of slaves is good.

They had been brought to the governor's compound by his orders, and small wonder they were terrified.

I now had to consider what I should do. I asked myself, if I settled their debts, which amounted to about half my ivory, should I ever be repaid? The headman of these people told me that all their hunting and trading caravans were in the desert, and had, as yet, received no news of what was happening in Abyssinia. This I supposed to be true. They assured me I would be repaid in full when they returned. That might be so. But even if repayment might be doubtful, could I allow them to be carried off into slavery? No. That was impossible. If I did so, the reputation of the white man would be lost. The feudal system extant in Abyssinia is mainly based on the principle of standing by one's own people, and anybody who betrays his tribe is utterly despised.

I therefore soon came to the only decision possible, and, standing up, made my announcement.

"I will pay these people's debts. Fetch me the creditors, and I will settle with them."

Then pandemonium began! They argued for hours while I was trying to make a list of creditors, debtors, and amounts. Night fell, and still they argued. It was almost midnight before I got my list correct of the various sums which I arranged to pay the following day, and then at last, almost in exasperation, I managed to break away, and went off to find some place where I could sleep.

My house, I found, had been looted, and indeed, all through the night the cries and rifle shots still continued. So, my own house being out of the question, I decided to go to the best of the houses belonging to the traders, and marching off to the Baluchi's house, I commandeered his



DEBTOR AND CREDITOR CHAINED TOGETHER.



A GALLA WOMAN SLAVE.

bed, blankets, and food, and stayed there for the next three days, waited on hand and foot by my former enemies, until my porters, whom I had left behind with my ivory on the road to Maji, arrived, and the Abyssinians left.

CHAPTER IX

A DISASTROUS HEGIRA

These next three days were some of the most strenuous I have ever gone through. It was evident that I should have to wait at Maji until I was repaid for the ivory I had advanced, and therefore a long and solitary residence would have to be arranged for, until the arrival of the new Abyssinian governor.

At the risk of wearying the reader, I will refer once more to the system by which, under the Abyssinian law, when the ruler of one district is transferred to another, he must leave, accompanied by all his people, including soldiers, and servants, shopkeepers and traders, men, women and children.

They depart all together on one day, having first done their best to loot the whole district thoroughly, and carrying off with them everything removable, alive or dead.

At the time I am speaking of, for instance, the main object of the Abyssinians was to secure as many Shangallas as possible, for disposal as slaves in the Northern territory, and together with them, of course, all the livestock in the country. This would leave the usual desert for the new-comer, who, faced with famine, would be compelled to resort to further raiding in order to keep his people alive till the crops could be reaped.

It is hardly necessary to say that this system has been the ruin of the country. The Abyssinians have raided and carried off the Shangallas until few exist, and starvation stares them in the face, especially in the Southern and Western districts, which were formerly the richest part of Abyssinia.

If they were content to enslave the aboriginal inhabitants in order to make them work on the land for them, it would be bad enough, though the position would be perhaps tolerable. But the certainty of large profits and quick returns is too much for them, and they sell the slaves for the immediate gain with suicidal improvidence.

And, having sold them, what can they do to supply their own immediate needs? Perforce they must provide themselves with others.

Now from their eyrie on the hills, they look out over the British border to the boundless plains below, plains populated with peaceable and prosperous natives, living in a wild state, it is true, but rich in cattle and sheep, and unprotected except by a negligible force, which has its base far away, and which may easily be evaded. The frontier, in many parts, is unguarded by the British administration.

Behind them is starvation and hunger, for while a single slave can be captured, the Abyssinian will not work.

The result is a foregone conclusion. Raids, constant and repeated, take place, and in many cases whole tribes are exterminated.

It must also be remembered that no chief receives pay, and he must make his expenses out of his district, and not only so, but he is obliged to pay taxes also in kind to the Central Government, or else will be compelled to vacate his post.

So the necessity of the Abyssinians has resulted

in the evolution of a system by which the chief of a border district sends out his spoilers to raid British territory. On their return they divide the spoil, some to the soldiers, some to the chief, and some to the ruling power in Addis Abeba. In this way, all are satisfied. If any of the raiders are captured by the British police, they are promptly disavowed, all the chiefs concerned regretting deeply their inability to control the "robbers" on the border.

It must be most trying for the unfortunate British Minister in Addis Abeba, who is compelled to pretend to believe the apologies of these incorrigible reprobates. Small wonder that the prestige of the white man is low in Abyssinia, more especially as no damages have ever been paid for losses sustained by British subjects in these raids, nor of course have any of these ruffians ever been executed for the murder, or wounding, of any of the British officers, who have been so unfortunate as to suffer at the hands of these raiding parties.*

But, to return once more to my own position. It was no good looking on the dark side of things, and I had plenty to occupy myself with to prevent me doing so. First, the debts of the British subjects had to be paid. This I effected chiefly in ivory. The amount came to well over one thou-

* The time I have here described was about 1910-1911. The territory contiguous to the Abyssinian Highlands, on the Sudan side, has by now (1925) become largely depopulated. Raids still continue, but have to be conducted further afield. Mr. Galton Fenzi, the Hon. Secretary of the Royal East African Automobile Association, on his return to Nairobi in Kenya from his recent motor expedition to Mongalla, on the Nile, informed me that the inhabitants of that district had stockaded their villages against Abyssinian raids. Mongalla is two hundred miles, as the crow flies, from the Abyssinian border.—H.D.

The Sudan district officials, it is only fair to say, consider this an exaggerated statement, but admit the existence of roaming bands of bad characters made up of Abyssinians, Swahilis, Baluchis and others. A raid occurred as recently as July, 1925.—C.W.H.

sand pounds sterling. Some few debts I paid in cash, which left me with no ready money, but I went to my old friend Dedjasmatch Dumti, and was able to persuade him to cash my cheque for a thousand dollars on the Bank at Addis Abeba.

He had never seen such a thing as a cheque before, but he gave me the money without a word. I was so pleased with this proof of his confidence in me, that I gave him a large tusk of ivory, which he seemed to think a great deal more of than he did of the money. He evidently thought it much more difficult to shoot an elephant than to write a cheque! Needless to say, I did not disabuse his mind on the point.

The Bank cashed the cheque, as I heard afterwards, but Dumti was lucky, for when he presented it I had been reported dead in the "*Daily Mail*," and other home papers.

With this money I purchased plenty of ammunition, some cows, and everything else I could think of which would be necessary for my men and myself during a long, and probably eventful, stay at this place. My caravan, with the rest of my ivory, having arrived we all began to settle down.

The raiding went on all this time, day and night, bands of Shangalla women and children being constantly brought in. The men also, who had not been killed, or had not effected their escape into the forest, were roped together, four or five at a time. This continued till the town of Maji was a mass of cattle, sheep, slaves, and howling Abyssinians.

One of my friends, a Shangalla chief called Debo, used to come and weep in my hut over the destruction of his people. According to Abyssinian law, the chief of each tribe had to be left behind to receive the new governor, even if

his whole tribe had been carried off. He told me that many of the women, as well as the men, had escaped into the bush, but that several had left their small babies behind, owing to the suddenness of the attack. Debo seemed to think it strange that the Abyssinians had not knocked them all on the head, but that is not their way. All is fish that comes to their net. Although these children were almost certain to die, a number of them had been brought into the town on the chance of their being purchased, though the price was very low, owing to the over supply.

I had a bright inspiration. It was evident that I was to be left behind with my own men only, together with the few British subjects. What was more to the point, the Shangallas, who by this time had got over their surprise, were doing their best to defend what was left of their homes against the Abyssinians. When the latter left, therefore, I should be surrounded by a hostile population, and I decided that I had better begin to make friends with them.

I therefore told Jeguna wa Chege, my head boy, to go out and purchase as many of these unfortunate little beings as he could get hold of.

Jeguna seemed to think I was mentally deranged, but that did not deter me. They used to say "Mad Englishman" on the Continent, just as they do in Abyssinia to-day, but I think I am right in saying that the epithet is not quite so universal in Europe to-day as it was before the Great War. It is to be hoped that the same change of opinion will some day occur in Abyssinia. In any case, my "madness" did not prevent Jeguna from obeying orders, and he succeeded in purchasing about a dozen babies at the low price of

one dollar, or two shillings in English money, per head.

I got old Wadi, my head donkey man, to look after them. He was an expert in babies, as he had had numbers of them, being much married all over Africa. He himself was an old slave from Ujiji near Tanganyika, and had become free on the death of his master. As slaves often do, he had at once gone into the slave business himself, and had had plenty of experience in this kind of trade goods, of every age, so this small batch did not frighten him in the least. He laid them all down in a row in my hut, and squatted down near them. Whenever one of them cried, he dipped an end of cotton cloth in a bucket of milk and water and fed the patient until it was quiet. He was relieved at times by other assistants, whom he instructed in the art.

His expertness proved successful, and not one of these little unfortunates died. Luckily I had plenty of cows, as Dumti's orders were still obeyed to some extent. I am convinced, indeed, that to his orders alone is due the fact that I am alive to tell the tale to-day. This may easily be conceived, as I still had about a thousand pounds worth of ivory in my hut, besides cattle and sheep herded outside. My outfit, too, was worth a fortune in any Abyssinian's eyes.

Personally, I must confess, I was doubtful if we should get out of it alive, and even if that were the case, I hardly expected to save more than a little raw gold I had purchased from the gold washers and prospectors who wandered all over that area.

We were not frightened of the Abyssinians while Dumti was still in residence, but we naturally thought that, when he left, the gangs of professional

robbers would descend on us, and wipe us out.

But we had plenty to do to occupy our minds without looking for trouble ahead, and the time passed rapidly.

On the fourth day after my arrival at Maji the Abyssinians left, headed by their governor.

Such a sight is given to few men to see. Four to five thousand fighting men, together with their women, children, servants, and slaves, horses and mules, cattle and sheep, all descended the hill on which Maji stands, in one long line. The captive Shangallas, roped together in gangs, and piled high with loads of every description, formed by no means the smallest part of this procession.

It brought vividly to mind the account of the flight of the Children of Israel from Egypt.

The cavalcade was accompanied by all the traders, and shopkeepers. Even bands of robbers, outlaws in the district, and many of whom I knew, went with them being fearful of an attack by the Shangallas after the departure of the other Abyssinians. It was easy to see that in times of popular excitement like the present old feuds were forgotten, and by-gones were by-gones.

To tell the truth, we were relieved to see them go. I sat on a rock by the roadside, and watched this heterogeneous multitude descend the hill.

Dumti kissed me on both cheeks as he bade me farewell, and told me he feared he would never see me again.

Nearly all his people bade me farewell, saying, "Good-bye! You will be dead to-morrow," which was hardly consoling. But as I did not believe them, it did not depress me unduly.

My followers, taking their cue from me, appeared quite unconcerned. Indeed, as far as

they could, they literally "spoiled the Egyptians."

From the top of Maji hill, a distance of nearly two day's journey can be seen, for the timber along the road has nearly all been cut down.

Watching the slow progress of this mighty throng, we could see that the moment they left the environs of the town of Maji they were attacked by the Shangallas, who attempted to regain possession of their women and children.

Along the whole length of this long caravan a battle was in progress. At nightfall thousands of fires could be seen blazing, not only by the winding chain of departing Abyssinians, but in every direction, where the Shangallas were burning the houses of their former masters, while the constant sound of firing was to be heard from the procession of what were now virtually fugitives.

I heard afterwards the Abyssinians had literally to fight their way all through the dense forests with which this part of the country is clothed, during a fifteen days' march, until they arrived in the territory of Jimma, whose governor had not been removed, and where they at last found safety.

They lost nearly all their cattle and sheep and a certain number of their slaves, besides quite a number of soldiers, but as no chiefs fell the loss was counted immaterial.

It was evening before the last of this caravan dropped down the hill, and we were left alone. A town of several thousand inhabitants was left standing empty. After all the uproar, the silence was almost incredible. It was like a blow.

After nightfall, however, the chief robber of the country paid us a visit, accompanied by his armed guard.

Naturally, we thought he meant mischief, but

I set him down before my last bottle of whisky, and kept him covered until he had, by himself, almost finished it. Even now I do not really know what he came back for, and I am certain that when he left me he did not know either! His men placed him carefully on his mule, and they all trooped off together.

Here we were, then, so far safe and sound, with plenty of food and ammunition, but cut off from any news of friends by a space of country it would take quite thirty days to cover. We thanked God for His mercies in many different languages, and went to bed, not forgetting, however, to post double sentries in every direction from which an attack might come.

CHAPTER X

THE OFFER OF A FORTUNE

Next morning we woke up after the first quiet night we had had for some time, and proceeded to take stock of our position.

As was my custom immediately after breakfast, and before the arrival of my companions in arms for a consultation to which I had summoned them, I took a ride round the town.

It was a strange sight. All sorts of household treasures had been thrown away, and all the jealously guarded portals were wide open. Scattered here and there were the bodies of some of the Shangallas slain in trying to escape. Outside the town, and along the track of the retiring Abyssinians, the corpses were much more plentiful than in the town.

The Shangallas had all been piled high with the loads of their masters, and if they sank down under their loads, and refused, or were unable, to go further, they were either clubbed on the head, or speared. I suppose this was intended to encourage the others, and food was too scarce to waste on weaklings. There was no waste of ammunition in these cases, and pity, evidently had no place in the Abyssinian's category of virtues.

These corpses were disposed of very rapidly, however, by the pariah dogs which form the scavengers of all the towns in Abyssinia, including

Addis Abeba. In fact the thousands of pariah dogs which infest that town is one of the sights shown to the tourists, who generally come up by train to the capital, gaze round the place for two or three days, and then vanish again by train, full of information about Abyssinia. I have even known such tourists to write magazine articles on the country, with only this first-hand knowledge of it, and it is not uncommon for a person who may have resided in Addis Abeba during a few months to write a book, honestly believing himself quite an authority on the subject.

One might as easily write a book about England, having gone no further than the sound of Bow Bells. More so, in fact, since in Abyssinia civilization barely extends beyond the environs of the capital.

On my way back to my hut, I happened to pass the market place, and saw what I thought was a dead body stretched out on the ground stark naked. My Abyssinian, the only one who had dared to stop with me, walked over to him, found he was not quite dead, and declared that he was an Abyssinian, and one of his own tribe, a Tigré. I told him therefore to have him taken into his house, and that I would doctor him if I could.

It turned out, on enquiry, that he was one of the chief robbers in the country, and had evidently been in the thick of the *melee*. He eventually completely recovered.

I mention this little episode, for the reason that some years afterwards I ran up against him as chief of police in one of the largest towns of the country, when he was able to do me a good turn. I found he was then an excellent policeman, and much respected. This was only

natural, perhaps, for, on the principle of "set a thief to catch a thief" he is probably most proficient in his duties.

When I got back to my hut I met all my fellow ruffians, as I regarded them, and we began to take stock of our position. Eventually we decided to concentrate all our forces in a circle round the strongest position in the place, and then sent for Debo, the Shangalla chief, who was living almost alone just outside the town, for nearly all his subjects had been carried off.

On his arrival he expressed himself as delighted to see the strong position we were occupying, and explained that he was most apprehensive of an attack by the other Shangalla chiefs, as he had always been a friend of the Abyssinians, and had trusted them, while the other Shangallas had always been suspicious of and hostile to them. He was a fine fellow, and naturally his opinions had somewhat changed. In fact, all he wanted to do was to kill any Abyssinian he saw.

He, quite naturally, thought that the Abyssinians would never return and it was impossible to explain to him, at such short notice how the land lay, but I did my best to assure him that in time, perhaps in two or three months, they were sure to come back again, and that we must so behave that there would not be a fresh slaughter on their return.

Debo lived in great fear of a Shangalla called Serie, the chief of the Bolodia tribe. This man had never surrendered to the Abyssinians, and for years had carried on a guerilla warfare with them, cutting off small parties and outposts, and when attacked by superior forces, hiding in the dense forests of his fatherland.

He was something like the Robin Hood of

our own history, and was the popular hero of all the Shangalla. I had met him before in 1909, and liked him, and we were good friends.

Our acquaintance was made during a trip I was making down the Akobo river. Not expecting any trouble, I was riding ahead of my men, when I suddenly discovered that I was surrounded by a crowd of well-armed Shangallas. I noticed standing in their midst, a man, evidently their chief, dressed just like an Abyssinian, with silver shield, and sword, so I dismounted from my mule to shake hands with him and, after mutual salutations, I camped with him for the night.

My men were none too easy in their minds, for Serie had the reputation of always killing any Gallas, or Abyssinians he met, and I had some of both these tribes with me.

Apprehending my men's alarm, and wishing to put them at their ease, he ordered his followers to put their rifles in my tent, and calmly said that I must guard him for the night. He filled my tent so full of rifles that I scarcely had room for my bed.

These arrangements having been made, he brought in to me his little children, and implored me to take them to British territory, where they would be safe, for it could only be a matter of time before he and they became the victims of his oppressors.

Tears ran down his cheeks as he spoke. I was deeply moved, but could think of nothing to help him. He asked me if there was not some corner in British Territory where he could go to live in peace and quietness, but I had to reply in the negative, as he and his people lived at an elevation of some 8,000 feet, while the plains which surround Abyssinia are all swampy at times, and fever

ridden, being very flat and only having an average altitude of 3,000 feet.

More to the point in this case was the fact that it is believed that the Abyssinian Government has come to an arrangement with ours whereby any fugitives escaping from their territory are handed back to them, and they would be certain to hear of the whereabouts of such a notorious personality as Serie.

We talked till late at night, and succeeded in establishing cordial relations, but I could do little for him in any practical way, though I longed to help him.

Bidding me farewell next morning, as he shook hands he remarked that his people would never be free until the white men took the country, though he felt that he would never see that day.

A patriot was Serie, and a man among men. Peace to his ashes! He died as he would have wished, face to the foe, close to his old palace, at the time of the Great War in Europe.

At the time of my story, however, he was very much alive, and under the circumstances I was only too glad to think that he was in the neighbourhood.

To return to our dispositions, the first thing to be done was to establish a grain market for the food supply of our people, so Debo sent out orders to all his remaining adherents. As the Abyssinians had not been able to carry off all the grain, we soon got a market going. Of course it was at first attended only by Debo's people, but as things settled down, and the Abyssinians did not return, the remaining inhabitants came from further and further afield, until in a month or two we had just as good a market as the Abyssinians had had when they were there in full force.

This, I thought, was very remarkable, but I believe there must have been an enormous population in that country before the advent of the raiding and ruthless Abyssinians. To-day, however, one may travel for days, and scarcely see a soul. Constant and repeated raids subsequent to the time of my narrative have practically obliterated these tribes.

Our situation demanded the removal of our effects from the huts we were living in, to those round the position we had taken up. This was finished by nightfall, while every minute we expected to hear that the other Shangallas had got wind of our almost helpless state, and were about to take advantage of it, but nothing untoward occurred.

That evening, the mothers of the babies I had purchased began to arrive in search of their infants. They kept coming all night. My sentry would call out, "Master, here is another woman," and in she would come. She never looked at me, but at the line of little black morsels of humanity. Sometimes she would see her baby, but more often not. If she saw it, she would catch it up to her bosom, and rush out. I can never understand how they recognized their own offspring, as they were quite naked. So indeed were the women, for that matter, and I could not tell one from the other.

It did not take long to dispose of the whole of my "crèche," much to my relief, and there were no complaints. The amusing part of the whole business was that nobody ever said "Thank you," and from that day to this I have never even heard it mentioned, or referred to.

As everything seemed peaceable, we began to settle down, and for three or four days nothing

happened worth mentioning. At the end of that time our Shangalla outposts rushed in, declaring that Serie was approaching, and that he had declared his intention of wiping out Maji. I therefore mounted my horse, and rode out to meet him.

Luckily there was no firing, as the sight of my helmet and yellow beard always seemed to have the effect of a flag of truce. Indeed, I often had cause to be thankful that my hair is not dark. I met Serie just outside the town, and we rode back to my house the best of friends. He had a very strong force, as he had combined all the remaining Shangallas, and had been busily occupied in killing any stray Abyssinians who had been left behind by the retiring forces. He told me he had three thousand rifles, and of course was convinced that the Abyssinians would never return.

He was very keen for me to join forces with him, so that between us we could hold the whole country for the white man. He had no idea of the differences between French, German, or English, but regarded them all indiscriminately as "white men."

It seems that many of his people had been down to the Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya—then British East Africa—and their accounts had impressed him. He thought Greeks were a sort of race half-way between the white and the black.

His proposal, I must confess, gave me something to think about, particularly as he offered me lots of gold, and enough ivory to fill my hut to the roof. But I had to decline the offer, much as I would have liked to have thrown in my lot with him, chiefly because I saw no way of ever leaving the country with my spoils. The news of my presence among the Shangallas would soon

have reached the Abyssinians, and their Government would at once have complained to the British Minister, so if I had gone down to Uganda, or the Sudan, I should have been seized at once, and most likely returned to the Abyssinians, or in any case relieved of my gains.

I have often wondered since if I did right in refusing, or if I should have thrown in my lot with Serie, in the endeavour to help this much abused and hapless people.

After a long talk I refused, and he left on the following day, to carry on his self-imposed task of obliterating his oppressors, and so left us in peace.

For over a month we rested undisturbed, but away from the hill on which Maji was perched all was fire and sword. Bands of Shangallas wandered about in every direction, burning Abyssinian houses, and looking for fugitives, so it was impossible to leave our refuge. There were constant alarms, but our market grew bigger and bigger, and the recognition of our peaceable occupation went further and further afield, until we began to hope we might manage to escape South, by buying transport donkeys from the Turkana, who live along the shores of Lake Rudolph, the North end of which lies some six days' journey to the south of Maji.

