

# *Ethiopian Realities*

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*Polson Newman*

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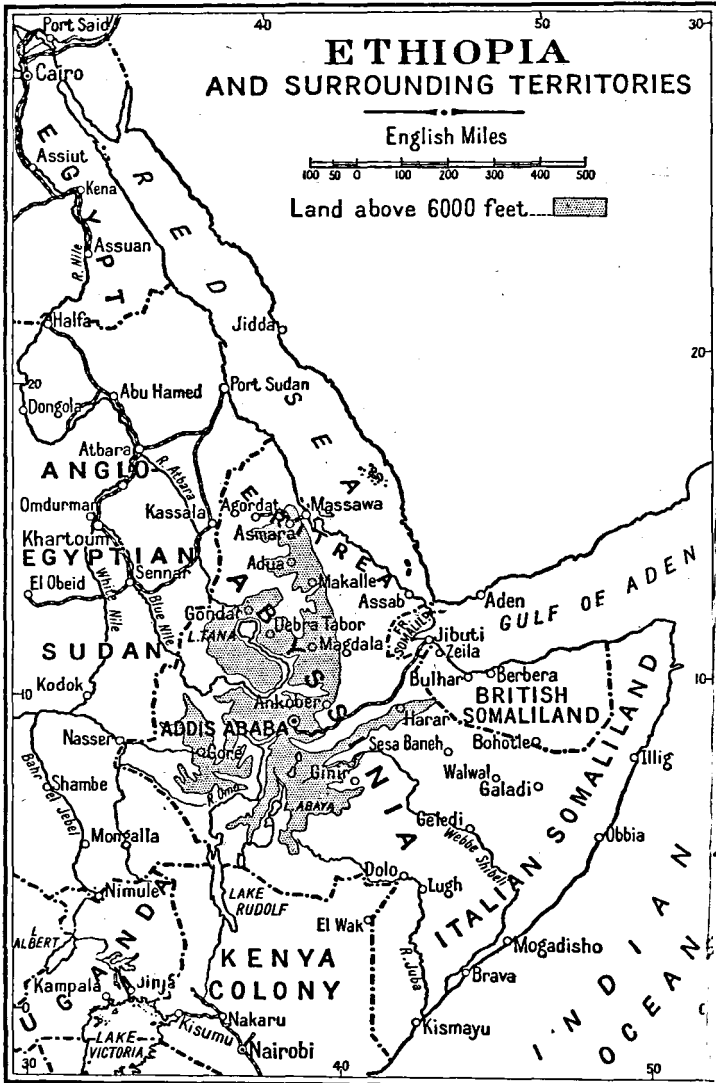
# ETHIOPIAN REALITIES

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# ETHIOPIAN REALITIES

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Major Polson Newman



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## P R E F A C E

WHEN, in October 1935, I returned to England from a journey in Ethiopia, British and French Somalilands, and Italy, I had no intention of writing a book. When, however, I had discussed the Italo-Ethiopian question with representatives of British public opinion up and down the country, and had heard some of the questions which people were asking, I was astonished to find the extent to which the British attitude was one-sided owing to a deep ignorance of essential facts. It seemed to me that the situation urgently called for someone to undertake the work of dispelling the general misconceptions of conditions prevailing in Ethiopia past and present, and of presenting to the general public the true facts of the conflict between that country and Italy. As I was perhaps in the unique position of having returned to England after studying conditions on the spot immediately prior to hostilities, I felt that the opportunity of writing on the subject was one which I could not allow to pass.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to outline the background of the present conflict by giving a short account of what may be termed "Modern Ethiopia"—the period from Theodore II to the present time. To this I have added what I believe to be the truth about conditions in Ethiopia to-day, together with the main factors in the clash between Ethiopia and Italy.

## ETHIOPIAN REALITIES

Although the term "Abyssinia," meaning "confusion" with reference to a mixture of races, is perhaps more appropriate, I prefer to use the term "Ethiopia" as being the official designation of the country.