We were much encouraged by the arrival of the expeditions belonging to the Baluchis and Swahilis, which returned to Maji, bringing a large haul of ivory, and reporting that they had not only been free from attack on their return journey, but had, on the contrary, received every kindness from all the Shangalla chiefs they had met, who only asked them if they belonged to the "Feranj" (white man) and, on receiving an affirmative reply, had passed them on to the next chief.

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For over a year, indeed, I was constantly pestered by these "British subjects," who always claimed they belonged to me whenever they got into trouble.

At the moment, however, I was only too glad to find myself repaid for the ivory I had advanced, so we were all happy together.

CHAPTER XI

A DEEP-LAID PLOT

Time after time we tried to escape from the position we had got into. To enable us to do this, it was necessary to buy either mules or donkeys to carry off our ivory and stores, but we found it was impossible to do so.

We thought at one time that we might be able to buy them from the Turkana, who lived, as I have said before, only some five or six days' march the south of Maji.

However, on sending some of the Swahilis down there, they came back in haste, and reported that the Kenya and Uganda authorities had been having trouble with the Turkana, and had given them severe punishment, so that they were the reverse of friendly. In fact, the Swahilis reported that they had been attacked by a large force, and had been lucky to escape back to Maji.

The North of course was closed to us. To the East, the Omo river, one of the biggest in Abyssinia, stopped our road. Westwards too was impossible, as we had already proved, and without transport was not to be thought of. So there was nothing for it but to remain at Maji, which we did, waiting for something to turn up.

We lived, I must say, in the greatest comfort, and occupied our minds in speculating as to what was happening in the rest of the world, and especially as to proceedings in other parts of Abyssinia.

At length, one evening, our Shangalla outposts, who by this time brought us news from as far as five days' journey away, informed us that a strong force was approaching, so I rode out to meet them.

I fell in with them after sleeping one night on the road, and I hoped that now our troubles were over. Little did I dream that they were only just beginning!

The new governor, who headed this party, was named Dedjasmach Beru, and he was what is called an "educated" Abyssinian. He had been to Paris, and St. Petersburg with a notorious *chevalier d'industrie*, Count Leontieff, and his idea of the British Government was of the poorest description. His only idea of governing was to get money. He and his people, I found, were very different from those of Menelik's regime, and they were all robbers. The proverb "like master like man" is eminently fitting to the Abyssinian feudal system. If the master has an evil disposition, all his followers are the same.

Beru had obtained his appointment when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, and he had only managed to enlist his men by dint of promises of unlimited loot. His followers had accepted the position, and at once occupied themselves by looting, and plundering in every direction on the march.

I rode back to Maji with Beru, and so had a good opportunity to observe the conduct of his men, as well as his own. He was extraordinarily polite to me, too much so in fact and this made me most suspicious of him for I could not understand why he should take up this attitude, particularly as he knew that I was the richest man in that part of the country, and therefore, as I anticipated, the first to be robbed, and I could

not hazard a guess as to what his object might be.

Arrived once more at Maji, I was still more puzzled at the behaviour of this new governor. He allowed his men to loot the whole countryside over again, just as Dedjasmach Dumti's men had done. Certainly there was not much to be picked up, as the former occupiers had made a fairly clean sweep of everything, but they did their best.

What perplexed me, however, was that no preparations were made for sowing the usual crops, and it became apparent that either they were in residence for a short time only, or else that supplies were expected to come in to the district from elsewhere.

At last, after the new comers had been there about a week, I was sitting in my house one morning, when I heard a drum being beaten in the market place. This always means Government proclamations, so I sent some men up there to hear the news, and to bring me back a report.

Then everything was explained. The proclamation was as follows—

“Oh, you people of Turkana, Karamojo, and Suk. I left Addis Abeba in the daytime, not at night (i.e., by orders of the Government.) Bring me my taxes. If you do not bring them in one month, I will come and take them. And you, my soldiers, get your food ready. In one month we will go down to these countries, and occupy them.”

All these countries mentioned are in British territory, most of them over a hundred miles beyond the border, and it was now patent that Beru had left Addis Abeba under orders to occupy them.

My men were much excited, as it was plain

to the meanest intelligence that this was tantamount to a declaration of war with Great Britain. It put me in a quandary, and at first I did not know what I ought to do. I might have attempted to prevent it by remonstrating with Beru, and possibly making trouble. But the recollection of my gold, ivory, cattle, and other goods, soon brought me to my senses, and I decided, reluctantly enough, that it was no business of mine, and that for this once old England would have to look after herself. For I could not be expected to risk all my property, and at times in Africa one is forced to remember the South African proverb, "It does not pay to help the British Government."

I fully realized the imminent disaster threatening the natives I had known down on the plains, and was very distressed about their future. I knew there were no troops for over two hundred miles, and even then but a few scattered policemen, who would be helpless before a well-armed and well mounted force of fighting men, such as the Abyssinians were.

But, having come to the decision that it was no business of mine, I sat down to have lunch.

Looking back, I can see that from that moment, all my plans, all my gold, and ivory, and virtually all my life's success, were upset, lost, and ended!

As I sat down to my lunch, the guard at the door announced the arrival of Fitaurari Alata, the prime minister, and chief adviser of the new governor. He told me that he had come to say that the governor wished to see me immediately, as there was some pressing business he wished to consult me about.

I mounted my horse, and rode off to see him, accompanied by my interpreter, and a guard of two men.

On leaving the gate of my compound, I found the soldiers of Dedjasmach Beru drawn up in two long lines, between which I rode up to the door of his palace. I did not understand the reason for this display but the Fitaurari told me it was in my honour, and in recognition of my bravery in stopping on at Maji, and saving their houses, and food supplies.

This was, of course, true Abyssinian irony. I had already realised that I was virtually a prisoner. It only remained to seize my property on any flimsy excuse, enslave my people, and then put a decent end to my existence.

Beru's idea of sarcasm, however, only succeeded in putting me in a bad temper, which I suppose he had hardly expected when he made his display of force.

At the door of his palace Beru met me as if he was my greatest friend, but I saw all my "British subjects" standing in a corner of his courtyard under a strong guard, and evidently terrified beyond words. They, of course, had left me on the arrival of the Abyssinians and had shown every desire to throw in their lot with their new rulers.

There was nothing for me to do, however, but to try and discover what was forward, so I followed Beru into his house, and then sat down, and enquired what he wanted with me.

After telling me how much he admired my action in remaining at Maji, he went on to explain that he had been sent to this district by the new Governor, with orders to take over the whole of the country as far as Mount Elgon, and the Suk country, and that he and his people did not know the road, as they were new comers. Would I therefore consent to act as their guide? If

I did so, he would give me one third of all the loot.

He explained that he had asked the Arabs, and Swahilis, but they had declared they were my people, and were frightened to guide the Abyssinians unless I accompanied them.

Perplexed beyond measure, and for want of something better to say, in order to sound the man deeper, I asked him if he had the permission of the British Government to act as he said he was proposing to do.

He replied shortly, saying : " What power has the King of England now ? "

This answer, as the reader may well imagine, left me thunderstruck. Yet I had to show no sign of perturbation, for I was on thin ice, and a false step might be the undoing of both my followers and myself.

I racked my brain to guess what might have happened in European circles during the nine months I had been cut off from the outside world.

I dared ask no questions. To do so would have been a confession of weakness. I could only follow the lead of the Abyssinian Governor, and hope that light would dawn in time.

Not till a full fortnight later, when half-way between Maji and Addis Abeba, did I learn the meaning of Beru's cryptic saying. Conversing there with the ex-Governor of the place, the talk turned on the comet which was attracting attention. " This year," said he, " is the year Kings die."

The same saying was repeated a little later by my Abyssinian boy. I turned on him. " What do you mean ? " I exclaimed, " What kings ? "

He answered in a surprised tone, " Master, YOUR King is dead. *Did you not know ?* "

It is an Abyssinian trait never to speak openly of a king's death, and as I previously explained,

Menelik's death was never mentioned for many months, though everyone knew what had happened.

The moment I realised the fact of the death of King Edward, I also understood the idea which had actuated the Abyssinians, namely, that law and order were automatically in abeyance in British territory, for such a time, at least, as would enable them to get a firm hold of the poorly defended area as far afield as Uganda, and the Nile.

The Abyssinians, knowing their own custom of the out-going, and in-coming Governors on their own Emperor's death, thought that on King Edward's death, all would be confusion in the outlying parts of the British Empire.

To return to my interview with Beru. There I had to feel my way, all in the dark as I was, to an acceptance, or refusal of the Governor's offer. Of course I knew the territory south of Maji. As far as Mount Elgon it was valueless, but Beru announced his intention of building a new palace, and making his headquarters on the Dodinga range of mountains, which is one hundred and twenty miles or so south of what the maps call the Sudan-Abyssinian border.

I was not slow to perceive that the whole matter concerned a carefully arranged plan of conquest, the idea of which must have been conceived in Addis Abeba, most likely with foreign advice.

But I was perfectly certain that the British Government would never allow any hostile State to abut so closely on the Nile as Abyssinia would do if she occupied Dodinga.

Now Beru expected, by intimidation, promises, or flattery, to persuade me to act against my own country, by guiding his forces, to the point he wished to occupy.

As the full force of this idea gradually dawned

on me, I became furious. I forgot all my care, and finesse and completely lost control of my temper and patience.

I had been sitting on one of Beru's imported bentwood chairs. Now I sprang to my feet and told him at the top of my voice, and in my best Amharic, so that his subchiefs standing round the walls of the room might hear.

"If you go into British Territory and steal one cow, you shall mend the roads in chains, and if you kill one man, you shall hang!"

The native temperament is curious. Instead of being angry, Beru just laughed at me, and as I marched out of the house, I heard him say "Turru Englese!" A true Englishman. So he got no change out of me, nor I out of him.

At the foot of the palace steps I found the Swahilis waiting for the news. I knew perfectly well that they would love to go and raid with the Abyssinians, but most of them had homes, land, and wives in British territory, and therefore had given hostages to fortune. So as to help them in making up their minds, I said, "If you go to war along with the Abyssinians, the British Government will break you like this," and I threw the two halves of my riding switch at their feet.

My attitude was no doubt of some assistance to them in their deliberations, for they were not fighting people, but traders, and, while quite ready to act as receivers of stolen goods, did not desire to risk any property they had at home by publicly acting against their own authorities.

Such at least was the point of view of the richer traders, but those with nothing, and no homes to lose, did not care which side they might join.

I walked down to the gate of the compound by myself, my horse being led behind. From the door of Beru's compound as far as my hut—some five hundred yards—stretched the two lines of soldiers waiting for my return.

It so happened that a little boy whose feet were sore after the long march from Addis Abeba, and whom I had been doctoring, ran up to me and "salaamed." I picked him up, and carried him along through the lines, telling him I would give him some more medicine when I got to my hut.

As a matter of fact, I never expected to get there alive. I thought that the stage had been neatly set for my speedy extinction. I reached home in safety however, doctored the child's feet, and then sat down to my spoiled lunch, wondering meanwhile how long I should be allowed to live, or if the Abyssinians would only put me in chains. In any case, I could see that I was irretrievably ruined.

Just as I had finished my lunch, one of the chief Baluchis called to see me. As this gang had gone over altogether to the Abyssinians, I wondered what he could be wanting, and thought that he was, most likely, acting as a spy. But I found, to my relief, that he was in trouble himself, and wanted my assistance. That I was in a position to help anybody was sufficiently surprising, so I naturally said I would do what I could for him.

He explained that he had managed to purchase some donkeys and mules from the new arrivals, and that he was going back to his home at Mount Elgon in Uganda, and that the Abyssinians had given him permission to do so. "But" he continued, "these people are simply robbers. They

are not like the people of Menelik. They are sending with me a party of soldiers who will go as far as Dodosi to spy out the best land, and look for the best road. Then they will return here to Maji to guide the main body in its attack on the country of the Serkali (Government). If the Serkali finds out that I have brought these men with me, there will be much trouble. Will you give me a letter to the Serkali saying that I am compelled to do so, and that it is not my fault? "

Here was a Heaven sent opportunity of communicating with the Government, which, needless to say, I took full and immediate advantage of, I gave the man a letter addressed to the first Government Official who should happen to get hold of it, telling him the full facts of the case, and also explaining that this raid would not take place for a full month at least, as the Abyssinians were very short of ammunition, and had had to send to Addis Abeba for a fresh supply.

This I had learnt shortly after their arrival. Moreover, while walking from Beru's palace to my hut, I had noticed that no soldier had more than five rounds of ammunition in his bandolier.

I do not suppose that Beru had intended to expose his weakness in this respect when he gave orders for his display of soldiery.

Neither do I suppose that my Baluchi friend was quite aware of the importance of this missive which I gave him. But I explained that it told the Government he had nothing to do with the party by whom he was forcibly accompanied, so off he went quite contentedly, and left me wondering what was going to happen next.

Scarcely had this man left my compound, which he did hurriedly by the back door, than

Fitaurari Alata was announced. He had evidently come to find out what I was going to do, and was rather rude, telling me that he knew I could not get to Addis Abeba, as my property was all here and that if I even wrote a letter to my friends there, all I had would be confiscated.

I had not yet made up my mind what to do, but I had to say something, so I replied with the Abyssinian proverb—"The tail of the lion, and the money of the Englishman, who can put his hand on it?"—and we went on drinking our tea like the best of friends.

The Abyssinians are always so polite that the Fitaurari's rudeness was most ominous, and I was convinced was the precursor of further and rougher action. I momentarily expected to be arrested, if nothing worse, but still I was left alone and I realised that the Abyssinians were discussing what they should do with me.

Menelik had taught his people the convenient habit of "Ishi negur"—"Certainly to-morrow," and procrastination has become one of their chief characteristics, which sometimes acts adversely to their own interests, as it chanced to do in this case.

My position would have been comical, had it not been so serious and I used to laugh sometimes when thinking about it.

Here was I, one of those terrible characters who shoot elephants, and wander about in parts officially hidden from the world's news, trying to keep the peace and preserve some of our unfortunate fellow subjects from death, destruction and slavery, while every official would have loved to catch me, and stop me from so doing, although he might be unable to administer the country himself!

I am old-fashioned enough to think that if

the Government employé is unable to do his own work, the employer, that is, the tax payer, must do it for him if he can. He ought to consider it just as much his business as the man employed to do it, and spend what he can afford in so doing.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE RAIDERS' CLAWS ARE CLIPPED

The Fitaurari went off at nightfall and left me to myself. It was manifest that I really should be compelled to do something at once for if I stopped where I was, there was a certainty that I should be robbed, and probably murdered as well. A most unpleasant outlook!

Thinking matters over during the night, I decided that the best course to take was to make an attempt to reach Addis Abeba. So, at the first streak of dawn, I got my four mules and two horses saddled, and slipped out, together with some of my best men, all well mounted, leaving everything standing in charge of my Kikuyu headman, a lad of about sixteen who had been with me for years.

We left my compound separately, and met on the road some distance outside the town, and then rode for dear life.

Luckily the Abyssinians are not early risers, and nobody seemed to have noticed my flight.

Down the hill we went, "*ventre a terre*," and were half-way up the other side, before looking back, I spied a band of men coming over the rim of the hill, evidently in pursuit. We had two good hours start, and I knew all the roads.

It was about three hundred miles as the crow flies, to Addis Abeba, and our animals were fresh

and fit, while those of our pursuers were travel worn, so I hoped we might win to the capital.

My men were wonderful, and never turned a hair.

It was absolutely necessary to get to the top of the hill ahead of us, which was some miles from foot to crest, before the Abyssinians caught us. After that point there was dense forest, in which, if necessary, we could hide, and also I hoped that we might get in touch with Serie, whose sphere of influence extended through that forest.

We therefore toiled along as quickly as possible until at last we reached the hill top, where the road runs through a gap between two hills.

Here we were suddenly halted by armed men, and looking round, discovered that both hill sides were thronged with warriors, whom I at once saw, were Shangallas.

In front of me was my old friend Serie, who greeted me in the most friendly manner. He told me he was waiting at this spot to catch any stray Abyssinian parties. I explained my position, and he told me to go on, and that he would deal with my pursuers.

So down the next hill I went, not pressing the horses any longer, and up another, when I pulled into a bit of thick timber to rest, and to await the result.

I had scarcely got off my mule, when a burst of firing announced the arrival of the Abyssinians. I waited for some time, and at last a messenger from Serie arrived with news.

Thirty Abyssinians had been killed, and the rest had escaped back to Maji. Moreover, Serie sent me a guide, and some of the Abyssinians' mules, as they were useless to him in the forests.

After the rapid pace at which they had been ridden, they were tired out, so I camped for the night, exceedingly thankful for our escape.

During the next twelve days we travelled through dense forests, along hidden tracks, guided and fed by the Shangallas, for the mantle of Serie was over us.

Not an Abyssinian did we see, except in the distance, on an occasional hill top.

It was pitiful to see the state to which the unfortunate Shangallas had been reduced. Murdered, robbed of all they possessed, and carried off into slavery by the thousand, they were now living in the densest forests, and prayed only for the arrival of the white man, a being whom so few of them have ever seen.

Their soothsayers have told them that they will never be free until "The White man comes and saves the country."

Often and often have they come to me asking, "Is the white man coming now?"

Surely the morning of deliverance must some day dawn for these unfortunates!

It was the most ticklish trip that I have ever made. The Abyssinians in their passage had burst through the Shangallas, and had made straight for Maji, leaving only a few parties scattered along their main road on the tops of the highest hills. These parties had no food, and were only able to exist by going out and raiding in the forests. The result was that every trail was watched by Shangalla scouts. These narrow tracks were impenetrable on horseback, and difficult enough on foot, so our mounts had to be led.

I may instance one day's march. Ahead went my guide, I came next, and then my men.

A little way from camp I saw my guide duck suddenly, and, looking into the bush, I saw a native with his spear poised ready to throw. He gazed at me with my yellow beard and helmet for a moment, and then vanished in the bush. My guide said nothing, nor did I, so on we went. The same thing occurred about half an hour's march further on. This time my guide began to pray out loud as we walked along. The third time it occurred, he left his position in front, and went behind my mule leaving me in front and I had to go on first. But my yellow beard took me through all right.

Great is the name of the white man! Perhaps he may deserve it some day in these parts.

At last we burst out of the forest, and there at our feet lay the open country through which runs the Gibbeh river, and there our guide left us.

Across the river was the country of Abu Jifar, another sub-king, and of quite a different tribe, being a Galla. By repute he was a kind and peaceable man, so I hoped to be safe there.

Three days after leaving the forest we found ourselves safe and sound in Jimma, or, as it is called on the map, Jiren. Here there were some shops belonging to Greeks, Syrians, and Armenians, so I was able to buy some food and clothes of a sort, as in crossing the Gibbeh river, which was flooded, I had lost all the clothes I had, except what I stood up in.

No news had reached this place of the happenings at Maji, so we were unmolested. We rested at Jimma for three or four days, but, as we had very little money, we could not buy many fresh mounts. Ours were mostly worn out,

as the forest paths had been for miles at a time, knee-deep in mud, the rainy season having commenced.

One day my men brought me the news that the ammunition from Addis Abeba, destined for the troops at Maji, had arrived in the town, on its way from the capital. It was obvious that, if I wished to save the inhabitants of the low country from destruction, this convey must at all costs be stopped.

I therefore went up to Abu Jifar, the king of the district, and told him I wished to have it stopped.

He knew nothing about it, and naturally did not want to get into trouble with the central Government. However, as I insisted upon it, he sent for a "Shum," or magistrate, who accompanied me to the house where the ammunition was stored.

Now, according to a law of the country, if an appeal to the King, or Emperor, is made properly before reputable witnesses, the question involved must be referred to the Emperor himself.

Being aware of this law, I rode straight up to the house, announced that the ammunition was consigned to robbers, and, in the King's name, demanded that the whole question should be referred to him at Addis Abeba.

The arraignment had to be done according to a set form, as follows—

"Bir Menelik am Lak—In the name of Menelik and God.

Bir Mungist—In the name of the King.

Bir Alga—In the name of the throne."

Having made this declaration, I rode back



TYPICAL ABYSSINIAN RIVER COUNTRY.

to my house, quite satisfied that the ammunition was now safe from transportation to Maji, and that the raid was stopped for the time being.

It seemed as though I could not escape from this adventure, though I did not go about looking for trouble, but the gage was now thrown down, and I was strongly advised by the Greeks to leave at once for Addis Abeba, as the escort in charge of the ammunition were very threatening, and a bullet is easily discharged from the bush.

Early next morning therefore we started out for the Capital, and got halfway without trouble, but the full strength of the rains was come, and the rivers were very full.

My money being now finished, it was increasingly difficult to get along, or even to buy food. At the ferry over the Hawash river I had to leave my last rifle in pawn for the price of being taken over.

We must have looked like scarecrows when we rode into the capital. My hair was long, and my beard right down to my chest. My clothes were in rags, and so were my boots, and I had not a single copper to bless myself with. Small wonder that I had some doubts as to my reception! What would the British Minister think of my story? Would he believe it? These were questions that occupied my mind.

I knew that a new man had arrived, so I expected that he would not listen to a word of my tale, as he would most probably be totally ignorant of what Abyssinians really were like. If he did not believe me I should be thrown to the wolves. I fully realized that here, apparently, was an unknown ruffian arriving from out of the

bush dressed in rags, spinning a yarn, which, even if true, directly accused the friendly Government to which he was accredited, with hostile intentions.

Most likely he would conclude that this ruffian who talked of thousands of pounds' worth of ivory and gold had got into trouble, and had invented this story to get out of it, and it would be surely impossible for any ordinary trader to act as this one had done unless he was getting something out of it for himself.

To make matters worse, my nerves were badly shaken, though this is not to be wondered at, for I had been expecting a bullet out of the bush at any time during the past month, and especially during the last few days. These, indeed, had been particularly trying, as I had heard that some runners had got through from Maji, and had passed ahead of me, bearing all sorts of stories about me, and with the injunction that I was to be stopped at all costs.

Besides, I had been living for some time on native food, and sleeping in a makeshift little tent, never knowing if I should wake up alive, and nerves suffer under such conditions.

More than all, perhaps, I began to get back something of my sense of proportion, so soon lost in the wilds, and to visualize the possibility that the British Government probably did not care a fig if the Abyssinians raided their protectorate or not. Or perhaps I should say, that they would infinitely prefer a raid on the lowlands to a "question" menacing their good relations with a friendly State.

I turned all these questions over in my head, time and time again, until I gave it up, and decided

to throw my cards on the table, and let them play themselves.

Luck, they say, goes in streaks, and at last I had a change for the better.

Arriving in Addis Abeba, I came first to the market place, and there I happened to meet the man to whom I had sold my ivory the year before. He seemed much amused at my appearance, but asked me in to have a drink. As it was evening, and I had had nothing to eat all day, I got a square meal as well, and extremely thankful I was for it.

I also borrowed fifty dollars from him. A few shillings clinking in one's pocket make a great difference, after being practically "broke." It served also to encourage my men, who were wondering where they were going to sleep and eat, especially as they knew I had no money left.

Coming out of this man's compound, I met an Englishman taller than most men, riding across the market place, and to my astonishment, I found I knew him. He belonged to the same club as I did, at home, and he seemed pleased to see me, and much interested at the state I was in. He turned out to be the new Manager of the Bank of Abyssinia. He was most hospitable, and a good bath and a square meal under European conditions I found refreshing and comforting. My friend even lent me some clothes, but as he was some inches over six feet high, and broad in proportion, they did not fit me very well, still I did not allow that to worry me.

Here I began to get news. First, there was confirmation of King Edward's death, which accounted for the Abyssinians' idea that England

would be in a turmoil, just as their own country was. Next, there was also confirmation of Menelik's death. He was being succeeded by his grandson, who was still too young to govern, and therefore a regent had been appointed to help him until he was old enough. This regent was busy removing Menelik's old chiefs, and pushing in others of his own faction. So the new King was following out the usual custom, and "wading in blood to his throne."

Another matter of interest to me was the result of a letter which I had sent on by special runner to the British Minister, and which he had received some days previously. I found he was anxious to see me.

Next morning, I borrowed a horse from my friend at the Bank, and rode off to the Legation, which is some four miles from the centre of the town. I was clean, and no longer famished, but in spite of my borrowed plumes, which were considerably of an out-size, I must have looked a pretty "hard case"! The native commissionaire at the door of the Legation certainly thought so, and I sat on the stone mounting block outside till my name had gone in to the Power within.

By this time I had come to the conclusion that I was a fool. I had said nothing of my own special affairs, or experiences, to my friend of the Bank, for he was hardly likely to be interested, and, on the other hand, he was full of the news of what was occurring in Addis Abeba.

Nor, indeed, did I suppose that my story would interest the Minister. One of the effects of Africa is that one becomes so self-centred that one is inclined to believe oneself the centre of the Universe! I have an idea that everyone

living in Africa should write up over his desk the words—"Cultivate a sense of proportion." If one were to look at those words every day, one would be saved a large amount of worry and money.

To turn from moralizing to cold fact, however, having gone so far, I had to carry on with my effort, and as I was ushered in to the Legation, I wondered, first if I should be believed, and, secondly, if I were believed, if the game was worth the candle.

I was pleasantly surprised. The men I met were officers and gentlemen. Here I got a hearing, though I own my statements were hard to believe. Strange to say, the question of whether my statements were true to fact or not was settled by the affair of the ammunition which I had arrested at Jimma.

If I was telling the truth the Abyssinians would be bound to prove it. For it was impossible for them to hide such action as they had taken. In fact, it was more than probable that a message from the Regent on the subject might arrive at any moment.

Of course, I felt at an immense disadvantage. My nerve had been shaken, and I had been thinking on native lines for so long that, when I spoke it was like having to translate the native point of view into English. These officials, too, were quite new to Abyssinia, and that my strange story was even listened to patiently was really wonderful. At last, to my great relief, the dragoman was sent for, and he was told to arrange an interview with the Regent as soon as possible.

This took place a day or two later, and was interesting enough, for the Regent gave himself away completely, ending the interview by standing

up, pointing his finger at me, and declaring in a fury, "That man knows everything." (Anglice—"That man has exposed everything"). For there was not the slightest doubt that the attempted occupation of British territory had been by his express orders.

I walked out of the reception room between the Consul and the Minister, feeling as proud as a peacock, in spite of the fact that most likely I had lost all my property which I had left behind at Maji, and what was more, had, in all probability made Abyssinia impossible for me to live in any longer.

But I was sustained by the feeling of a duty done. Though, in truth, I have often wondered since what it cost me, both then and eventually.

Here I may state my private opinion, which is, that money, time, trouble, even life, spent in the altruistic endeavour to assist the British Government must of necessity be its own reward to the private individual. The British official mind hates to be disturbed in the even tenor of its way, its point of view being "Why does this confounded fellow interfere! It is no business of his." As for the money spent, repayment is out of the question, for, in Africa, from the greatest governor, to the last joined policeman, all will answer any suggestion to that effect, by the words, "There is no fund out of which you can be repaid."

As the reader will perhaps have gathered, one of my reasons for writing this narrative is to expose the evils of the system of "closed areas." He will therefore perhaps bear with me if I here dilate on the subject.

In certain parts of Africa, far removed from the

comforts, and amenities of civilization, are places where there was at the time I am here referring to between 1900 to 1914, no active or effectual British administration, although nominally under British protection. No white man was allowed in them and the whole country from Mount Elgon in Uganda, as far as the Abyssinian border, about two hundred miles away, was one of these closed districts. It was overrun with so-called traders, Arab, Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Swahili and so on, who were raiders rather than traders. And as far as I know Britishers alone were excluded. This may have been, possibly, in order to prevent an exposé of the true state of affairs, but the ostensible reason given was, that if an Englishman was killed in such an area, there would have to be a punitive expedition as a retaliatory measure, and the country could not afford it.

The shades of the many Britishers whom the Abyssinians and their allies have murdered are still waiting for these expeditions, as also are the thousands of British subjects under the so-called British Protectorate, who have been killed or carried off into slavery by the Abyssinians.

Even to-day in the year of our Lord, 1925, the state of affairs is nearly the same as at the time of which I am writing.

The poor natives, martyrs to British "protection," do not apparently count in the scheme of things. They cannot read or write, or express themselves, and as nobody knows about them, what does it matter? Their country is a "closed district," closed to anybody who might expose the ineffectiveness of their regime, but wide open to murderers, robbers, slave raiders, or any ruffian who likes to take his chance there.

This book is my plea for the open door, and effective administration.

But a truce to these somewhat bitter reflections on incapacity and procrastination. In the next chapter I shall proceed to relate what happened after the Regent's audience.

CHAPTER XIII

THE " LION OF JUDAH " AND HIS LITTLE WAYS

I do not know when I have ever felt so triumphant as I did after my justification at the audience with the Regent.

Every statement I had made had been proved up to the hilt, and proved by the very man who was chiefly responsible for the whole affair, so my sense of satisfaction was naturally very keen. The Minister and the Consul were both exceedingly good to me, and as the matter was now in their hands, I decided to rest for a while.

I went back to my room at the Bank, and took things easy. In a day or two I heard that the ammunition I had arrested on its way to Maji was being recalled, so the raid was stopped.

Abyssinia is always interesting, and I had no objection to stopping at the capital, and amusing myself in the semi-civilization which is attempted in Addis Abeba.

There are several Legations, French, German, Italian, British, and sometimes those of the United States, and Turkey. The first named of these Powers have established for their representatives beautiful houses, with extensive grounds, along a hillside about four miles away from the rest of the town. There is a road to them over which it is possible to drive a cart, but riding is better and safer. Menelik started making roads,

but now that he is dead they are rapidly reverting to morasses.

Near these Legations there is a racecourse and polo ground. There are several race meetings every year, and polo is played regularly. Besides these amusements, there are bridge parties and luncheons always in progress, but rarely dinner parties, as the roads are unsafe at night, and one never knows what may happen. Life in the capital of Abyssinia is indeed the strangest mixture of civilization cheek by jowl with barbarism.

The market days are wonderful, with the thousands of natives, and the variety of their merchandize. The market square is a large place in the middle of the town, surrounded by European houses, tin sheds and native huts made of mud and grass. Abyssinian architecture is about the most primitive in Africa, and it is strange that a country which claims to be Christian, and has its own literature and grammatical language, should be so backward in this respect.

The market place is also the place for executions. Early one morning, riding through it, I saw several processions carrying black flags, followed and surrounded by a dense mob of natives, who stopped every now and then to listen to some proclamation which was read aloud.

Wondering what it was all about, I joined the throng, and then saw that each of these processions was escorting several men with their arms tied up behind their backs, and that the proclamation consisted of their death sentences.

After a while, the crowd to which I had joined myself came to one of the big trees which dot the square. A soldier swarmed up it with a rope, and to make a short story of it they looped it round the neck of one of these unfortunates,

hauled him up from the ground and strangled him most effectually.

The same proceeding took place all round the market square, and the victims were left suspended there for three days. This, I suppose, was in order to impress the populace.

There were still some prisoners left, but these latter were I gathered, simply robbers, so they had their right hands and left feet cut off, and were then told they could go and steal if they could. This accounts for the old story that even the beggars ride in Abyssinia, for the relatives of these criminals have to provide them with horses, in order that they may get about to beg for alms.

I heard afterwards that the exhibition I have described was to impress people with the might of the new Government.

It appeared that, since Menelik's death, lawlessness had been getting somewhat advanced, even for Abyssinia, and when a gang of robbers murdered a Greek, and robbed his house, almost in front of the Bank, the different Legations came together and complained to the Regent that matters were getting unsafe.

He was terribly shocked! Robbers must have been at work of whom he knew nothing, so he called his police, and told them to raid the lowest parts of the town, and capture the malefactors. Now nobody knows where the lowest parts of the town are, as it is all much alike, but the police did their duty to the best of their ability, and brought in numbers of masterless and moneyless men.

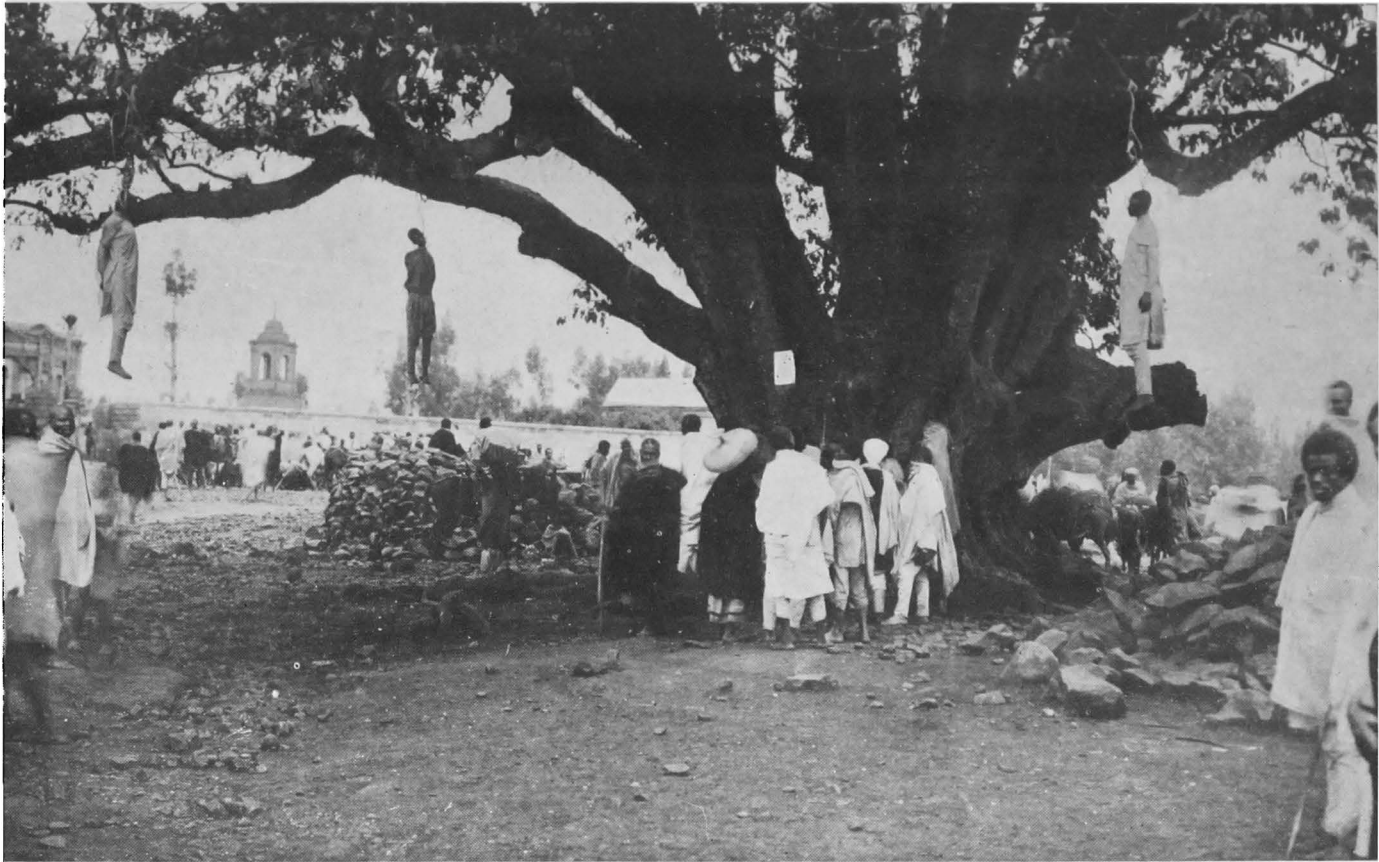
As these men had neither masters, nor money, they decided that they must be the criminals, and their execution was what I have described.

Whether the right men were executed, or not, is open to question, but there is no doubt that, from that time, the number of murders and robberies materially decreased, while the rifle fire at night became much more intermittent.

It was generally rumoured that the police were largely interested in the robberies, and at last one of their most prominent men was caught in the act. When searched, it was found that he had a girdle round him, on which were hung the keys of all the shops of the market square, so they hanged him without further question. He was a big, fat, man, so heavy that he broke the rope twice before he was successfully strangled. His executioners did not dream of fetching a new rope. Each time he fell down, they mended the old one, telling him while thus occupied that a terrible robber such as he was should not die quickly or comfortably.

Justice in Abyssinia, as will now be understood, is severe when it does function, but it is often difficult to detect the difference between robbers and Government officials, especially in the districts far from the capital. In these parts the Government and the bands of robbers are so closely allied that no stranger can appreciate the difference.

I saw no regular prisons in Abyssinia except at Addis Abeba, and there the prisoners get no food except what may be supplied to them by friends and sympathisers, so the inmates have a far from cheerful time. They die off at a terrible rate, being all crowded together at night in a small cell. During the day they are allowed outside in a sort of courtyard, and there they stand, with their hands through the bars, begging at the top of their voices from the passers-by.



AN EXECUTION OPPOSITE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, ADDIS ABABA.

A prisoner of high standing is not put in the common jail. He is chained to a soldier and allowed to wander about, and though it may seem strange it is no disgrace to be so treated. Even Menelik, before he became Emperor, was at one time chained up in this way.

There used to be an old Englishman called McKelvey, in the British Legation. At the time when Magdala was the capital of Abyssinia, King Theodore seized the British Consul, and all his staff, of whom McKelvey was one, and imprisoned them. This action led to the war with Abyssinia in 1870, when the British captured Magdala, and killed Theodore.

As it chanced, Menelik also was a prisoner at that time. Years afterwards, McKelvey, who returned to Abyssinia on his own business, and was given a post as interpreter, was introduced to Menelik, the then Emperor, and promptly claimed acquaintance with him, "Were we not both in chains together?" said he. Menelik did not appreciate his visitor's good memory, nor the want of tact which prompted the remark!

McKelvey ended his life in Abyssinia as the chief of a small village where he had lived for years. In spite of his long residence in the country he always remained a "white man," and wore European clothes, unlike some other Europeans, notably Russians, who have "gone native." I have seen these latter in the market place, and could scarcely distinguish them from the natives of the country. I believe they were Russians from Asia.

There is but small difference between the Asiatic and the Abyssinians, and perhaps that is not to be wondered at, for the Abyssinians claim that they came from the shores of the Caspian

sea. Certainly they were not originally Africans, though by now intermarriage with the natives of the country has produced a race of its own.

The Northern part of the country, however, is different. In Tigré, as it is called, the inhabitants have all the facial characteristics of the Jews, and they claim kinship with them.

They relate that when the children of Israel left Egypt at the decree of Jehovah, many thousands of them, who had not succeeded in joining Moses, were cut off from the main body by the rising of the waters. The road by which the Israelites crossed the Red Sea ran through the Bitter Lakes and was a well-known caravan track. It can still be seen from the deck of any steamer passing through the Suez Canal, but there is much more water in the lakes nowadays than formerly, as the canal has let it in. This caravan track led straight across the Bitter Lakes to the wells still known as Moses' wells on the East side of the Canal. It was open for about six months of the year, when the North wind blew, sweeping the shallow waters of the lakes into the Red Sea. When this wind stopped, the waters trickled back, and covered up the track.

Such is the story as it runs in Abyssinia, and it may be supposed that the erudite writers who collected the best known annals of Jewish history did not concern themselves with the fate of a comparatively few hangers-on, cut off by the tide.

Those of the Children of Israel, then, who had been left behind were in a quandary. They could not return to Egypt, as they were most unpopular there, nor could they cross over to join their friends, so they drifted down the shore of the Red Sea, which at that time was better provided with

streams than it is to-day (as is proved by old river-beds), living as best they could until at last they came to the mountains of Abyssinia. There they penetrated, and made friends with the inhabitants.

Now, so the story runs, the Israelites in Palestine were just as keen traders in those old days as they are to-day, and hearing the report of this settlement of their kin on the far side of the Red Sea they sent out an expedition to find them. This expedition started out from the spot now known as Annesley Bay, and wandered up the Red Sea until they discovered the whereabouts of their brethren, and started trading with them.

This went on for some time, till the reign of Solomon, when these traders brought to Abyssinia the news of his greatness and power, and succeeded in persuading the Queen to go and visit him. Solomon, as all know, contracted a matrimonial alliance with her, and she returned home with a son named Menelik the first.

From that day to this, the title of the Kings of Abyssinia has always been "So and So The Son of Solomon, the Son of David," and the Royal proclamations invariably begin—"The Lion of Judah has conquered."

This is the Abyssinian version of their own history, and though not pretending to be a historian, I see no reason why it should not, in the main, be true.

To return to the capital. Here many interesting events were taking place which helped to pass the time while I waited there. The Legation would not give me permission, yet, to return to Maji, though waiting was an expensive business, for my men there were drawing food and wages all

this time, and my own expenses were mounting up. I had therefore to endure the delay with what patience I could muster. The Bank luckily, was very good to me, and so I carried on well enough, and kept myself amused by the society of the place, and still more by observing the way in which this Royal and Christian State was governed.

One day, I remember, an old chief of the late Emperor's regime, came and had afternoon tea at the Bank. His name was Ras Munjesha. Just before sundown he started for home with his escort in the usual way, for as I have before explained, nobody wanders about after sundown.

Next morning we saw a grand procession leaving his house, en route for the burial ground. On enquiry we heard that it was Ras Munjesha, "who had been ill for a long time." It was given out that he had died from "Cerebral meningitis," a diplomatic translation of the poisoned cup.

It seemed that the night before, on his way home, he had stopped for another cup of coffee at the house of one of his friends, and a "cup of coffee" of a certain kind is recognised all over the country as one of the most deadly disorders.

The new Government was removing the old chiefs, and this one had evidently been making himself unpopular. About this time, too, the dragoman of the British Legation, a somewhat important personage, was dismissed for questionable dealings with the Indians of Bombay, who have the chief trade of Abyssinia in their hands. He had been for years in British employ, and was furious. The night he left his house in the Legation grounds his men got very drunk, and made a terrible scene. Eventually they raided the

Minister's compound, bent on mischief, and laid out the late Major Doughty Wylie V.C. by cracking him over the head with a club. The Consul, and also the Vice-Consul suffered in a similar fashion, and the Minister himself, a man of might and muscle, only escaped damage by knocking out five of his assailants with his bare fists. Luckily the others all recovered.

The prowess of the Minister created astonishment among the Abyssinians, as they know nothing of the noble art of self-defence.

It took some trouble to persuade the Regent to order that the assailants should be flogged publicly, as an example to others, and when the flogging did take place it was of such a mild nature that it merely served to amuse the on-lookers, who were used to witness much more stringent castigation than was then administered.