For valuable help given in a task demanding rapidity as well as accuracy I am deeply grateful to my wife.

E. W. POLSON NEWMAN

WOODSTOCK.

*December 1935*



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# ETHIOPIAN REALITIES

## CHAPTER I

### RISE OF THEODORE

THE present conflict between Italy and Ethiopia has drawn the attention of many to the ancient legends on which Ethiopian tradition is based, causing an entirely wrong impression of their significance. These legends enshroud a little-known Christian country with a romantic glamour, carrying the mind back to stories of the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon, and the Ark of the Covenant; but when it is realised that the imagination of the Ethiopian people has been purposely stimulated all along the line for political purposes, a great deal of the glamour disappears to reveal indisputable facts of a very unromantic nature. Religious tradition has for centuries been utilised as a means of fostering the appearance of national unity, and the first thing every usurper has done has been to arrange through the Church a pedigree showing his descent from Solomon. Indeed the matter has been so overdone that it has reduced itself to a farce. In the outside world also the fact that Ethiopia is a Christian country in Africa whose past is enveloped in Biblical legends has been used in attempts to gain respect and to build

up prestige. The majestic lions of Judah add dignity to an imperial ruler, although until recently his imperial palace consisted of ramshackle buildings with corrugated iron roofs. Although Ethiopia is undoubtedly a country of antiquity, her history does not in any way justify classing her in the same category with Mesopotamia, Palestine or Persia, and certainly not with Egypt. While the latter countries had long periods of an advanced civilisation, Ethiopia has been throughout a land of varying degrees of barbarism, inflated with the idea of a special divine approbation. It was only with the rise of Theodore that Ethiopia began to be recognised as a power in any modern sense of the term.

Prior to 1855 anarchy and chaos ruled supreme in Ethiopia. The chieftains of Amhara, Shoa, Tigré, and Gojjam were perpetually at war with one another—Harar was not at this time a part of Ethiopia. No ruler had any security of tenure. The so-called Emperor, Negus Negast, or King of the Kings of Ethiopia, had no authority whatever, and was the puppet of one or other of the quarrelling chieftains. So frequently were they deposed that on one occasion there were six Emperors alive at the same time. The country was overrun by the Moslem Gallas, whose chief, Ras Ali, had succeeded in marrying his mother to the Emperor John III. Ras Ali, however, had a powerful rival in the person of Ras Ube of Tigré. While these two were engaged in a continuous struggle for supremacy, a

youth, afterwards the Emperor Theodore, had appeared upon the scene, having achieved military fame through his exploits against the Egyptians. Kasa, as he was then called, was born in the frontier province of Kawara of which his father was governor. But as his mother was not the lawful wife, he had to endure considerable poverty and hardship in his early years. He was educated in a monastery near Lake Tana, and there he studied such literature as was available. Although the material at hand for study seems to have been limited it implanted in him a love and respect for learning which led him in later years to found the library at Magdala. It was probably while he was at this monastery that he first heard of the prophecy that there would one day appear in Ethiopia a king called Theodore, who would rule justly and righteously, would wipe out Islam from the world, and would take Jerusalem and reign over a world that would be entirely Christian. This prophecy fired his imagination, and he adopted the name of Theodore when he was crowned in 1855. He persuaded the Abuna to crown him in return for an undertaking to expel from the country the Roman Catholics who were undermining the power of the National Church, and at his coronation he swore to bring under his own rule all the provinces which had once belonged to Ethiopia, and to suppress the influence of Islam.