An Abyssinian flogging is no laughing matter. It is carried out with a long whip made of giraffe hide and very thick. One stroke can lay the skin open on the culprit's back, from neck to buttocks. A few strokes can kill.

Such a flogging was looked for on this occasion by the curious crowd, but the sight they saw was the sort of castigation as applied in England to refractory prisoners. They expressed the opinion that it was ridiculously mild.

The Abyssinian race is one of the most mixed in the world. The Arabic name for them is "Habesh," which means mixture, and it is a true title, for they are a complete amalgamation of African and Asiatic.

Their Christianity, of which they are rightly proud, is mixed up with Judaism, as they possess an ark, and several ceremonies evidently derived from that religion.

Their habit of eating raw meat has a patriotic origin. They say that when Abyssinia was attacked by the Mohammedans they were compelled to fly to the forests which covered a large part of the country, and in order to render their security complete they were compelled to eat their meat raw, lest the enemy should trace them by their fires.

It should be mentioned that the Abyssinians themselves are not the most numerous section of the people in the country. The Galla tribe, who are mostly Mohammedans, are much more numerous.

Menelik, founder of the Abyssinia of to-day, through having realised the power of the rifle, conquered them and brought this tribe under his rule. But Abyssinian rule is maintained by force and fear alone, not only in ancient Abyssinia, but in those districts more recently conquered. Should any of the races at present subject obtain possession of rifles and ammunition in any quantity, a civil war is a certainty, with all its massacres and extermination.

It is difficult to see how Abyssinia can continue in her present course. A Government which rules by fear alone, and combines that rule with slave trading, and slave raiding, is an anomaly which cannot exist indefinitely, in these enlightened days. That they have existed so long is really due to a wonderful ability in diplomatic intrigue, and by playing off the different Foreign Powers, one against the other.

But their policy of the practical extermination of all the subject races with whom they are in contact has depopulated the country, and must eventually cause their downfall. That policy, which they seem unable to alter, is like a dread-

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ful cancer slowly eating the heart out of the nation.

It is strange indeed that such a Government should be allowed to continue, with its rule, consisting, in practice, of murder, robbery, and slavery open and unblushing.

The future of Abyssinia is on the lap of the gods.

CHAPTER XIV

A MURDER CHARGE AND A NATIVE K.C.

For over three months I waited patiently in Addis Abeba. Every time I asked for permission to return to Maji it was refused.

At last one morning I received a message saying that the Consul wished to see me. On arrival I was informed that I could leave for Maji as soon as I liked and that as I owed the Bank money one of their representatives, an Abyssinian, would accompany me to take over my ivory.

The Consul explained that they had been waiting all this time for the return of their agents, who had been sent to Maji to spy out the land, and also to verify my statements. I never knew who these agents were, but, luckily for me, they returned thoroughly alarmed with the state of affairs in the Western province, which, they said, were even worse than I had depicted. I have an idea that they considered themselves lucky to get back alive.

I had to carry with me enough money to pay the men I had left behind, and this was considerable, nearly a year's wages. The Maria Theresa dollar, which is the currency of Abyssinia, is very heavy. Being silver throughout, its value alters from time to time according to the market price of silver, though the usual exchange is about ten to the pound sterling. Six hundred

of these dollars weigh thirty-seven and a half pounds avoirdupois.

I had therefore to procure several mules for my load of silver, and to carry a supply of cartridges, which are used for small change everywhere.

I cannot say that I looked forward to my trip with pleasure. Besides being most suspicious of the Abyssinian Government, I had to face the certainty that the bands of robbers which infested the whole country would very much like to capture my caravan. What I feared most was the prospect that my old enemy Dedjasmach Beru at Maji would hear of my return, and would have me ambushed before I got to Maji, informing the authorities after my decease that it had been the work of robbers and that, though he much regretted the incident, yet he had known nothing of it himself.

The British Minister advised me to leave Maji as soon as possible, and to go down into the Sudan to a place called Mongalla on the Nile, that is, if I could find my way there.

I knew already that I could not get far into the Sudan by way of the desert due West of Maji, as I had tried that route already, but I told him I would make the attempt to reach Mongalla, and went off with forty mules, piled high with trade goods of every sort, besides my dollars and my cartridges, with the prospect of an eventful time in the immediate future.

I had armed my men, and engaged some Abyssinians as well, but I knew the latter would desert me if our caravan should be attacked by their friends, and my Swahilis, to say the least of it, were not soldiers, and hardly knew one end of a gun from the other. This was natural enough,

for I had engaged them South of Mount Elgon in Uganda and their sole business in life was to carry loads on their heads.

That, indeed, appeared to be just about the only use their heads were for! They did not use them for thinking. If they had done so, they would have left me long before. But I presume they thought I was a lucky master to work for, and so far I had always managed to pull them through.

I must confess they always astonished me, staggering along through the desert, carrying enormous loads on their heads, undergoing heat, hunger, and thirst for the smallest of wages, which, after perhaps a year's toil, they would often fling away in the wildest spree, and in ten days or so would return to their masters penniless, to re-engage for another year in the desert, quite pleased with themselves.

The old Swahili porter was a wonderful fellow. Without him where would our tropical African possessions be to-day? He would march along, sticking to his master through every sort of danger and hardship, perfectly happy at the end of the day's work to receive a tin full of flour and a share of some meat his master might have shot on the road.

I have known these porters die beside their loads, rather than give up. As an instance of this, I may relate the following.

In 1912 I was camped on the Boma plateau, when a large caravan of Swahilis came up from the low country, and told me they were flying from the Sudanese soldiers, also that they had lost several of their porters. I went down the hill to meet these troops, but found they had gone back to their base.

Along the trail I came across the porters, dead of thirst and exhaustion, each man with his tusk of ivory beside him.

The old porter has practically ceased to exist. His place has been taken by railways, and motor cars, but it should always be remembered that he it was who made the country possible for the white man.

Every track in Africa has been covered by his plodding feet, and every water hole has its grave beside it.

Peace be to his shade!

When the reader perchance sees some old porter fallen on hard times in Nairobi or elsewhere, let him consider a moment before telling him to move off. We all owe him more perhaps than we can realize.

For the first few days after leaving Addis Abeba we had little difficulty, for the rains were over, and the rivers had gone down so as to be easily fordable. The mud, which is so terrible to wade through when on trek, had dried up, so we reached the banks of the Omo river in half the time it took us to come on our former journey.

The reception we received, however, from the inhabitants was very different from what it had been in Menelik's time. The strong hand was gone, and it was generally recognised that the question as to what party had the greatest number of rifles would soon have to be settled.

The foreign legations had all agreed to recognise Lij Yasu (child Jesus), the grandson of Menelik, as the future king, but many chiefs did not desire his accession, as it was rumoured that he was tainted with Mohammedanism.

The administration of the country, therefore,

did not run with its former smoothness, and what complicated matters was the Abyssinian custom of removing the old rulers, in order to replace them with the adherents of the new ruler.

Bands of robbers had begun to infest the road, and we had many warnings, but the strength of our caravan, which had been increased by other small traders who had joined us for protection, prevented any attack being made on us. With scarcely any difficulty we trekked on for fifteen days, till we arrived at Jimma, the half-way house between the capital and Maji.

The country here was as peaceable as before the death of Menelik, for that king was a Galla, and had not been "removed," so we decided to rest for a few days before facing the devastated territory lying between Jimma and Maji.

We had only been there one night, when there was a sudden tumult immediately outside the hut I was living in.

It transpired that Dedjasmach Beru had sent his right hand man Alata from Maji, with orders to kill me if he met me in the bush. Here, to his disgust, he met me in Jimma, which is another king's territory. This was not at all to his advantage, particularly as Abu Jifar, King of the district, being apprised of our little quarrel, and knowing of Alata's intentions, had put a guard over my house.

Thus I knew nothing until the shouts of "Bir Menelik! El Heddum!" "In the name of Menelik, do not go there!" apprised me that a forcible entrance to my compound had only just been prevented.

It was touch and go for some minutes, but the arrival of a strong force of Abu Jifar's men soon

compelled my would-be attackers to desist from their intentions.

The yelling and swearing, however, continued, and so, to put an end to it, I seized my chair, planted it in the middle of the road, and told my old acquaintance Alata that, if a shot was fired, it would be he who fired it, and he knew what would happen then.

Of course, by Abyssinian law, he was responsible for the actions of his men, so if I had been killed, he would have had to pay the penalty, and there were too many witnesses present for him to risk it.

This quieted the hubbub, and my would-be murderers went into camp just across the road from where I was sleeping, while Abu Jifar's soldiery surrounded my hut, and remained there all the time I was in Jimma, and incidentally cost me a pretty penny in food and drink. Good luck to them!

This rude and unexpected check compelled the Dedjasmach to try other methods, so for a day or two I had comparative peace while he cogitated on his next move. At the end of that time he had arranged his plans, and I was to encounter fresh trouble.

Early one morning Abu Jifar sent for me, so, surrounded by a strong force of his soldiery, and my own followers, I rode up to his palace.

There I found the whole place crowded with people awaiting my arrival in dead silence.

Standing near the King was old Alata, dressed in his best clothes, and surrounded by his friends.

Now I found what was before me. It seemed that he had charged me with murder, and the trial was to come off at once.

This was most unpleasant, particularly as, by Abyssinian law, anybody accused of any crime is held guilty until he proves his innocence.

Here, unexpectedly, I found my lucky star was in the ascendant. It transpired that the agent of the Bank was a regular Abyssinian lawyer, and a K.C. at that. He jumped at the chance of a "case," so I called for a chair, sat down, and asked for the charge to proceed.

The conduct of the affair was quite like that of the Courts at Home. Old Abu Jifar, sitting on his throne, looked, and was, I am sure, just as capable as any Judge. Certainly he knew the law better than any of us, and my K.C. was as pleased as Punch with himself, so I hoped for the best, and tried to look, and act, as if being tried for murder was no graver an ordeal than one might undergo for breaking the speed limit.

Alata first stood forward, and formally accused me of murdering thirty-seven Abyssinians in the desert about six weeks before.

The reader will remember that Dedjasmach Beru sent a strong party down into the desert to spy out the road to Dodinga, just before I escaped to Addis Abeba from Maji, and that I had sent a letter by a trader, at the same time, to the Uganda Government, telling them of Beru's intentions. It seemed that the Uganda Police had come on this party of spies, and captured all of them, except the leader, who managed to evade arrest, and, after really terrible privations, succeeded in getting back to Maji.

He had heard of this letter, and putting two and two together, came to the conclusion that it was I who was responsible for the capture of his men. He did not know whether they had been

killed, or only captured, but hoping for the best he had brought the charge against me.

It was a difficult position for Abu Jifar, who did not want to offend the new Government, more especially since Dedjasmach Beru was a near relative of the new ruler, so he wanted to send me back to Addis Abeba for trial, in order to avoid the responsibility.

My K.C., however, wanted to go on to Maji, and while collecting my ivory for the Bank, at the same time do some business of his own, so we had a hot legal discussion, full of the most appropriate gestures, but of which I did not understand a word, until at last, to my relief, my legal representative bowed deeply to the Judge, and stepped back to the prisoner's side, evidently completely satisfied.

He explained to me, in a mixture of French and Amharic, that he had pointed out to the Judge, firstly, that my daily expenses were large. Secondly, that I was an Englishman, a recognized subject of the King of England, and a great friend of the British Minister at Addis Abeba. Thirdly, that I had proved beyond question that I was hundreds of miles away when these robbers were captured (loud protests from the other side!), whom the witnesses asserted had been killed in the desert.

But, notwithstanding these undeniable proofs of my innocence, since both he and myself were desirous of assisting justice at all times, if Fitaurari Alata would give security on two heads, we should be perfectly agreeable to go to Addis Abeba at once.

Forward strode Alata, bowing deeply with every sign of satisfaction, expressed his readiness to give security for anything whatever, and then stepped back again.

"Excellent," said my K.C. "Now the two things I want security for are as follows.

"In case my client shall be found not guilty, I claim immediate security for three hundred dollars a day, for his expenses during his detention, beginning from this, the day of his arrest. And furthermore, I demand security for ten thousand dollars damages to his reputation."

This raised a storm of protests, loud and long, and arguments rattled like hail on a tin roof from side to side till old Abu Jifar at last ordered silence.

"It is impossible," he said, "for Alata to give security for all this large amount, but my judgment is, that he must give security for three hundred dollars a day for expenses to the accused, until I get a reply from Addis Abeba to the report which I shall send of this matter. The accused may write too, and so may the accuser. If the reply from the Head Government says that the accused must go to Addis Abeba, he will do so. In the mean time, both the accused and the accuser will wait here in Jimma."

I bowed deeply, and withdrew, leaving my counsel to arrange with Alata the necessary security for three hundred dollars per diem. It strained his master's credit to the utmost to get people to do this for him, and it was not till evening that my lawyer friend arrived, tired but triumphant, to announce that it did not matter now how long we stopped in Jimma, and that we could drink champagne every day!

After this highly successful *denouement*, I wrote to the Minister at the Legation in Addis Abeba, and I presume my accuser also wrote to headquarters. I often wonder what happened to those letters, for I never got an answer to mine.

We had been waiting at Jimma for about a fortnight, when orders came that Alata was to go to Addis Abeba, and that I was to go on to Maji, so we parted, but Alata still owes me five thousand dollars for expenses, which I have as good a chance of getting as I have of flying to the moon !

CHAPTER XV

A GIGANTIC SLAVE GANG

The time I spent in Jimma was most interesting. Not only did my own affairs demand a constant-vigilance, as my rival Alata, who was living on the other side of the street, was constantly trying to make himself unpleasant, but I was also enabled to see again and on a larger scale, how an Abyssinian chief makes arrangements for the future welfare of himself and his dependants, when removed from the district he may have been governing.

But first a word as to Jimma. This town and district, at the time of which I am writing, was one of the richest and most fertile, and best governed in Africa. In this I do not except the white governed districts all over that continent. I have never seen people more contented.

The palace was cleaner, and better ordered, in every way, than the palace and court at Addis Abeba.

There Abu Jifar reigns like a patriarch of old, and when he dies, his name ought long to be held in revered memory by his people. Not only has he saved them from being devoured by the Abyssinians, but by his assistance to trade, the liberality of his views, and his open-handed policy, he has brought them into the position of

being the wealthiest, and I fully believe, the happiest native governed state in Africa.

At his death, however, I fear for the future of these friendly and peaceable people. The mouth of every Abyssinian waters when he travels through their territory, and I am sure they will make a determined effort to seize it, for they say "After the Shangalla, the Galla."

If they do so, the country will quickly revert to the same state as the rest of Abyssinia, for the wealth of this section of the country is derived from the energy of its people, and the conciliatory rule and the liberal policy of its ruler, which encourages, instead of cramping, trade and industry.

The actual climate and soil is no better than throughout the rest of the country.

The only black spot in his administration is Mandara, the native town lying immediately below the palace. This is the greatest centre of the slave trade in Abyssinia. Every slave caravan from the South makes straight for this place, and the slaves here are sold, and pass into other hands, to be distributed to all parts of Abyssinia, and even across the Red Sea into Arabia.

This slave trade started in a small and clandestine way during the reign of Menelik, in spite of the opposition of the different governors, who, being firmly seated in their different territories, did not appreciate the loss of the only subjects they had, who were willing and able to do all the agricultural work.

The moment Menelik died, his standing orders were disregarded, and all was changed. Not only did the outgoing Governors seize all the Shangalla they could lay their hands on, but the new-comers,

instead of settling down to build houses, and to grow crops, as had been the custom heretofore, set to work to catch and sell their remaining subjects as quickly as possible, because of the uncertainty they were in as to the tenure of their different governorships. Then, not content with depopulating their own territories, they proceeded to raid further and further afield, beyond their own borders, until there is now a space of over a hundred miles of so-called British territory which has suffered the same treatment, in every direction outside the Abyssinian boundary, and bordering on what the Foreign Office terms in its Official Reports, "The slave producing areas of Abyssinia."

I have referred to this matter before. Now, to give the student of slavery and its effects a concrete instance, I will describe what I saw with my own eyes, and what may serve as evidence of the literal extermination of an entire tribe.

The largest slave caravan I have ever seen arrived at Jimma while we were camped there, waiting for our orders from the central Government.

It seems that the chief of Shoa Ghimoera, a district some hundred miles to the south, had been "removed" by orders of the new Government. He was a rich man, and had at least one thousand soldiers under him. On moving out, he and his men carried off enormous numbers of his former subjects.

I had no notice of the approach of this caravan, but hearing a sound of many people going along the road which stretched between my camp and that of the Fitaurari Alata I went out of my compound to see what was happening.

To my amazement I saw an unbroken string of slaves, the men roped together, the women and

children walking alongside, while the little babies unable to walk, and whose mothers were exhausted, were strapped on the backs of mules, three or four at a time.

I gazed in astonishment at this throng, and tried to count them, but the number seemed endless, so I took my armchair out of my compound and sat there counting them as they filed past.

Each soldier conducted his own little mob. I marked the hundreds by throwing bits of stick on the ground.

At nightfall the procession of misery halted, and camped on the spot, marching on again at break of day.

For nearly four days they streamed along. I counted six thousand in the first two days.

Unfortunately I was then called away on other business, so I am unable to state exact figures, but it must have been at least twice that number.

I heard at the time that a Swiss doctor, Monsieur Montandon, was somewhere in the district, so, if necessary, he could support my statement. He, I believe, did not see the main body, but only the different caravans before they joined together in Jimma. I gathered that he was wandering through the dense forests of Kaffa when this happened.

I can lay no claim to being a philanthropist, far from it, but I can say with truth that I have never seen a more heart-rending sight. I only wish I could write so as to make every reader of this record realize it as I did at the time. It was worse than war.

I remember, after the last had gone by, I saw an old woman supporting herself with a stick, hobbling along after them.

I said to her in Amharic ; " Where are you going to, mother ? Do you want the Abyssinians to catch you ? "

She answered, " What do I care ? They have killed my husband, and carried off all my children and grandchildren. I have no home left, so I follow them to wherever they go."

The feeling of utter helplessness which came over me was worst of all. One could do nothing for any of them. I do not mind confessing that I would have loved to shoot every Abyssinian soldier as he brought his quota of slaves past my door. Aye ! and to have piled one on the other, and left them there.

The only good thing about it was the object lesson it gave to my Swahili followers.

Not very long ago I was reading a book in which the writer, evidently an armchair philanthropist, said that he would like to see a people in Africa governed by their own rulers. He was sure they would be more successful than the white man.

Let him go to Abyssinia, which I believe is the last purely native governed State in Africa. Let him travel right through the country, and I shall be greatly astonished if he does not change his mind.

In Addis Abeba it is true one sees nothing amiss. There, everything not quite "*comme il faut*" is hidden from the eyes of the white man by a cloud of lies. Moreover, everybody is interested in maintaining the *status quo*, not excepting the politicians. The traders dare not open their mouths. If they said a word, they would be ordered out of the country.

I, who have seen, and am not afraid of speaking, have written down the truth, aye, the whole

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truth, in the hope of getting the world to hear. It seems almost a hopeless task, but, perhaps, at long last, somebody may rise up who will be powerful enough to stop this slaughter of an unoffending people, and to rescue the remains of a destroyed and helpless race.

CHAPTER XVI

HIDDEN GOLD AND JEGUNA THE BRAVE

As can be imagined, during the passage of this enormous slave gang through the town of Mandara, there were all sorts of exciting episodes. Slaves, trying to escape, were recaptured. Gallas made the most of their opportunity by trying to steal the slaves, sometimes as they went by in the daytime, sometimes at night. Disputes of every kind were going on all the time.

One case which came under my observation was amazing. One of the soldiers went off into the town, and got very drunk in the house of a certain woman who was largely interested in the slave business. Not knowing that he was a soldier, but thinking he was a runaway slave, she spent quite two dollars making this man drunk, and persuading him to stop the night.

When quite intoxicated, she threw him down into the cellar underneath her house, split his tongue to prevent his talking, and increased his value as a slave by an operation which I will not do more than hint at.

A month or two afterwards, when he had recovered from his wounds, she brought him up out of her cellar for sale.

Unfortunately for her, he could write, and succeeding by considerable cleverness in getting

audience with an Abyssinian chief, he exposed the whole proceeding.

Then there was a great to-do. The main question was, what should be done to the woman. It was useless to kill her, as that would not help her former patient. Eventually, I heard, she was given to him as a slave to do what he liked with. An unenviable time she must have had!

I need hardly say that I was glad to be able to move out of Jimma, after orders had come from Addis Abeba to that effect.

We travelled along by the same route which this large caravan had taken. Within the settled part of Abu Jifar's country the road was quite good, and it had been cleaned up after the passage of this multitude of unfortunates. Food was cheap and plentiful, almost unbelievably so. I was amused at my first experience of this.

The first night out from Jimma two of my mules got loose, strayed away, and, finding a nice new field of *teff*, one of the most expensive species of millet grown in the country, first ate as much as they could of it, and then rolled in it, completely destroying the poor owner's only field.

Missing the mules early in the morning, I sent some of my people to look for them. They soon returned with the mules, but they were also accompanied by a mob of Gallas, shouting and yelling in great excitement. The aggrieved Galla, seeing I was the responsible person, marched straight up to me, and throwing his toga-like shawl around him, made what was evidently a most forcible speech, his followers loudly applauding.

Unfortunately, not speaking the Galla tongue, I did not understand a word of what he was saying, but after a while one of my men succeeded

in getting a word in edgeways, and explained the whole matter to me.

Having gathered that the Galla wanted compensation for his loss, I sent for the boy who carried the spending money, pulled out one dollar, and presented it to the injured party.

He looked at the dollar for a moment, and then, holding it out towards me, said something or other in one short sentence.

I naturally thought he was complaining that it was not enough, so I gave him another dollar. This only made him worse, so I said to my boy: "Give him two more dollars, and if that is not enough, tell him he can go and complain to the Judge."

Holding the dollars in his hand, the man gazed at me in a hopeless sort of way for a moment or two, and then, abruptly shutting off his increasing flow of language, he went off to where the mules were standing, seized the two culprits, and marched off with them.

I told my men to leave him alone, as he could not steal them, and I was curious to see what he would do with them. He marched off to his cornfield, and turned the mules loose in it, saying that, as I had paid more than the whole field was worth, I had better enjoy it while I could.

I found out afterwards that he had only claimed two bars of salt, worth perhaps sixpence, and when I gave him the first dollar, his question was simply, "Where can I change this?" His astonishment at my further generosity will therefore be easily understood.

These people are rich in everything except money, and when they do get hold of hard cash it is immediately buried in the ground for safety, only to be dug up when absolutely necessary.

There must be millions of dollars buried all over Abyssinia, as Mother Earth is the only Bank the natives believe in. Of course much of this money is lost, as the burier cannot always find it again, and at other times dies without acquainting anybody with the position of his hoard.

At Maji, on one occasion, I came across one of these cases. This happened before Menelik's death; and when I was on very good terms with the authorities.

One of the chief men of the country died suddenly of pneumonia, and when his heirs came to look into his affairs, they missed his main accumulation of cash, which was known to be in gold. For some reason or other they consulted me on the subject, their reason, being, I suppose, because they could not trust each other. The heir was a little boy of about eight or nine years of age.

One evening an old slave dressed chiefly in one small dirty rag came to see me. He explained that he was the deceased's oldest and most trusted slave, and that he knew where the gold was buried. He was evidently very fond of the little boy, and would only show me where the gold was hidden if I promised to see that it was handed over in full amount to the little lad's mother. Having reassured him on this point, we all went off full of excitement with the old retainer.

He took us about a day's journey away, and then began to search about on a hillside where, he explained, they had lived some years before. The houses had been burnt, and nothing remained to show there had ever been a village there.

At last he showed us a place at which to dig, and sure enough, about three feet down we came

on two iron cooking pots. Inside these was the gold, quite safe, in rings, as these people fashion it after they have washed it out of the streams. I forget how many ounces it weighed, but it was quite a considerable amount. I offered to buy it, but the mother refused, and I expect the gold went straight back into the earth again, only to be dug up in the general exodus which occurred on Menelik's death, and which I have already described.

On this journey of ours, the agent of the Bank was most pressing that we should travel quickly, assuring me that so we should be safer, and weakly, I allowed myself to follow his advice. I only found out some years afterwards that his intention was to avoid certain messengers from the Legation at Addis Abeba, who had been sent after us, as the Minister had realized the position of affairs in the country, and considered it unsafe for me to go on. Of this of course I knew nothing, but my K.C. had somehow got wind of it, and having no desire to return, as his business at Maji would not wait, he told me nothing about the messengers, but hurried me along.

Leaving the settled portion of Jimma, we plunged into the forest. This was terrible. The stench of dead bodies which the slave-raiders had left on their journey into Jimma struck us every hundred yards or so, and after crossing the Godjam river, which was really the dividing line between peace and anarchy, I took advantage of a side trail, and left the main road, in order to avoid these gruesome encounters.

There are two main roads running from the Godjam to Maji, and this was the eastern one of the two. On the previous occasion I had followed a trail unknown to the Abyssinians, as I had been

guided by Shangallas, and our one object had been to avoid Abyssinian bands along the main road.

Along the road which we now followed, and which runs through the country of Kaffa, the same signs of murder and robbery met the eye at every turn, and the former population had vanished.

Kaffa is really the most lovely country I have ever seen. It consists mostly of forest country, with open glades, and running streams, reminding one of England in the summer-time. It is noted as being the home of the coffee plant, which was first exported from here, and has spread all over Abyssinia, and even into Arabia. I have ridden for days through coffee growing wild in the forests.

Kaffa is also noted for the rumoured amount of gold in its streams, and it is said that when Galeto, the former King of Kaffa, was dragged in chains before Menelik, he protested against being forced to wear chains or iron like any criminal. Menelik asked him what chains he would prefer, and his followers promptly produced chains of gold, which he was allowed to put on, in place of those he was wearing.

It is also said that little gold has been found there since its conquest, as the natives are still hostile to the Abyssinians, and attack prospecting parties, or rather they did so before they were exterminated by the ruling race.

The beauty, health, and richness of Kaffa is such that it is lamentable that law and order has left this glorious plateau. For this purpose the Abyssinians are hopeless, for they will not work; they can only be likened to a cloud of locusts.

Personally, I hope, as do the few Kaffas who

are left, that it may be a white race which will rescue this country and people. It matters little which race it is, but it should be one which will give peace and safety to a harmless, intelligent, and most industrious people.

As we wandered along these forest roads we could note Abyssinian forts perched on the top-most peaks of the hills, from which the armed men raided for food, slaves, and everything they could pick up in the daytime, only taking care to return home before nightfall, as the Kaffas, maddened by the slaughter of their brothers, and the wholesale carrying off of their wives and children, had done their best to retaliate, and had succeeded in making it impossible for any Abyssinian to travel by himself, and nobody went for water after dark. Being armed only with spears, the Kaffas could do little or nothing against men armed with modern rifles, but as far as they could they did their best.

An instance of this occurred in my own caravan, which I must say was never molested. One morning, on leaving one of the Abyssinian posts in Kaffa, a minor chief, with two or three soldiers, asked leave to accompany my caravan, as he wanted to visit his brother in the next fort. Naturally I had to accede to his request, although I strongly objected to being mixed up with any of the soldiery who were occupying the country, as the Kaffas quite realized the difference between them and traders such as ourselves. The road was very narrow, with dense bush on either hand. I went on ahead, with my yellow beard and helmet as a sort of passport, and behind me came my caravan of mixed races, marching as closely as possible to each other, while last of all came my Swahilis, who were quite safe ; and very

proud they were, too, of being "Englese muugist sow" (British subjects).

The chief referred to followed but a few paces behind me.

Passing through one very thick patch of bush, a spear flew out, and went right through his neck, killing him instantly.

His followers rushed up, stripped him, fired one or two shots into the bush and then followed on after me, being nearly the first to arrive with the news at the fort to which they were bound.

I suppose the man had been making himself unpopular, but as he was dead there was no more to say on the subject. At any rate I never heard any more about it, and was never even threatened with another attack.

The Kaffas seemed to think I might be the single swallow, the harbinger of spring, for them. They used to crawl into my tent at night, and ask, "When are the white men coming?" and then vanish when I told them I did not know. Leaving Kaffa, we passed into the country of Bolodia, of which my friend Serie was chief. Here, of course, we felt at home, but began to think that all the natives had been killed, as we did not see a soul for three days.

At last we came in sight of the hill on which Maji is perched, and pitched our camp, hoping to reach home—as we regarded it—in one more day.

In the evening, however, we saw some mounted men riding as hard as they could in our direction. They came straight into camp, to judge by their scared looks, as terrified as they could well be. They were a party of the traders who had come with Dedjasmach Beru, and had left Maji to

try and see what they could pick up, but had been attacked two hours after leaving Maji, cut off from their base, and were expecting to be killed every minute when they espied our camp and made for our protection.

So it seemed, after all, that the country was not so devoid of life as we had thought. Indeed, I believe we were dogged the whole way, and protected by Serie's orders every day, from the time we first entered Kaffa until we reached Maji safely, which we did thirty-six hours after these refugees had come in to our camp, still without seeing another soul.

I wondered what sort of a reception I should get when I arrived at Maji. I must say I expected some trouble. Of course I knew Dedjasmach Beru would have heard of my proceedings long before I put in an appearance, but a white man can never properly understand how an African native will look at things.

Personally, I expected rudeness, if nothing worse, but instead of that I was received most politely, much more politely in fact than when I was previously at Maji, even the soldiery getting out of the way when I rode about. Then I realized that Dedjasmach Beru was uneasy in his mind, for the representative of the Bank had delivered a letter from the central Government, ordering him to go to Addis Abeba at once.

I soon came to the conclusion that Beru was much more frightened of me than I was of him, at least for as long as I was in Maji.

Luckily I had with me several of my old friends who had returned with me to Maji, and who had lived there during the law and order of Menelik's reign. They soon brought me news that a strong party of Beru's men were being sent out to a place

in the desert called Moro Akippi, to wait for my arrival there. The main trail to the desert runs past this place, and I could hardly expect they were sent there for my good, so it seemed as if my troubles were by no means over.

My first business at Maji was to hand over all my ivory to the representative of the Bank. A good deal of it had been sold by my headman whom I had left in entire charge, since the rest of my people had had to be fed during the five months I had been away.

That I found all my goods intact, and everything in perfect order, was entirely due to this headman.

His name was Jeguna was Chege, a Kikuyu from Fort Hall near Mt. Kenya in British East Africa (now Kenya Colony). He was a notable individual. The natives called him "Engatung amoy," which means "the Lion's heart," and when the natives give anybody a name, they have generally earned it.

Jeguna was truly as brave as a lion, and very clever too. The year before I had taken him up to Addis Abeba, and Menelik, hearing about him, said he wished to see him, so I took him with me up to the Palace. He was then only a lad of about sixteen years of age, and a very well-behaved little boy.

I took him in to see the Emperor, who was sitting in state surrounded by thousands of soldiers, and all his chief Councillors. The Emperor spoke kindly to the boy, and asked him several questions—How old was he? Where had he come from? How long had he been with me? and so on, and then dismissed him.

The boy was most polite, standing strictly to attention, and looked and spoke exactly like

what he was, one of those who respect themselves, as well as those above them. I was delighted with his behaviour, and after we had left the presence, and as we were going out of the gate, I asked him what he thought of Menelik. He looked at me for a moment, evidently turning the question over in his mind. Then he replied, "Bado, Bwana. Inchi ni bado." "Not just yet, Master. Not yet, this country." And then: "Is his skin different from mine?"

In his mind I surmise was the idea that, though Menelik might be a great ruler, yet he was not a white man, and that it was only a question of time before Abyssinia should come under the white man's rule.

This lad scorned the Abyssinians, and still more their methods of rule, or rather misrule, and he was constantly comparing the peace and justice of the rule of the white man with that of the Abyssinians. He rapidly picked up the language of the Shangallas, and was the greatest propagandist among them that I could possibly have imagined. He used to visit their chiefs and sit among them as their equal, conversing for hours, and telling them, so I heard long accounts of the rule of the white man over his own people. For myself, I never did any of this sort of work, as the Abyssinians would have heard of it and reported me to the Legation, but I never interfered with him.

Nor did the Abyssinians, for they looked on him as just such another little savage as their own Shangallas.

He had a wonderful memory as well as personality. He never learnt to read or write, nor did he wear boots. But he kept all my boys' accounts in his head, and there was never a question

as to their correctness, and he managed my whole expedition without a hitch.

Of this I had a remarkable instance on my return from Addis Abeba, five months after I had left this lad in charge. I arrived at my compound before any of my people knew of my approach, and rode straight up to my own door, jumped off my mule, and walked in.

I found this boy sitting down in my arm-chair with a great big fellow from Dodinga called Loinya, who was my gunbearer, tied up to the post which supports the roof, with his hands over his head. This man was remarkable for his strength and pluck.

The boy jumped up, overjoyed to see me again. "What about Loinya?" said I, after a bit. "Oh," he replied, "he got drunk last night, and made a noise, so I had him tied up."

As I had returned home safe and sound, I told the boy to turn him loose, which he did, ordering one of the men to do so.

I found I owed a great deal to this Kikuyu lad, for the discipline in camp was wonderful, when one considers the time I had been absent, and also the fact that rumours of my death and imprisonment had been frequent.

More important still to me, I found my ivory to be intact, buried in the house under the chair in which he had been sitting.

Jeguna was a great lad! I have even heard Abyssinians, who worked with him, and therefore knew his capabilities, address him as "Ato toto," "Mister Boy," or "Mister Child."

It may interest the reader to learn how I first picked up this boy. In 1903, if I remember rightly, I was trekking from a place called Gilgil on the Uganda Railway near Lake Naivasha in

British East Africa. Turning round casually to watch my porters on one occasion, I discovered a tiny little urchin following along behind my caravan, with a small load on his head.

Now the desert between the Guaso-Nyiro river, and Lake Rudolph, to which place I was bound, was unknown, and reported to be waterless; besides which the natives grow no food of any sort, so I never permitted my porters to engage small boys to help them, a thing they are very fond of doing.

I therefore told my headman to bring this little straggler along to see me in the evening.

When he was brought before me together with the native who had engaged him, I told him that *totos* (small boys) were not allowed on my caravan, but that if the little boy wanted work I would engage him myself, and he could herd my sheep in the base camp, which was then situated some fifty miles North of Rumuruti station, then about to be built.

The man was quite satisfied and went off, but the little lad still stood there. "What is it you want?" I asked.

"Master," said he, "when I worked for a black man, I got one rupee (Sh. 1/4d.) a month, but now that I am working for a white man I ought to get more."

I was much amused, and asked him how much he thought he ought to get. This rather posed him, but at length he decided that one and a half rupees, and the daily ration of *posho* (flour) of a proper full-sized man, was his just due. So he got what he asked for.

He was so small that he used to ride one of my big black sheep back to camp every evening,

and usually he carried a spear considerably longer than himself.

Now and then he had a stroke of luck. One day, having gone off for the day with the Dorobo of Mount Guargues to look for honey, he found a dead elephant with fair-sized tusks. He quickly brought me the news, so, as a reward, I presented him with the pick of my cows, and some clothes, with which I need hardly say he was highly delighted.

I shall never forget the time he had when he arrived in Nairobi after this trip. I gave him ten rupees for a present, his wages and his cow having previously been sent away to his father near Fort Hall, and this enormous gift came as a complete surprise.

He collected a crowd of little black urchins of the same size as himself, and stood them all tea, sugar, and sweet biscuits at an Indian shop which caters for this sort of trade. He had the time of his young life, and was, for the nonce, quite the most important and wealthy little mite I have ever seen.

He had been with me ever since that time, and managed for me, and, as will have been seen, ran my expedition with great ability. He always retained the inborn traits of the Kikuyu, and could not bear to see me sell a cow. As he explained the matter, to an African like himself, money is nothing, and cattle are the only real wealth in the world.

To return, however, from this digression: It soon became evident that Dedjasmach Beru was not going to leave Maji until after my own departure, and, as he seemed anxious to see me safely off the premises, I packed up without much bother and marched off, making across the Boma plateau in a direct line for Moro Akippi.

I was accompanied by four of Beru's men, who went along with me for about six days, when, being within two or three days' march of the spot we were supposed to be making for, they left me early one morning, as I surmised, to tell their friends, of whom I was supposed to know nothing, and who were waiting to ambush me, that I was safely on the road.

The moment they were well out of sight, I wheeled due West, and made for the desert, over country I knew nothing about, and, by the greatest good luck in the world, got safely down the Bomā escarpment, and right out on to the plain without trouble.

My extraordinary good fortune followed me, for a heavy rainstorm washed out all my tracks, and so I knew the Abyssinians would have some difficulty in finding me.

Once on the open plains, which stretch without a break, and with scarcely a rise in the ground, from the foot of the plateau to the Nile—nearly two hundred miles as the crow flies—it was evident that I should have to remain hidden somewhere until the rains set in, which would then enable me to cross the waterless desert to Mongalla.

The ordinary, and in fact the only track to Mongalla was well known to the Abyssinians, so I decided to keep clear of that, and to make directly for an extinct volcano called Kisyangor, which rises up out of the plain about forty miles away in the desert. This mountain nearly always holds water, and the Abyssinians, I knew, were not aware of the fact.

Even more important to those in our position, the crater has such a narrow mouth that it could be held easily against a large force. It is really an extraordinary place, and appears to be composed of the richest iron ore I have ever seen.

We trekked across the plain, therefore, and on our arrival found the crater, and all the country at the back of the hill, crowded with natives and their stock hiding from the Abyssinians. They were delighted to see me, and gave me a great reception.

Nobody can say how news travels among the natives of Africa, but they were all aware of my successful effort to stop the Abyssinian raid. That they were subjects of the British Government they had long known ; so, as I say, I had a great reception, and was duly elected a chief.

We camped here for a month, sending out scouts, so that day by day we knew exactly where the Abyssinians were. The moment the rains came, I should be able to get away Nilewards. But meantime there was always the chance that the Abyssinian party might happen on our whereabouts, and immediately attack. So I used to sit on a big rock at the entrance to the crater, and watch the Boma hills for rain, and the open plains for signs of our pursuers.

On the top of this rock I found some slave anklets, evidently made out of the local iron ore, and which the Jiwe, as this tribe is called, would not allow me to touch, for they said they were "bad medicine." Evidently they were the relics of some Egyptian slave party of who can tell how long ago. Even the old men could tell me nothing about them, except that they were unlucky.

At last the rains came, and I broke cover for Toposa, almost due south of Kisyangor, across the level plains which were rapidly becoming a swamp.

Now indeed we could consider ourselves safe, for the Abyssinian force was not able to follow us here, and we were among friends, even if those

friends were only untutored and unadministered savages.

Which for us, as the reader will agree, was, under the circumstances, infinitely better than the close attention of the civilized and Christian race from which I had just been fortunate enough to escape.

CHAPTER XVII

THE VICISSITUDES OF A FLIGHT TO SAFETY,

Before I left Kisyangor I had plenty of time to take stock of my position.

The Abyssinians, I should mention, could not follow me for the following reason. In their search for me they had gone up a river called the Karon. This is full of buffalo and tsetse-fly, which, so the natives told me, had wiped out all their horses and mules. So for us now the desert was safe, as it is impossible to make an expedition in those parts without animal transport.

For myself, I could not return to civilization until I could obtain some more money, as my six month's waste of time in preventing this Abyssinian raid entailed a heavy expense, and had cost me not only my gold and ivory, but practically all that I had in the bank at home.

I have never grudged this loss. I have always felt that I could not have done anything else, and I should do it again to-morrow under the same circumstances. I call it a raid, but it was more than that. It was a deliberate attempt on the part of the new Abyssinian Government to break the treaty Menelik had made with us, which had definitely settled the Anglo-Abyssinian boundary. I am quite convinced that, if I had not been on the spot, serious trouble would have occurred, which most certainly would have entailed the

death and enslavement of large numbers of our African fellow subjects.

However, as the Arabs and Swahilis used to say, "The luck of the British Government is not yet finished."

One of these men, who was a sort of Fiki, or priest, went further than that, and used to lecture me, saying that all this ivory and wealth was given me to spend as I had done. Perhaps he was right. Who can tell? Certainly my men used to declare their belief that I was preserved for some future use.

It does seem rather strange how, in spite of my desire for a peaceful life, and my attempts to keep out of trouble, I was constantly compelled to keep the white man's path, and to bear the white man's burden.

I used to smile to myself to think that here was I, who had been considered to be an ivory poacher of the worst sort, whom every game warden in British East Africa and Uganda must have longed to lay his hand on, keeping the peace, and saving a large area of the territory their administration was supposed to govern, from spoliation and even actual occupation by a neighbouring power.

The reader must understand that at the time of which I am writing, there was not a soldier, nor even a black policeman, from the so-called Anglo-Abyssinian border, until one came to the south side of Mount Elgon; and even then there was but a negligible force of a few black policemen, with a white officer or two.

Along the Nile it was the same, and the Sudanese troops there were so scattered and so few that the forces of any one Abyssinian chief would have sufficed to annihilate them.

An Abyssinian attempt on the country would have cost both the Uganda and Sudan Governments a great deal more than they could have afforded, as, beyond any question, it would have been impossible to acquiesce in an Abyssinian occupation of country so close to the Nile as would have been the case once they were firmly posted on the Dodinga hills.

That was, undoubtedly, the intention of the Abyssinian Government, though whose mind conceived the idea is not for me to guess at. International politics as practised at Addis Abeba is a science and an art beyond the ken of a layman like myself.

When I left Kisyangor, I was careful to do so by the Western side. If I had gone Eastward I might have run into wandering Abyssinians, who would have spread the news. As it was, at present I must have seemed to my pursuers to have absolutely vanished into thin air, and it was just as well to keep them in the dark as to our whereabouts.

That we were entirely successful may be judged from the fact that the force of Abyssinians who were looking for me—so I heard afterwards—went all over the Boma plateau in their search, and then, not hearing news, nor finding any tracks, trailed off on foot down to the Western side of Lake Rudolph, returning home at last, down-hearted, absolutely nonplussed, and minus several men who had died of fever, as well as every one of their horses and mules.

Continuing our journey westwards from Kisyangor, we found the whole country practically under water, and the game, which at that time of the year is driven to the higher ground from about the lower country, lying between the Sobat

river and the White Nile, was the most wonderful sight I have ever seen.

They came along in vast herds; thousands of them. They consisted mostly of hartebeest, white-eared kob, and little buck. They all seemed galloping in one direction, that is for the high land out of the mud. The natives had an exciting time running them down in the mud, and spearing all they wanted.

They told me that the same herds return yearly to the same spot of high land, for it is here they are born.