Theodore is said to have been a fanatical Christian, but there is no evidence to show that he ever persecuted

anyone for the sole reason of his religious beliefs. In the early years of his life his character seems to have had much to recommend it. For an Ethiopian he was comparatively merciful to his vanquished enemies; though in the latter part of his reign, as he became soured by his inability to attain his object of national unity, he developed a ferocity which gradually increased to an insane lust for blood and destruction. He was capable of deep devotion which he showed in his attachment to his wife, Tawabach, and to his two English advisers and friends, Plowden and Bell. Though he was always possessed of a fiery temper these three true friends exercised a restraining influence upon him, so long as they lived, by their wise and fearless counsel. A truly romantic story is that of Theodore and Tawabach. While John III ruled at Gondar, Queen Menan, his wife, anxious to secure the supreme power for her son, Ras Ali, sent an army against the youth, Kasa, whose rapid rise to fame had filled her with alarm. With this army, to see that the Queen's wishes were carried out, went the Princess Tawabash, a beautiful maiden of fifteen years. This army, however, fell in with the invading forces of Mohammed Ali, the Egyptian, and mistaking them for Kasa's men, gave battle. Kasa, in his turn mistaking the Queen's army for the Egyptian, also joined in the fight. The Queen's army, attacked on both sides, was overcome and the Princess was captured by the Egyptians. When Kasa learnt of this he hurried to



THE EMPEROR THEODORE

the rescue and found that the Princess, rather than fall a victim to her negro guards, had stabbed herself with a poisoned dagger. Kasa, overcome by her beauty and distress, fell in love with her, and with his own lips sucked the poison from the wound. He restored the Princess to her parents at Gondar, and then asked for her hand in marriage. But the Queen had no such romantic ideas, and refused to give her daughter to a low-born savage, urging on her son Ali to a new attack upon Kasa. Love, however, was triumphant, for Ali was defeated, and Kasa entered Gondar capturing both the Emperor John and the Queen, whom he only released in return for the hand of his Princess. He was of medium height, and of good physique. He was admitted to be the best horseman, best shot, best runner, and best spearman in the country. As a military leader he made every effort to organise his armies on a European basis, although this was only practicable to a very limited extent. His campaigns were based on well-conceived plans, and his movements were carried out with remarkable rapidity. In other words, he made the best use of the topographical nature of the country in which he was operating and the natural fighting qualities of the man-power at his disposal. Contrary to the usual Ethiopian practice, he believed in keeping his movements secret, thereby maintaining his army intact and increasing the value of his shock tactics. When necessary he fought at the head of his men and dis-



played a reckless bravery, the sole idea in his mind being that of victory. In spite of the fact that at the end of his reign he encouraged general devastation, it was he who first introduced into Ethiopia a system of paying soldiers instead of allowing them to rely on plunder.

The first act of the eventful thirteen years of his reign was to depose and imprison the last Emperor, John III, but as he was a negligible factor, Theodore later allowed him to escape. But a much more serious problem were the Galla invaders who, though powerful and numerous, were unable to stand up against his military skill. They were for the time being completely defeated, so that he was able to establish his capital in the mountain stronghold of Magdala in the heart of the Galla country. He next turned his attention to Shoa, where he had a much easier task, but here, as elsewhere, submission to his authority was only temporary. Throughout the whole of his reign rebellions took place whenever his back was turned, and even at this early stage he had only short respites from them. It was during one of these peaceful intervals that he restored some of the old churches of Magdala, and removed the libraries from Gondar, the old capital of Ethiopia, to the new library which he endeavoured to form at the Church of the Saviour of the World. To this library he also transported the manuscripts which had previously been scattered throughout the land. Peace, however, did not last long, and he was soon involved once more in crushing

revolts up and down the country. About this time his wife died, and Bell was killed while saving Theodore's life. Theodore exacted a terrible vengeance for the death of his friend, and continued to quell revolts with ever-increasing severity, but in spite of this revolts continued to break out. One of these, which threatened to be serious, was aided by Monsignor Jacobis and his Catholic adherents whom Theodore, contrary to his oath, had not expelled from the country. Negushe, a descendant of the former royal line, laid claim to the crown and defeated several bodies of Theodore's troops. After this he was able to seize Tigré, while he sent his brother to invade Gondar. Although the French had promised aid to the new claimant, this help did not materialise, and the revolt was finally quelled. The rebel and his brother were captured, had their left hands cut off, and were left to perish of thirst. This punishment, with variations, such as cutting off either or both hands or feet, with or without the gouging out of eyes, has long been a prominent feature in Ethiopian warfare, and is not yet considered out of date. It was at the time of the campaign against Negushe that Plowden was killed, and his death marked a complete change in the character and conduct of Theodore.