The lions were very numerous and went about openly in broad daylight. They were mostly of the maneless variety, quite different from the lion which lives in the Abyssinian hills, and which has a beautiful black mane. With regard to the latter, the Abyssinian chiefs used to pay as much as ten pounds sterling for a good skin, for they love to decorate them with lumps of gold, and wear them on high-days and holidays as a sort of cloak.

Those which I saw on this trip were valueless, but I got five in the first three days. They were a great nuisance, for they frightened my donkeys at night.

Elephants, too, were very numerous. They were, like the rest of the game, all bent on getting out of the mud.

I remember watching an old cow with a very small baby elephant going over a swamp near Kisyangor. The baby went along all right on the crust of the mud, but the mother broke through, and stuck. She would strain and strain, and then manage to get two or three steps forward, her infant running around her to see what was the matter. She kept squealing with rage and fright,



PUNISHMENT BY MUTILATION FOR STEALING. RIGHT HAND AND LEFT FOOT CUT OFF.
(This man died after terrible suffering in the Market Place.)

and as the baby bothered her by getting in the way she gave him a good trouncing with her trunk.

I observed her for quite half an hour, until at last she got out of the swamp. I never in my life heard an animal make so much noise! In the end she went off on to the firm ground, still trumpeting in a furious rage, with the little one running after her wondering what it was all about.

About that time, too, I came on another elephant in rather a different way.

I was going along, with all my caravan at my back, when I saw an elephant standing out all by himself in the middle of the open plain, so I left my men behind, and getting the wind in the right direction, went to see what he was like.

I soon saw that both his tusks were broken off close to his head, so he was not worth shooting, and returning to my men, we continued our march.

The trail, however, brought our wind to the elephant, who at once hoisted up his head, and came straight towards us, bent on mischief. When he came close up I saw that he was covered with wounds from head to tail, which were suppurating, and running down his sides, so no wonder he was in a bad temper!

He came right for us, the only instance I have ever personally known of an elephant charging without rhyme or reason; I was therefore compelled to shoot him. On going to look at him, I found that he had been shot all over, evidently by a band of Abyssinians, and the "Gras" rifle bullets were all embedded just under the skin. Even the natives would not eat him!

I never had such shooting in my life. I potted elephants till I was tired, and got all the ivory I could carry long before I arrived in Toposa.

The Toposa people, as I have mentioned previously, are akin to the Turkana and the Masai, and their language is similar.

During my stay at Toposa an incident occurred which is worth relating.

One night, one of my sentries was speared and killed. Now it is the Toposan custom, as it is of the Turkana, to regard with entire equanimity the murder of any person of another tribe who comes into their territory. For it gives the slayer the right to tattoo himself, and also to get married.

I had thought I was safe with my followers, from this custom, and so I was very angry indeed.

On the morning after the murder, the chiefs came to me and said they were very sorry, but that they would search out the murderer, and in a week or two would see me again about it.

Having only a few rifles, and the Toposans being very powerful, I could take no high-handed action ; but I left this camp, and continued to hunt, and to survey my line of march to Mongalla where I was bound.

At last, just after I had found guides to take me to a hill called Gebel Lafone, which was, so I understood, about two days' march from the Nile, and was on the point of setting out, I was halted by a message from all the Toposan chiefs, saying they wished to see me before I went away.

I returned answer that I would receive them, so they came and asked me, if I would accept two tusks of ivory as compensation for the man one of their people had killed.

It transpired that an Egyptian trader from Mbale, who gave himself out to be a white man, had accepted such a gift in similar circumstances a year or two previously.

Of course I refused. I explained that British

methods of justice did not admit of such compensation for wilful murder.

They then produced the culprit, saying: "Shoot him, or do what you please with him."

After considering for a moment, I replied that I would take him along with our caravan, and hand him over to the first British authority I came across.

Having no handcuffs I made a light wooden yoke for his neck out of the branch of a tree, and so arranged for him to be led along. This was the only way I could think of to prevent his escape, and it was not very inconvenient for my prisoner, as both his hands were free.

Needless to say, this was not my invention, but is a relic of times long before we were born. It was shown to me by old Uledi, who had been a slave himself, and afterwards a slave raider and trader, in German East Africa many years before.

The prisoner wept a great deal at first, thinking that he was about to be executed in some novel fashion, but he soon calmed down, and by nightfall ate his dinner quite cheerfully.

I shall refer to this man again later on. He gave no trouble on the way to Mongalla, and eventually was most useful as a guide to Toposa for a party sent out from Mongalla.

The following day I marched off with all my caravan, and made for the Nile.

The nearer I got to administered areas, the worse became the manners of the natives. I put this down solely to our custom of carrying out what we call "punitive" expeditions, but which the natives regard simply as cattle raids.

One understands that the difficulties in the way of effectively administering such a large and scattered area are very great, but still it hardly

seems "playing the game" to claim a country, and by way of its administration, only use it for raiding purposes! I speak, of course, from the native point of view.

On reaching Gebel Lafone I found the natives were very friendly. The old chief was most helpful, and told me he wished to send his son with me to Mongalla to announce to the white men there that they had resolved to become "the children of the white man," so I willingly agreed to take him along with my party.

On arrival at Mongalla, this young man first gave the governor his father's message, and then added, on his own account: "As we have become the children of the white man, I now ask permission to kill my father, for he has become too old to bring rain as he used to do, and this is the custom of my people."

The governor naturally was scandalized at such a request, and gave the young man a good scolding.

His words did not seem, however, to have had much effect, for on my return to Gebel Lafone a month or two later I found the old chief was dead, and the young man sitting on his father's stool.

My reception at Mongalla was most amusing. I had expected that the British Minister at Addis Abeba would have written to say I was likely to be coming along, but he had not done so. I therefore appeared like a bolt from the blue. In fact, I rode up to the governor's house before he had noticed that any white man was in the country, so I suppose I ought to have been thankful that I was not made a prisoner on the spot, for, as I have previously explained, I was travelling in a "closed area" without a permit.

I am afraid I shall never get into the way of

looking at large stretches of "closed" British territory in the proper and official way, that is, that no white man is allowed in them except the accredited official.

These areas may be compared to the South Americas of Elizabeth's time, when no one but the Spaniards were allowed there. It is not unnatural that the term "closed area" immediately attracts the adventurous of these days, seeing that the nature of the roving Briton is just about the same now as it was in the good old days of Drake and Raleigh.

Luckily for me I had ordered some supplies from London to be sent to Mongalla, and by this means, and as I had also known the governor years before at home, I found myself fairly well vouched for.

I found the administration in this district, to all intents and purposes, confined to the banks of the Nile, and there appeared to be no prospect of its extension for many a long day unless the Government constructs motor roads to ensure greater mobility than can be obtained by moving about on foot.

At the present time they cannot afford to do this, as it takes all the revenue the Sudan can produce to make the present budget balance.

I was now much interested to hear that there was to be an expedition, or rather two separate expeditions, with the intention of penetrating eastwards by different routes, and which were to connect at my old "stamping ground," the Boma plateau.

One of these expeditions was to go up by the Ajuba river and then swing south to the plateau, while the other was to leave Mongalla, and make straight for the same objective.

As nobody at Mongalla had the slightest idea of the road it was evident that I had come at the right moment.

The governor first asked me to go and see if there was a road straight across from Mongalla to the plateau, but this I knew to be impracticable at any time, and quite impossible in October and November, as it was then, when the whole plain is one huge swamp.

To satisfy him, however, I made the attempt, but after wading for two days mostly up to the knees in water, I gave it up as a bad job, and came to the conclusion that the only real road to the Boma plateau was the one I had just travelled over.

The expedition eventually arrived at Gebel Lafone, to which spot I had turned off, but then they refused to listen to advice, and having picked up an old native who professed to know the road went off, leaving me behind. They eventually returned to Mongalla, having succeeded in getting no further than Toposa.

Even this they would not have been able to do if it had not been for the Toposan, my former prisoner, whom they had taken along with them, most luckily, and who acted as guide after they had got hopelessly lost. After it left Gebel Lafone I did not come across this expedition again.

I was not unnaturally considerably annoyed at having my advice as to the best route rejected, so as they marched off I told them I would go by my own road, and wait for them at the plateau, and if they did not get there, would go to meet the other column, which, by the time I arrived there, ought to be somewhere in the neighbourhood.

Therefore, after seeing this headstrong column safely off the premises, I marched off, following

my old road, and without any adventures worth recording arrived in Toposa.

There the natives would tell me nothing about the expedition, so I thought they must have turned back, but I heard afterwards that they actually did manage to get as far as Toposa, where my ex-prisoner escaped from them, or perhaps was allowed to do so.

This adventurer came to my camp one evening, just as I was on the point of leaving Toposa, and sat down on a little hill just outside the village.

It was in the evening, when all was still. We were having our supper when I heard a voice calling out, "Ekan a kileng! Ekan a kileng!" (my native name).*

I asked who it was, and what he wanted.

"It is I," said the voice, "the man who killed your soldier. You are a good man, but will you tell that bad old man in Mongalla, with white hair, who made me work, that if he comes into my country, I will kill him."

From this it appears that the governor had not impressed him favourably! Of course, as the country was unadministered, the authorities had not been able to do anything with him, so had put him in prison for a time on general principles, where he had had to do a certain amount of work. This was the greatest possible insult which could have been offered to a Toposan fighting man, although, on the other hand, having more food than he had ever had in his life before, he grew as fat as butter.

From Toposa we marched on without any

* I am unable to give the meaning of this name "The hand, the knife." I did not carry either sword or knife. Possibly it may be translated "The strong hand," or it may refer to some incident I have forgotten.—H.D.

trouble, and in about twelve days got to the top of the Boma plateau, having travelled this time by a route I had not traversed before.

Arriving there, I made many enquiries about these two expeditions, but the only news I could get was from my friends the Jiwe of Kisyangor, who told me that the Mongalla expedition had got as far as Toposa, had stolen several bullocks, and had returned home. Also they said that the young warriors of Toposa were very angry with the white men, and had stated that they would attack even me if I went into their country. For the time being, therefore, that way home was closed to me.

Waiting about was risky, as there were odd parties of Abyssinians here and there, and they would be sure to bring down some of my enemies upon me if I stopped on the plateau. I therefore sent off the heavy part of my caravan to Kisyangor, and started out to look for the other expedition, which I judged to be somewhere on the Ajuba river, some four or five days' journey North of the Boma plateau.

The people of Boma are not friendly with the people of Ajuba, and the space of country between this river and Boma is uninhabited. It is perfectly flat, holds very little water, and is so covered with trees that one can never see more than two or three hundred yards, nor are there any landmarks to go by. Luckily for me the grass had just been burnt, for when fully grown it is everywhere over one's head.

I found a guide who took me from tiny water hole to tiny water hole, not one of which I could ever hope to find again by myself, but, once in sight of the Ajuba river, he evidently thought his duty done, and made off for his home like a bird, leaving our little party with very little idea of

where we were, and still less of where we were going.

We therefore set off downstream, hoping to hear of the expedition, but not a soul, black or white, did we see.

The second day after arriving on the Ajuba we came to a camp, which had evidently been used by the expedition.

As we were examining this burnt zareba, we saw in the distance, coming over a bit of open plain, several hundred natives, stark naked, but armed each man with a rifle and two belts of ammunition, besides some spears.

They spread out, but seeing that we were only a small and harmless-looking party, came up to us in almost dead silence. I recognized the rifles and belts some of them were wearing. They were Sudanese accoutrements, so I saw at once that there had been fighting, and that our troops must have come off badly.

I said quickly to my men: "Tell them we come from Addis Abeba, and do not mention Mongalla."

They took my cue. Never did I hear such beautiful lying. Those who could speak Arabic had forgotten it, and we could only speak Kiswahili or Amharic (Abyssinian).

It was very ticklish for a few moments, as the young men wanted to secure my outfit, but luckily their leaders managed to restrain them, and ordered that we should be brought to their chief. So off we went, willy nilly, trying to look as if we liked it.

It was still early when we arrived at their headquarters, which had just been burnt, and they were at work building another. They pointed out a place where my men could pitch my camp,

and then led me off, with my gun-bearer Loinya, to interview the chief.

Another boy also followed me, carrying my light .22 bore rifle. I took him along, because he was very nervous. My men all thought him a fool, and I thought he might, if cross-questioned, give everything away. At the moment my camp was crowded with people trying to cross-examine my men, and I was told afterwards that they even went so far as to divide my goods amongst themselves—provisionally only, I am thankful to say.

This boy was a Kavirondo of the Nifwa tribe (the Nilotic group), and as it turned out, my taking him along was the most extraordinary piece of good luck, and indeed was the means on this occasion of saving our whole expedition.

On arriving at the chief's tree, for his house was not yet ready for him, we found him sitting down on a skin with a beautiful Lebel rifle across his knees, and not looking in the least amiable.

We were surrounded by a mob of natives, whose intentions, I could see, were the reverse of friendly, but they withdrew to a little distance on their chief's orders, and I sat down on the ground, and prepared to lie for my own, and my men's lives.

I felt, if I could lie as well as my men were doing, that we should pass muster, but I was most apprehensive lest my Kavirondo, who crouched just behind me, and was fairly shivering with nervousness, should give everything away.

We had to convince these people that we had no connection whatever with the British Sudanese, and that we knew nothing about them, but had, on the contrary, just come straight from the capital of Abyssinia.

Loinya, my gun-bearer, was carrying my .450

rifle. It was loaded and he kept it cocked, and never turned a hair, nor relaxed his watch. For myself, I kept my hand on a little revolver which the Consul at Addis Abeba had pressed upon me at leaving, and decided, if the worst came to the worst, to let daylight into my chieftain friend sitting in front of me, before anything else happened.

It was somewhat difficult at first to get in a word edgewise, for the young men by whom we were surrounded kept putting cartridges into their rifles, and asking leave to shoot me out of hand, but the chief managed to quieten them at last.

Now I had learnt one thing in Africa, and that is, always to take the initiative when possible, so the moment I got a chance to make myself heard, and before the chief was able to begin, I produced an old letter of Menelik's, and demanded to know the reason for all this trouble and threatening behaviour, and why food was not brought at once to me and my men.

Here, I declared, was Menelik's letter, saying that everyone should supply me with food. Was he a robber, or not?

All this I delivered in my best Amharic, and with as much emphasis as I could command.

This quieted the hubbub a good deal, and as, luckily, I spoke Amharic better than anybody there, peace was restored, and we began to get the news.

This could hardly have been worse. It appeared that the Sudan expedition had arrived there two or three days previously. Then there had been severe fighting, and three white officers had been killed, as well as nearly one hundred soldiers, and the Sudanese troops had fled, being

still pursued by Abyssinians and their own men, whom they were expecting to return the next day.

The old chief evidently did not believe that I had nothing to do with the Sudanese, in spite of my protestations, but my long beard saved me once again, as the white men they had killed had all been clean shaven.

After talking for a long time he became more friendly, and produced some milk, which I turned round to share with my gun-bearers. I was thirsty, as may be imagined, after lying so long and so vigorously! The old chief too turned round to have a meal himself, and began talking to his men.

The moment I turned round, Loinya was at me.

"Master," he declared tensely, but without raising his voice, "the language these people talk is the same language as this Kavirondo speaks who comes from the great lake Victoria Nyanza. He understands everything they say, and he says that they are arranging to kill us all to-morrow morning. The chief will not allow them to kill us in his camp, as you hold Menelik's letter, and if you really are a friend of the Emperor's he will get into trouble, so they are waiting to find out the direction you are going in to-morrow morning, and then they will lie in wait to ambush you, for the chief cannot be held responsible for what happens to you in the bush."

Here, indeed, was a pretty kettle of fish! But I could not help laughing at the thought that my shivering Kavirondo was the one who had the card up his sleeve to trump the chief's ace. I told Loinya that we would beat them all the same. He, to all appearances, never turned a hair, though he expressed his opinion of our hosts in as forcible a language as he was capable of. As for the

Kavirondo, he just gazed at me, and said nothing. Like Brer Rabbit, he lay low!

I turned round when I had finished drinking my milk, and the old chief and I had a long pow-wow. I told him we were bound North for Gambella the next day. This I said, for I knew the road, and it was over the open plains for about two miles. Then, having outwardly accepted his friendly intentions, I went off to my camp, tired out, but glad to find myself still alive.

Just as I got to the camp, a deserter from the Sudanese army turned up, and began to cross-examine my people in Arabic in a very threatening manner. But, well coached as they had been, not a man could understand him, and my cook, who spoke Arabic in ordinary times in preference to any other language, played his part so well that the examiner said he was the greatest fool he had ever met, and struck him on the side of the head, after which he left us, and we went to bed. I was tired out, and slept like a top.

Here I may relate a curious custom which came to my notice at this place.

The men of the Annak tribe have a tremendous opinion of themselves, at least if the way their wives treat them is any criterion.

Old Agwei, the chief, sat in the midst of a semicircle of his sub-chiefs, and when he gave me my gourd of milk, the wives of these men brought them their food too.

Each wife carried a bowl with her man's food in it, in her right hand. On approaching her lord and master, each got down on her knees, and crawled up to him, helping herself along by her left hand on the ground, and holding the bowl most carefully in her right hand.

I could not help wondering what would happen to her if she dropped it.

The husband took it from his wife, and fed himself, while she sat back and waited for him to finish. When he had done so, he handed her back the bowl, and she crawled away some ten yards or so, until I suppose she considered she had left the Presence, when she got up and walked away.

CHAPTER XVIII

A NARROW SHAVE FROM A TREACHEROUS CROWD

During the night I was awakened by a tremendous crash of thunder, but no rain followed. The thunder, however, was so continuous, and the lightning so vivid, that I got out of bed to see where the storm was. I found it was only a few miles away, and the rain was evidently falling in sheets, between the Boma plateau and our present camp.

I went back to bed again, and just as I was falling to sleep, heard the cook, who was sleeping close outside my tent, say to the gun-bearer: "Yes, lots of rain, but shall we drink it?" I asked myself the same question.

Next morning I woke up early, but made no hurry to leave camp. The chief sent us a guide, and my men told me that not a man was left in their temporary village. They had evidently gone on ahead to prepare their ambush.

My Kavirondo, who by this time had regained his courage, said he had heard them arrange to await our arrival at a big clump of trees about an hour's journey from camp, so, after a good breakfast, we started out with the guide in front, to all appearances quite pleased with ourselves, and anticipating no trouble.

The guide, having no idea that we, or at least one of us, understood his language, addressed me

constantly as "Fool." He spoke also a little Amharic.

We went off, straight in the direction of the clump of trees, until we got out of sight of camp.

Just then we came to a little stream, and I told the men to stop and fill their water-bottles.

The guide, as I was told afterwards, said: "All right, fill your bottles, but you will never drink the water!"

He had been well in advance all this time, now he came back to have a drink. My men knew all about his treachery, and his intentions. I had had some idea of taking him on with us by force, but while I was drinking at the stream, they disposed of him in a moment. It was his life, or ours. I could not blame them.

We were out of sight of the camp, and still just out of sight of the clump of trees, where the warriors were waiting for us. Our bottles being filled, we changed direction, and made straight for the Boma plateau, through the forest which loomed up just ahead.

It was touch and go. We expected the natives to come back to look for us, when they would be sure to pick up our tracks, so we did not go in line, but plunged on as fast as we could go, separately, until after we came on a big herd of buffalo, which ran behind us and completely wiped out any traces we might have left.

With no landmarks to guide us, it would have been easy to get lost, or to wander in a circle. But my luck still held. Some years previously the late Sir Northrup McMillan, who had explored this country, had given me a map of his travels, and I had kept it by me all this time. I kept my compass in my hand, and constantly referred

to the map, steering first for one tree, and then for another.

My men were very cheerful at our narrow escape, for we had never been in a tighter place, and we were still more cheered when we came to where the storm of the night before had covered the ground with pools of water. Without this, we should certainly never have got through, as the country was quite waterless, and natives never dared to go far into the forest on this account.

At midday we stopped and had lunch, taking care to use dry wood only, so as not to make any smoke. Having eaten our lunch we extinguished the fires, and pressed on until nightfall, when we found a patch of undergrowth which had escaped the fire when the long grass had been burnt, and here we slept, tired out, but safe and sound.

Before daylight we were off again, travelling hard all day, finding pools lefts by the thunderstorm everywhere, until the evening of the third day, when, coming out of a patch of forest, I looked ahead, and there to our joy was Boma mountain clearly to be seen, only two days' march or so away, and, thanks to Sir Northrup's map, dead ahead of us.

These constant escapes seemed marvellous to me, and they must seem like romance to the reader. But they are true nevertheless, and I have sometimes pondered on the words of the old Arab "Fiki," or priest, that I must have been preserved for some reason or other, which one day, perhaps I shall know.

The sight of the Boma plateau, pleasing as it was to my men, did not lift all my troubles from my shoulders.

The Annaks were safely left behind, but my possible troubles on ahead began to loom large in my imagination.

There was every probability that the Abyssinians would have heard of my presence in the district, in which case they would be certain to come to the plateau, and might even be camped there, waiting, or enquiring for me.

As soon, therefore, as we reached the foot of the Boma hill, two of the men were sent forward to spy out the land, while we slept for the night.

The following morning we climbed the hill, meeting on the way many of our native friends, who always kept a good look-out from the top of the path, which is most precipitous, so much so that in places one has to depend almost as much on one's hands as one's feet, a fact which makes it a first-class position to defend against any attack.

There is constant war between the men of Boma, and the Annaks, which, under the present circumstances, was just as well for us.

Arriving at the top, we camped, and waited for news of our scouts, who returned in the evening. They reported that everything in the neighbourhood was quiet. The Abyssinians, having heard rumours of my presence, had descended on the plateau in force, but having searched everywhere, had been compelled, owing to lack of supplies, to retire some four days' march to where there was plenty, and only two or three Abyssinians had been left behind on the watch for me.

Flour was an absolute necessity for us, as the Swahilis can no more live on meat alone than can Europeans, and the report of the scarcity of flour rather alarmed us.

The spies, however, reassured us, explaining that in reality there was plenty at our disposal, as the natives had it hidden in the ground, and

never produced it during the visits of the Abyssinians.

These poor people know well that they are British subjects, and hate the slave raiders with a most whole-hearted hatred, which is hardly to be wondered at. It seems a shame that they should be exposed defenceless to the Abyssinians, but presumably the finances of the Sudan have not permitted of a motor road being driven to this far outpost of Empire.

I am convinced that if such a road could be made, either from Mongalla, or the Pibor, to the foot of this splendid plateau, and even if the road were only passable for six months in the year, a most beautiful and healthy station could be established there, which, besides dominating the low country, would be well out of the mud, sand, fever, and heat of the Sudan.

Moreover, a large trade would develop, and the outpost, besides being a safeguard to the inhabitants, would be self-supporting in native supplies.

My only fear is, that the occupation of this district will be put off for so long that the inhabitants will have ceased to exist. The Sudan Government, apparently, pays little heed to this possibility—in fact, it is not accustomed to population, as the Mahdi, from whom it inherited the country, exterminated four-fifths of the population.

The country also is included in the "closed area," so no reports can get out to the world, and even the Press, that last resort of the persecuted, knows nothing of what is going on.

Off we went next day, and I walked right into the camp of the three Abyssinians my scouts had reported, before they dreamed of my presence.

Of course we professed mutual friendship, and conversed most amicably, while my men bought flour well out of their sight.

This camp was close to the granite rocks among which lives old Pom, the tutelary deity of the people of Pom, or Boma, as it is known on the map.

Here the road drops down to the Rotilla plains, on to which flow all the streams falling from the South-West corner of the Abyssinian mountains. During the rainy season these plains become an impassable morass, while in the dry weather they are nothing else but a treeless and insect-ridden blaze of heat.

From the edge of the plateau, looking out over the wide expanse to the horizon, as far as eye can see are open plains, covered with waving grass, and with scarcely a tree or a hill to be seen. The ground, on closer inspection, is covered in many places with circular depressions about the size of a cartwheel, made by the Nile eels* in time of high water. In these they lay their eggs, or perhaps young. I know not which. The natives live mostly on milk, meat, and fish. At some places pools of water remain after the floods. Into these the natives wade, and spear the fish as they swim past with marvellous dexterity.

Across this Rotilla plain lay our only way of escape. Northwards, the Annaks, from whom we had just fled, blocked our way. Southwards, the Toposans, as we heard, were on the *qui vive*, for the Mongalla column had taken several of their bullocks for food, and the Toposans were not accustomed to white men taking their property without paying for it.

* Possibly the nests of the African lung fish *Protopterus athiopicus*.
—C.W.H.

Until this column came into their country, they were under the impression that only black men took cattle without payment. So now they had declared hostility to all whites.

Eastwards, the Abyssinians threatened us, so our only possible course was due West.

Luckily, this was the road we had attempted the year before, so we knew part of it well, and the friendliness of the natives in that direction was assured.

Delay was impossible, as the proximity of the Abyssinians gave us cause for grave uneasiness.

The day after our arrival at old Pom's abode the three Abyssinians left us, no doubt to inform their friends of our whereabouts. So as soon as they were well out of sight we packed up, and hastened in the opposite direction.

Stacked high with loads of flour, we almost tumbled down the hill, for on ahead we knew was hunger.

With the view of giving useful information to any future explorer in these wilds, I left a note behind with the chief. It was short, and to the point—

"All hope abandon when you go down here.

There is no food 'twixt Pom and Taufikia."

At the foot of the hill we ran into a band of Swahilis, exhausted, and starving. They told us that they had fled before a strong force of Sudanese troops, who were advancing up the Lotilliet river, driving the inhabitants before them, and apparently making for the plateau. I gathered that it was the same force which had been defeated by the Annaks, and which was now seeking a line of lesser resistance in order to get to their

objective. As it happened, I was correct, but neither this column, nor the one from Mongalla, succeeded in getting to the plateau.

The Swahilis and ourselves were on the best of terms, and we camped together. I even weighed their ivory for them, about 1900 lbs, and I learnt that they very much regretted the loss of several of their largest tusks in their flight, together with some of their best porters, who were missing.

From here we marched off to our transport camp at Kisyangor, and there found to our great relief that the headman had laid in a good store of flour, so we were now well supplied:

It was impossible to stop here long, as it was certain that the Abyssinians would be on our tracks, now that the Swahilis had seen us. As it turned out, however, the Swahilis were so full of the Sudanese advance, that their report successfully frightened the Abyssinians, who rushed off back to Maji to get orders as to what they should do, in case the troops occupied the Boma plateau.

This, of course, we did not know at the time, so made for almost the last water-hole which we could be sure of at this time of the year. It is called Moro ongorey. Here we fell in with another band of Baluchi elephant hunters, who also were fleeing before the Sudanese troops. Their ivory weighed over a ton. At the same time we were cheered by the arrival in camp of the chief soothsayer of the Rotilla tribe, who was a great friend of ours.

The reports of the elephant hunters as to the scarcity of water on our chosen route alarmed us considerably, especially as we knew that the Rotilla tribe, fleeing with all their stock, would soon finish what was left. So we set to work to persuade our soothsayer friend to guide us across

this dry stretch, promising him safety, and assuring him that our only object was to make peace between the "Turks"—as they call the Sudanese—and his own people. We also offered him two cows, an enormous sum for a few days' work.

He was not very keen to go, on account of the difficulties on the road. Nevertheless, he went off into a corner of the rocks to "throw his boots," which is the way these people divine the future. I cannot say I have much faith in the process, myself, but no Rotilla will go anywhere without testing his future in this way.

My old friend sat down, took off his sandals, and, holding them sole to sole in one hand, waved them about, the while he muttered incantations, or prayers. He then threw them into the air, and by the way they fell on the ground, divined the future, and told us a long story of what was going to happen to our expedition.

The extraordinary part of it was that he was perfectly correct in our case, at any rate, for he announced that we should lose three or four men on the trip, but that most of us would get through all safe and sound.

He also announced that he would certainly accompany us, as his boots foretold that after his arrival peace would be made between the "Turks" and his people.

Acting on his advice, we sent back most of our men and donkeys, under my headman Jeguna wa Cheggi to Kisyangor, travelling with as little impedimenta as possible. It was fortunate for us we did so, and our best thanks are due to this old medicine man. I hope the cows I gave him are still alive, and have given him many calves!

We set out at two o'clock one afternoon, with

all the water we could manage to carry, and on our way met crowds of Botilla, flying from the Sudanese.

They told us that there was no water for three days' march and that we should all die, or be killed by the "Turks."

Some of the Rotilla were inclined to be hostile, as they seemed to imagine I was of the same stripe as the leaders of their enemies. But our old prophet friend smoothed matters over by pointing to my beard, and asking if any of their persecutors had such a magnificent one! He also told them that his "boots" had foretold that he was going along with me to make peace, so everything passed off most pleasantly.

We carried on well into the night, and at daybreak started off again, and kept going till we came to where there ought to have been water, but found the pool was quite dry.

Our water was now finished, and many of my men lost heart. We had not seen a tree since we left the last water-hole, but along the banks of this dried-up river there was quite a small forest, which promised at least shade, so we crawled underneath the trees and slept like logs.

At daybreak next day the old soothsayer headed a party consisting of two men and myself, to look for water.

We wandered down this river-bed, trying every corner, and every likely spot. At last I sat down under a tree exhausted, for my legs were trembling, and my mouth was dry as dust, and had been so for hours.

All at once, from down in the river-bed I heard a voice calling: "Ekan a kileng! Ekan a kileng! Kya kakippi" ("Here is water!")

I got up and staggered on. There was a

quantity of long green grass, but not a sign of water could I see.

Again the voice called, so I went on further, and at last came on my old friend, sitting up to his neck in a pool of water in a depression which had been formed by the footprints of elephants.

I stooped down to drink. "Don't drink," said he, "get into the water." So off went my clothes, and I squatted alongside of him, both of us as happy as sardines in a tin, imbibing water through the pores of our skins. This is worth knowing. When I did drink, I did not want much, though what I did manage to swallow was most painful, in spite of my old friend's helpfulness in massaging my throat. The water was warm, and, I expect, filthy, but never did I enjoy a drink so much.

It did not take us long to dry ourselves, as the sun was well up, and seeing an old hartebeest standing on the river-bank simply asking leave to supply us with breakfast, down he fell to my shot, and we had a meal.

We then started back to where we had left the rest of our party, and cutting across bends in the river, which made it half the distance, we soon came in sight of a spiral of smoke in the offing. But still it seemed a long way, for we were loaded down with water-bottles. The meat we had left behind hung up in a tree.

Nearing the camp, we heard the sound of cheerful voices and smelt cooking. Very much surprised, we burst into the camp and found the men hard at work cooking and eating, and as happy as possible.

It turned out that, as the sun got higher, some of the men crawled further into the bush, saying that they might as well die where it was cool as

stay outside to be roasted, and they had then found a pool of water untouched by the game: It was surrounded by the tracks of at least one family of lions, which had evidently kept off the rest of the game, so without bothering about us they had set to work to have a square meal.

Three of my men, unfortunately, had gone off by themselves to look for water, and we only found one of them again alive, and that not until three months afterwards.

He had fallen in with some of the Rotilla, who fed him and gave him water, and took him to my camp at Kisyangor.

The other two we never saw or heard of again.

CHAPTER XIX

CIVILIZATION ONCE MORE

We stopped at this pool during one day only, for it was rapidly drying up. And we spent that day in looking for our missing men, but regret could find no trace of them.

All day bands of the Rotilla escaping from the Sudanese troops continued to pass. They gave us the news that the force had stopped, and begun to build a fort some few days' march further down the Lotilliet river, on which we were camped. They were all friendly, especially when they heard that we were going to try and make peace.

They also took us out and showed us the dead bodies of the Swahili porters who had died of exhaustion during their flight from the troops. Each man lay with his tusk of ivory alongside him. The natives collected the ivory to take to the Swahilis, so they said, but I should be surprised to hear they ever received it.

The Rotillas were in the usual trouble common to all natives in these parts. They were constantly being attacked on the one side by the Abyssinians and on the other by the Sudanese, and so, naturally enough, they only wanted rifles and ammunition for any ivory they might get hold of, in order to be able to defend themselves.

They reported plenty of water further down the river which relieved our minds considerably, and the next day we moved on down stream, passing Rotilla fighting men for three days.

At last, early in the morning of the fourth day we heard that the fort was near, so, going most carefully lest the troops should shoot at us, we crept through the bush until we descried, in front of us, and about two hundred yards away, a newly built fort.

Now we blew our trumpet, and beating our drums we advanced out of the bush quite boldly, although we could see the flash of bayonets over the wall.

Luckily we were not shot at, and came up to the gate without mishap. A line of soldiers did not look any too friendly, so I gave an old-fashioned "View Halloo!" which will fetch most Englishmen.

This brought out some white men, who were somewhat surprised to see us, and evidently did not know what to make of us, for besides being in a closed district without a permit, we were moving about while this little war was being conducted.

We managed to explain matters to their satisfaction, however, but as flour was very short at the fort, which had been named Pibor Post, we only stopped there during one day and then marched off, still downstream, to where some seven days' march further on we were told another fort had been built.

These two forts were quite cut off from each other, and, as communication was difficult at the time, I was given the mail-bag to carry. It was not a pleasant trip. We had hardly any flour, and during the last three days before we got to the next post none at all. Meat is poor food with nothing else to eat with with it, and the result was that I got a bad attack of dysentery.

We had left our old soothsayer friend behind at Pibor Post, very much pleased with himself, and busily sending messages to his people saying the war was over.

In his absence, the natives who saw us for the first time were most suspicious. Fortunately, most of them had heard of me, so we got through without much trouble. We were also helped, indirectly, by the Annaks, who, having defeated the expedition, had pursued it, and were now raiding on the river and so clearing the country. Luckily we managed to slip past their camp during the night. It was on the East bank, while we kept to the West side.

The further we went downstream, the more water we found, until it stretched from bank to bank. About five days' march from Fort Bruce, or Akobo Post, as the lower fort was called, we met the water coming upstream. None of us had ever seen such a remarkable sight before.

This invariably happens in these swamps at certain seasons of the year. The rains first fall in the mountains of Abyssinia, and rush down the Sobat river, which rises high in its bed. This spate of water, being above the usual level of the rivers running into the Sobat, seeks vent up these side streams, and so forms a great reserve of water, which flows out again during the dry season.

It is, however, most extraordinary, if one does not understand the reason for it, to meet this overflow bubbling upstream just like a tide on the seashore.

The fish come up with this tide to spawn, and they are pursued by innumerable crocodiles. The water-fowl, too, are in myriads.

My attack of dysentery got worse and worse,

and I became extremely weak, but still we staggered along the river-bank. It was necessary to follow the river closely, as we did not know the exact whereabouts of the new post we were making for, and were afraid of missing it, for the banks were well wooded, and we met no natives to guide us. They had fled from the incursions of Sudanese and Annaks who had lately descended on their happy hunting grounds. They could hardly have regarded either party as anything but a nuisance.

At last, one morning, as we walked along by the bank of the river, we saw a British flag creeping upstream. At first we could see no more than the flag, as the banks were high, the river ran in sharp curves, and the water was low in the channel.

Then round a curve came a small launch, crammed with troops, and with white officers sitting on the bridge.

I promptly sat down, and so did my men all round me.

Glasses were levelled at us, an order was given, and the launch drew up at our feet. There was dead silence.

It was evidently up to me to say or do something, so lifting my hat, I said : "How do you do."

For a moment there was no reply, and then a voice gave the invitation : "Will you come aboard?"

This I proceeded to do, and went up to the officers to shake hands with them. The first question I asked was if they had on board any remedy for dysentery, but they had nothing in that line.

The O.C. then asked : "Where do you come from?"

As we had just been wandering about in every

conceivable direction, I could not resist the opportunity, and replied, "From everywhere you cannot go," which no doubt was rude of me, but I am sure not far from the truth!

I expect from the O.C.'s point of view I must have been a considerable puzzle. Here was I, dropping, as it were, from the clouds, with worn-out clothes, and long beard, as thin as a lath, and as dirty as possible, full of assurance, and most amused about the "army," the little war, and everything else.

How I escaped being put into jail with a long sentence for "contempt of court" I really do not know!

But I found that the O.C. belonged to a club in Yorkshire of which I was also a member, and two of the other officers had been at the same school with me, so I did not come off so badly after all.

I was well treated at Akobo Post, from which point the launch was reconnoitring the Ajuba river, as the Annaks lived on it higher up. And I need not say I was most grateful for all the kindness I received, which was the most remarkable when the doubtful manner of my arrival is taken into consideration. Certainly, for all my hosts knew, I might have been a filibuster of the most mediaeval description!

I remained for a week or two, recovering from my run-down condition, and delighting in all the latest news from England, Home, and Beauty. Then, as a launch was leaving for Khartoum, I took the opportunity offered, and went down to that city for a visit.

I tried to get an audience with the Sirdar, or Governor of the Sudan, but the Fates were not propitious, so I did not stop long, as there is

not much of interest at Khartoum, but returned to Akobo Post, and from there accompanied some engineers of the Survey Department on a trip they were making by boat to Pibor Post.

Sailing up the Lotilliet river in a large boat, in the greatest comfort, was very different from plodding alone the same river on foot, as I had previously done and I appreciated the difference.

Then, as I wanted to get back to my men, whom I had left at Kisyangor, with instructions to wait there for me, I left the Survey expedition and following up the Lotilliet river, came at last to my headquarters, and found my men perfectly contented where I had left them three months previously.

The Abyssinians, by great good fortune, had not discovered their whereabouts, as no native had revealed their position.

The Jiwe, who live at Kisyangor, were the best of fellows, but I often wonder how many of them are still in existence. They were rich in cattle, and the Abyssinians were sure to find them out sooner or later. Although their home is fifty miles or so over the boundary, in so-called Sudan territory, that makes little difference to the Abyssinians, whose raids in pursuit of slaves and cattle carry them much further than that.

The only hope that I can see for the unfortunate inhabitants living within a hundred miles of the Abyssinian border, is the driving of a good motor road from the Nile to the Boma plateau, and the real occupation of that spot with a strong force. With a fort there, the raiding could be stopped ; for across the plateau is the only access to Maji, the back door of Abyssinia, from these Western plains.

Such a road is practicable from Mongalla, on firm ground. I speak from experience, as I

have been over the route which should be chosen. To motor traffic, water is not such an essential as to a caravan on foot, and tanks could be provided at convenient distances.

Till the country is properly occupied, and thrown open, a state of constant petty warfare will continue to exist. And this, at any time, may develop from a local tribal dispute into something much more serious.

I withdrew my men to Bor, on the White Nile, and thence to Mongalla where, after paying them off, I sent them back to their homes.

Then I retired in good order on dear old London Town for a much-needed rest, and found that I was just in time for the Great War, through which, D.G., I served, and am still alive.

After the war I again visited Abyssinia, served for some time in the capacity of frontier agent and accompanied Major Athill on the journey which he so eloquently described to the Royal Geographical Society in 1920.

I sometimes remember what my old Fiki friend said, that my adventures were ordained by some Higher Power. That my experiences may be of some value to those native tribes among whom I spent so many adventurous years, is my present hope.

Perhaps, as Omar Khayyam sang—

“From my base metal may be filed a key to open wide
the door.”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX

Extracts from a Paper read by MAJOR L. F. I. ATHILL, R.F.A., at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, and reproduced by the Society's permission.

In January, 1919, I was sent with a remarkable pioneer, Major Henry Darley, to a place called Maji, some 80 miles north of Lake Rudolf. The governor of Maji, whose geography was not his strong point, had made a small error as to the position of his frontier. The unfortunate result of this error was a fight between Abyssinian and Sudanese troops, in which three Sudanese officers and several men were killed. Major Darley and I were sent with three Abyssinian commissioners to investigate and to try to prevent further friction. I propose to describe the country and people we saw in the performance of our work.

Our travels fell naturally into three parts. The first was the journey from Adis Ababa, the capital, to Maji. Our route took us through beautiful and varied country, and we saw almost all the types of Abyssinian scenery, except the rugged and highly denuded peaks which abound in the north. We were also able to study the varying social conditions produced by the extension of Abyssinian civilization among the conquered tribes of the south-west.

The second part consisted of our wanderings up and down the frontier, when we were naturally

able to form a closer acquaintance with the country and its conditions than we had been able to do during the first and more direct part of our journey.

The third part was not premeditated by us. Our work took longer than we had hoped, and by the time it was finished the torrential rains of Abyssinia were imminent, and during these rains the roads become almost impassable, or at least most exhausting to both man and beast. This consideration, added to the fact that the country between us and the capital was reported to be in a very disturbed condition, decided us to make a dash for the Nile at Mongalla. As we were not equipped or provisioned for travelling in a sort of country we had to cross, and as we were embarrassed by a number of women and children whom we felt obliged to repatriate, we could not explore or survey the area we traversed as fully as we should have liked to do. We were, however, able to make a compass traverse of our route which has turned out to be of some value, and to fill in a small blank on the map.

We left the capital with twenty-five servants and muleteers, all enlisted locally, while our pack train consisted of twenty-five mules. The mongrel civilization of Adis Ababa soon fell behind, and a few hours' march took us to the col from which we obtained our last view of the town. Before us lay the wide valley of the Hawash, and beyond it the hilly mass of the Guragé country. The Hawash valley or plain is rich in cultivation. The deep black soil bears good crops of maize, millet, linseed, tef grass, and a kind of pea called

shumburra. A certain amount of wheat is grown, while the barley, which is one of the most important crops of the country, hugs the hillsides or in some cases crowns the summits. This Hawash plain becomes a bog in the rains, and is dotted with small Galla and Abyssinian homesteads built on knolls which become islands in wet weather.

. . .

On our right the highlands continued in apparently unbroken line, and before us lay a somewhat corrugated valley of most attractive appearance. I should perhaps say a series of valleys, for the trend of the drainage was still from north to south, at right angles to our route, down numerous parallel stream beds. To the south of our route they all turned eastwards joining each other and flowing into the Omo in one stream which took the name of its largest feeder, the Walga.

. . .

The Walga is a stream of no geographical importance, but typical of the many brooks which make this country so productive. It narrows in places to 25 feet, and has a mean depth of 3 feet, with numerous shallows. Above our camp it passed through a beautiful wooded gorge, and a short distance below, among some rather fantastic contortions of the ground, tumbled over a ledge with a drop of 50 feet into a rocky basin of great depth. Its grassy banks were in places shaded by great fig-trees. Wildfowl abounded, chiefly mallard and the common Egyptian goose. Irrigation channels tapped it at frequent intervals, though

they did not seem to be put to very scientific use. The kloofs in the foothills through which it flowed afforded ideal sites for farmhouses, and in fact Darley and I spent much of our time laying out in our imagination the estates on which we decided we should like to spend our old age.

The true native life of this delightful country was purely Galla, and socially resembled that of an English countryside. The yeoman farmer, like his British counterpart, was usually a cheerful and portly individual with a chronic grouse against the weather. He appeared to have no political ambitions beyond the fervent desire to avoid being dragged into political controversies. His house showed that he had a shrewd notion of comfort and a good cuisine.

The inhabitants of the small huts or tukels which dotted the landscape were similarly the counterpart of our own country labourers. Their relations with the farmers were cordial. The men were hard working, slow to start speaking but fairly voluble when started, and friendly in an unimaginative way. Their women were sometimes buxom, very talkative, and quite unimpressed by the white man. Their children were legion, and delightfully merry and ready to make friends. Agricultural methods were extremely primitive.

In this part of the country Abyssinian administration has been in force so long that its oppressive weight is regarded in the same light as any other natural curse, such as a malarial climate or drought—things to be endured without opposition. The Abyssinian population is limited to the local officials, large and small, with their parasitic following of soldiers. The officials seemed busy people, always running hither and thither collecting

the dues of their overlords in the capital, or extracting revenue for themselves by the instrumentality of what is called "chiqachiq." This expressive term means intrigue, and usually takes the form of embroiling the Galla in a lawsuit, either against the crown or among themselves, from which escape can only be obtained by bribing the local magistrate. To describe the code of administration is beyond me, but it is obvious that the presence of these functionaries, unproductive, unpaid, and rapacious, cannot but hang as a blight over the countryside.

For two days our road lay through deserted ridge-and-furrow country, more or less parallel with the river Omo, while to our right rose the mountains of Oche, Hola, and Feco. Then, turning westwards again, we entered the autonomous province of Jimma. We now crossed the southern end of the Feco mountains, which presented the first really serious obstacle to road-making which we had seen since leaving the capital. These hills were covered with juniper and other coniferous trees. The climate in the forest was cool and damp. Game seemed scarce except for a few bush buck and numerous leopards. The woods were the home of a much-dreaded band of *shiftas*, and I visited several villages which had been deserted only a few days before owing to the depredations of the band. We entered these hills by a winding bridle-path with precipitous gradients, and left them by a slightly better-graded track, which led us into the rich undulating country ruled for the Abyssinians by a benevolent despot, Jimma Aba Jifar. The aspect of this country was

often European. Some of our camping-grounds, on the verge of pleasant water-meadows and backed by charming little copses, made it almost impossible to believe that we were really in Africa.

The nature of the crops was unchanged, except for a good deal of a sort of arrowroot called "gudaré." The population consisted of Moslem Gallas, and the chiefs affected an Arab type of dress. Abyssinians appeared only as wayfarers, and the peasantry seemed to profit by their own labours to a far greater extent than those under purely Abyssinian rule. On the thirty-fourth day after leaving Adis Ababa we climbed up a steep hill and entered Jiren, the capital of Aba Jifar. The distance could easily have been covered in seventeen days had we kept going all the time.

The palace and court of Aba Jifar presented a more ordered aspect than that of Ras Tafari, and Aba Jifar himself, in Arab dress and seated on a divan was a dignified and patriarchal figure. He gave us a warm welcome, and both then and at subsequent interviews plied us with shrewd questions as to the number and condition of the Moslem subjects of Great Britain. So searching were his questions that we had to arm ourselves with a 'Whitaker's Almanac' before entering his presence. Aba Jifar encourages trade and gives much assistance to the foreign merchants in his province. The market dues imposed in the three markets of his capital are very low, and his taxation is far lighter than that of the Abyssinians. He even goes so far as to remit, partially or even wholly, the taxes of such of his subjects as have been incapacitated for any length of time by accident or disease. A grave blot on his otherwise enlightened administration is that Mandara,

the Galla town lying below his palace, is the largest centre of the slave-trade in Abyssinia.

Leaving the palace, we passed Mandara and, crossing the Awetu river, camped at Hirmata, where the chief European and Armenian merchants are established, and here we stayed ten days.

. . .

With renewed transport and supplies we again took the road westwards, and for two days passed through the smiling garden province of Aba Jifar. Georges Montandon, as shrewd and un-biassed an observer as ever travelled in Abyssinia, points out that Jimma owes its riches, not to any great natural superiority over the rest of the country, but to the liberal policy which encourages instead of cramping the industry of its inhabitants. On the third day we entered a zone of high forest, which lies to the east of the Gojeb river. Here the road assumed a switchback nature, and the dead body of a newly shot robber lying by the roadside bore witness to the recent presence of *shiftas*, who everywhere cripple the internal commerce of Abyssinia.

We now entered the stricken land of Kaffa, second to none in natural beauty and fertility. The cruelty and shortsightedness of its conquerors have turned it into a lovely but deserted wilderness.

The original Abyssinian occupation and Christianization of Kaffa took place at least five hundred years ago. During the great Islamic invasion of Mohamed Grayne in the sixteenth century, the Abyssinians lost their hold on the country. Its reconquest was undertaken by

Menelik in 1897. Before this date, Roman Catholic missionaries had gained a footing on the Kaffa, and their converts numbered several thousands.

Confronted by the formidable forests and mountains of Kaffa, Menelik enlisted the aid of Aba Jifar. Jimma and Kaffa were traditional enemies, and by the help he gave to the Abyssinians against his ancient foes Aba Jifar bought the degree of autonomy he enjoys to-day. On the very edge of Kaffa we found traces of the deep trenches dug by the Kaffa warriors to oppose the advance of the Galla horsemen. These defences were of no avail, and Menelik clinched his victory by the slaughter or deportation of two-thirds of the unhappy population. His lieutenants ably carried on the work begun by him, and to-day the peace of death reigns in the glorious forests of Kaffa.

Bazabi, the son of the last king, is now a hanger-on in the following of the Abyssinian ruler of Kaffa. He accompanied us for two days, during which we passed close to the spot where his unfortunate father, Galito, fell into the hands of his conquerors. A story is told of Galito which testifies to the mineral riches of Kaffa. When dragged in chains before Menelik, he protested against his fetters being of iron like those of a common slave. His followers produced chains of gold, which Menelik graciously allowed him to exchange for the ones he was wearing. Montandon relates that so much prestige was attached to the royal crown that Menelik had it sent to Switzerland for fear that its presence in Abyssinia should encourage the descendants of Galito to rise in rebellion for its recovery. Switzerland was therefore the dumping-ground for cast-off crowns before the rush set in in 1918.

We now plunged into a country of exaggerated

ridge and furrow, thickly covered with magnificent forest. The road dwindled to a tiny path, masked by foliage through which we had to brush our way. It disdained the subterfuges by which modern roads mitigate the steepness of our hills, and dived headlong into the gorges, to emerge by an equally direct and heart-breaking method on to the crest of the succeeding hills. Signs of a vanished population abounded, and one could easily deduce the stages by which human industry had been stamped out by noting the varying height of the comparatively recent growth of forest. For four days no human being not connected with our caravan crossed our path, with the exception of a convoy of seventy newly caught slaves. Then the monotony of the forest was broken by the wretched little Abyssinian settlement of Aberra, where we were joined by our senior colleague, Dedjazmatch Damté.

The Dedjazmatch was a charming man, reputed to be most humane. All his slaves and mules were rolling with fat. He himself was a courtly and cheerful soul, and celebrated our meeting by drinking twelve glasses of brandy without turning a hair. He wore brown leggings and a broad-brimmed felt hat, and usually carried a large telescope which gave him a nautical air. He was always accompanied by a kind-hearted but senile Fitaurari. During our political arguments, which were sometimes rather heated, the Fitaurari would become much perturbed and would retire to a corner, where he would sit clucking like an old hen.

Two days' more marching through forest brought us to the market of Wotta, where for the first time we met the real Negroid type, devoid of clothes and classified by the Abyssinians under the general term of Shankalla. From here we

crossed a hill with exposed chalky faces, and the forest took on a rather different appearance. The chief characteristic was the abundance of beautiful tree ferns and bamboos, while there were large numbers of a kind of tree rather resembling a larch, called by the Abyssinians "Tuqur Inchet," or black wood, and highly valued for building. One day's march from Wotta brought us to the important Abyssinian settlement of Shoa Ghimirra. The Governor of Shoa Ghimirra was a lordly gentleman called Kenyasmatch Aba Wukum, which means "The father of the fist." He was reported to have earned this name by his methods of subjugating his province, and by what I saw of his subjects, I should think he thoroughly deserved it.

The Kenyasmatch was expecting shortly to be relieved of his command, and was therefore catching and selling the local population as rapidly as possible in order to provide for a rainy day. However I think that his little kingdom reached a pitch of natural beauty which I have never seen equalled. Its gently rising and falling surface, here and there brightened by emerald green meadows, with numerous running streams and great stretches of glorious forest suggested an almost supernatural peace which was only too marked a contrast to the lives of its hunted inhabitants.

Two days further brought us to more rugged country, and leaving the forest we entered the district of Golda. Though hills persisted into this area, and the great ridge of Benesho lay on our northern flank, our path now dropped to lower levels, and at once thorn trees replaced the bamboos and other highland vegetation. Now we found anarchy let loose.

Exasperated by oppression, the Shankallas had risen against their lords, who had retaliated by all the means in their possession. Abyssinians could only move in large parties, and far and wide rose the smoke of burning huts, while the only natives visible were occasional spies, who marked our progress from treetops. I cannot allow myself to enlarge on this subject, but I will give one instance, which should suffice.

Our humane Dedjazmatch was preceding us. Behind him flocked his soldiers, his slaves, and his mules, laden with supplies. Fat women panted along the road bowed under the weight of great jars of tej, or honey wine. Then came Darley at the head of our cortège, while I brought up the rear. At the outskirts of a burnt village I saw Darley stop, and hurried on to join him. I found him literally choking with rage. At his feet lay a skeleton, but a living one. A wretched little slave boy, crippled by an injured leg, had been left to die by the Abyssinian inhabitants of the village as they fled from the Shankallas. For seven days he had lived on roots, and now, too weak to crawl to the stream, he lay dying of thirst. Of the three hundred Abyssinians who had filed by within a few yards of him, not one had thrown him a crust of bread or offered him a drop of water. What remained of him we gathered up and brought to camp, where we were told by our friends that we were wasting our time, as even if he lived he would never be of any use. He did live, and when I left Adis Ababa last November he was a plump, cheerful, and exceedingly naughty little boy, rejoicing in the highflown name of "Ya Igzier Chernet," or "Grace of God," and earning his living as my stable boy.

We hurried on through this inhospitable land,

and on the twenty-second day after leaving Hir-mata crossed the Maji river and camped at the foot of a precipitous slope. On the following day we climbed this slope and made our state entry into the important frontier settlement of Maji.

Geographically and administratively, Maji is an outpost of the Abyssinian Empire. The valleys, which drain to the Omo on one side and to the Akobo on the other, interpose a lowlying zone of what the Abyssinians call "Quolla" between the "Dega" or highlands of Maji, Shasha, and Beru, and the rest of Abyssinia. The two regions are absolutely different, the Quolla bearing its characteristic vegetation of mimosa, and the Dega rejoicing in a climate and fertility similar to that of Kaffa and Ghimirra.

Naturally Abyssinian occupation has denuded Maji and Shasha of their forest, which still survives on Beru. The line of demarcation between the two zones is abrupt, usually marked by an almost sheer escarpment, due, I imagine, to a fault and not in the first instance to erosion. The three plateaus are joined by knife-edged cols, and spurs of similar character jut out. The most striking is that of Siski, the nature of which is shown by the map and by the illustration. The Maji plateau is over 8000 feet high. Its climate is temperate by day and bitterly cold by night, and it is often shrouded by a dense mist. At least four streams fall in cascades from its precipitous cliffs, and its general appearance in some ways recalls the high parts of the Isle of Wight.

The town of Maji is the last typical Abyssinian "Ketemma," with its triply stockaded *gibbe* or palace, its circular church, its market-place, its crowds of loafing soldiers, and its innumerable

brothels. It also marks the limit of organized serfdom. Petty officials may claim to administer the country further west, and do effectively maintain a *regime* of oppression over wide areas in that direction. The natives, however, shun contact with them as far as possible, and such revenues as are collected are the fruits of armed raids, while the work of slave-catching goes on from day to day. At Maji the poor cowed Shankalla has accepted his fate, and tills the land of his master without protest. The population has dwindled until thousands of acres once under cultivation are now abandoned. The surviving inhabitants of Maji are no longer subjected to open violence, and enslavement conceals itself under the cloak of legal recovery for debt. Dibo, or, to give him his native title, "Maji Kuri," the native chief of Maji, is a pathetic figure. For years he tried to defend his people with a rare combination of courage and diplomacy, but broken in spirit he at last welcomed the anodyne of *arika* to which he was introduced by his Abyssinian conquerors. His fall was so complete that he came to take an active part in the enslavement of his people. I hardly know which sight was the more melancholy—the physical wreck of little Ya Igzier Chernet, or the moral degradation of the wretched Dibo.

Here at Maji began the real work of our mission. Our duties were twofold. Firstly we had to visit Kangalla, where the action between the Sudanese and Abyssinian troops had been fought; and secondly, to point out on the ground the position of the provisional frontier. We decided to start southwards with donkey transport, as we were going into a tsetse fly area. Having pointed out the frontier as marked by the lower reaches

of the Kibish, we intended to replenish our almost exhausted grain supply at Gullop, on the spit of land between Sanderson Gulf and the Omo mouth. Partly through real scarcity and partly through obstruction, we could get no supplies at Maji. Then we intended to visit Kangalla, and to follow the frontier northwards between Tid and Tomadur. Here we hoped to be rejoined by our extra men and mules. We would then make a fresh excursion as far as necessary northwards, still following the frontier, and would afterwards return to Tomadur. It was by this time plain to us that a direct return to the capital would be impossible, and Tomadur was a good jumping-off point for our journey to the Nile.

With these intentions we started southwards from Maji, taking with us twenty-one donkeys, only ten of our Abyssinians, and fifteen locally engaged Swahilis. The latter were part of a numerous clan of outlaws and poachers who have settled in Maji and who make their living by raiding Uganda and the Sudan. We eventually repatriated about twenty-five of these men, with their wives and families, who added not a little to the embarrassments of the last part of our trip.

In spite of our protests, the Abyssinians insisted on taking with them a mob of useless soldiers, women, and little boy slaves, who all suffered severely from hunger, thirst, and malaria, and of whom several died before we regained the plateau a month later.

We now followed the eastern foot of a low escarpment, passing through thorn bush with frequent open spaces of black cotton soil. After

three days we crossed the route followed by Austin and Bright in 1901. Here we had the luck to round up a convoy of twenty donkeys bringing back poached ivory from the Sudan. On the fifth day after leaving Tomadur, we emerged from a narrow pass between two hills and camped below the southern face of the volcanic mass of Moru a Kippi, or "hill of water."

We now debated our plans with some anxiety. We had no means of carrying water, and some of our baggage was carried on slow-moving donkeys who were already rather tired. The presence of twenty-six women and children, the latter ranging in age from a few months to ten years, complicated matters. Our Swahilis encouraged us by pointing to distant hillocks where various of their friends had died of thirst. We knew that by twelve hours rapid marching we could reach the water of Kwamkunyū, but we doubted the capacity of our motley throng to stay the distance. Any one who has seen a young child dying of thirst knows how distressing it is, so Darley and I, standing *in loco parentium* to our numerous brood, were rather oppressed by our responsibilities. However, with the convoy we had caught a few days before we had acquired several valuable though reluctant guides, who had just come from the country we were trying to reach. They reported that heavy rain had fallen in the Dodinga hills, which had caused the rivers flowing from them to come down in spate, and that the pools in these river-beds still held water. Accordingly we headed due south into the more or less unknown, with the happiest results. Four hours' marching brought us to a low hill where a tiny trickle of water was welling out of the rock. Here we halted during the heat of the day, and about

three o'clock in the afternoon pushed on southward. As night fell we reached another small hill, and saw beyond it the trees marking a river-bed. We did not try to reach it that night, but some of our men went forward and soon returned with the welcome news that they had found plenty of water. Early next day we reached it and followed its course upstream for six days, thus being able to add it fairly accurately to the map. Its name is the Lomayen. It is of no geographical importance, but a knowledge of its course and water-providing capacity will be of value to any one who is sent to bring that part of the country under administration.

I should like to make a little clearer the good luck which attended us during this part of the trip. The country we crossed is nearly all black cotton soil. When rain has fallen on it it becomes a bog, almost impassable to man and absolutely so to pack transport. On the other hand, the water in the river-beds rapidly dries up, and then no practicable amount of digging will reach water. It is therefore only at the psychological moment when the river pools are filled by water which comes from the hills, while the surrounding country is still firm and dry, that the route is practicable. Donaldson-Smith, confronted in 1895 by the same problem as ourselves, was driven back by drought and obliged to find another route. Had his caravan contained as many weak elements as ours did, he could hardly have avoided loss of life. As it was, Heaven not only sent us the psychological moment, but also the guides who enabled us to seize it.

Since leaving Tirima, thirteen days earlier, we had seen no sign of human life beyond the convoy we captured. This camp on the Lomayen was therefore of interest, as we here found traces of a recent fire made by famine-stricken Toposans in search of edible berries. In our camp we also found a human skull, a relic of a fight which had taken place a short time before between the Toposans and Swahili raiders. Next day we moved on towards Lolimi, a place well known to Darley in his elephant-hunting days, and on the way we were joined by an aged Toposan, obviously chosen as a scout because he was not worth stealing as a slave and too old to be missed much if he was killed. He was the first British subject we had met during a march over 140 miles of British territory.

For the next five days we marched round the foothills of the Dodinga highlands. These lay on our left, while to our right stretched the wide expanse, alternately impassable bog and waterless desert, which extended to the Pibor river. Outlying and more or less isolated hills, broke the monotony, and the country was furrowed by many river-beds running northward. At this time of the year (July) water was standing in pools in most of them, and the natives know of many places where water can always be found by digging. The sand in their beds suggested that the hills from which they flowed were granitic. The ground between them was mostly covered with black cotton soil, and a form of bush bearing a bulbous-shaped thorn, and through whose branches the wind whistled with a characteristic sound, usually marked the places where the going most readily became boggy. Lolimi alone was slightly different from the rest of the country, for there

the hills projected further northward, and the landscape became what, for want of a better term, is usually called "park-like." At Lolimi we again came upon traces of the Swahili raiders, and from it we made a forced march down the Liyoro river in hopes of catching them. Although we approached their zeriba at crack of dawn, and with much stealth, the birds were flown, and there was only a smallpox-stricken Toposan in possession.

Three days later we reached the Zangaiyetta river, and encountered palm trees for the first time since leaving Abyssinia. The banks were covered with Toposan villages, and there was a good deal of durra growing. It was not yet ripe, and as the two preceding crops had failed and most of the cattle had been looted by the Turkana, the people were starving. Near here we met an enormous herd of giraffe, over sixty strong, and, braving the game laws, we shot four, which were wolfed with marvellous speed by the starving Toposans. We here found two men who were prepared to take on messages for us, and therefore sent news of our approach to the Sudan post at Losinga. We had a healthy respect for the vigilance of the Sudanese troops, and had no wish to wake up one morning under machine-gun fire. This might easily have occurred, as our party in every way resembled a band of Abyssinian and Swahili raiders. The castellated crags of Boya had now for several days been luring us westwards. These mountains rising from the plains are the greatest encouragement to wanderers in the otherwise dreary wilderness. At first they appear like fairy castles, visible only in the golden clearness of the evening. Day by day they grow in size and reality, until at last they loom

above one, only to fade once more into the dim horizon, eternal milestones in the desert.

As we approached the Locheriatom river, at the base of Boya, we were rejoiced to see a party of men in uniform sitting under a tree. It was a detachment of the Equatorial Battalion, sent out to meet us by the Commandant at Losinga, and carrying every sort of supply we could possibly want. The name of the Commandant, Bimbashi Wilkins, will always be coupled in our minds with thoughts of vermouth and heartfelt gratitude. On the following day, the one hundred and sixty-sixth since we left Adis Ababa, we entered Losinga Post, and there I propose to conclude my narrative.

No account of this journey, however, would be complete without some tribute to Major Darley, who was my leader and long-suffering friend throughout it. Such success as we achieved was due to the care and knowledge which he brought to bear on the outfitting of the expedition, to his patient and skilful handling of the rather difficult political situations which arose, and above all to the prestige attached to his name among the little-known savage tribes through which the last part of our journey led us.

APPENDIX II

“ KENYA OBSERVER ” (Nairobi)
(Leading article, May 13th, 1925)

“ The British Consul at an Abyssinian town named Maji proceeded with representatives of the Abyssinian Government to a Sudanese Government mountain station named Dodinga 120 miles, from the Abyssinian frontier, to discuss, we understand, the relations of Abyssinians to their neighbours—a relationship that is too often, and too exactly, synonymous with slave raiding, and the discussions took place in a reasonable atmosphere.

“ The British Consul was detained at Dodinga on other business, and the Abyssinians returned to their own country alone.

“ En route, they are said to have swept the area over which they travelled clear of human and animal domestic life. And the completeness of devastation by Abyssinians is the completeness of the locust, but more cruel.

“ The British Foreign Office has maintained for many years *an impenetrable and unexplained secrecy* in regard to the repeated raids of Abyssinians across British territory, and public opinion, as represented, to the great credit of that organization, by the Anti-Slavery and Aboriginal Protection Society has lately tended to be lulled by the assurances and demonstrations made last year

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against the export of slaves across the Red Sea, and has thus ignored the continued risks of land raids on the West and South.

“The devastation of their territory and the loss of their freedom, treasure, and lives are matters for the prevention of which the Toposa, a race very closely similar to the Masai of East Africa, have a right to look to Great Britain, etc.”

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