It was about this time, also, that Theodore had married as his second wife, Terunasha, the daughter of Ube, Ras of Tigré. She proved, however, to be of a character very different to that of his first wife; she

was proud and arrogant and did nothing to check his downward course. There was no longer anyone to exercise a restraining influence upon him, and, indeed, he seems at times to have been mentally deranged. He ignored the laws and ancient customs of the country, and made his will the law of the land. He scoffed at the advice of his advisers and the clergy, he maltreated the Abuna Salama, he insulted the priests and the learned men of his court. Furthermore, he imposed fresh taxes and other burdens upon the peasants, seizing their lands and calling them "Crown property." He now began to treat prisoners of war with a cruelty unsurpassed, even in Ethiopia, and there are many examples of his bloodthirsty actions. On many occasions he slaughtered all the prisoners that were taken, often numbering many hundreds, and sometimes resorted to the most cruel methods. Having captured four hundred of the chief men of a rebel tribe, he had them taken to a plain and enclosed within a thick hedge of spiky thorns. They were stripped of their clothing to prevent them breaking through the thorns, and guards were set round them to see that they got neither food nor water. It was fifteen days before the last of these wretched men died. Then later on, in another district, he seized several thousand men, women, and children, shut them up in wooden huts and burnt them alive. Strangely enough, it is recorded that he paid for the huts so destroyed.

As a result of Theodore's deterioration and excesses,

his friends and supporters began to desert him and his army dwindled from about 50,000 to 5,000 men. He was faced with armed opposition and revolt in many directions, and his power to suppress them was declining. Some of the Galla and Bogos tribes, whom he had previously conquered, succeeded in freeing themselves from his yoke, and the important Kingdom of Shoa, under Menelik, regained its independence. In one of Theodore's early expeditions against Shoa he had carried off Menelik, the young son of the reigning king, and had taken him as a hostage to his capital at Magdala. He had treated the boy with every kindness; bringing him up with his own son, Mashasha, and later on he had Menelik married to Bafana, his daughter by a Galla widow. After some years Menelik determined to escape, and it is probable that he was aided in this by the family of Bafana; for Theodore, on finding his captive gone, took a terrible revenge on the Gallas. Gobaze of Amhara also successfully rebelled against Theodore. Gobaze was reinforced by other chiefs, and he appointed as his lieutenant in Tigré, Kasa, a kinsman of Ube. This Kasa took Adowa, and gradually made himself ruler of the whole of Tigré. He later became John IV, and was responsible for the defeat of Gobaze. It is not uncommon in Ethiopia to find similar cases, where a man put into a position of authority eventually rebels against the very person who first appointed him.

Meanwhile, the British Government decided to send

Captain Cameron to replace Plowden as Consul in Ethiopia. He arrived in February 1862, bearing a letter from Queen Victoria. Theodore received Captain Cameron well, and told him that it was his intention to drive the Turks and Egyptians out of the Red Sea ports. By this time Theodore had developed an advanced stage of megalomania, considering himself the equal of the great European monarchs, and went to the length of writing to Queen Victoria and the Emperor Napoleon III suggesting Ethiopian Embassies to Great Britain and France respectively. As these proposals were coldly received in both capitals, Theodore's rage was beyond all bounds, and he threw the unfortunate Captain Cameron and other Europeans into prison. This was early in the year 1864. When the news of these arrests reached England, a letter demanding the release of the prisoners was sent by Mr. Rassam. At the same time it was decided to send to Ethiopia the artisans, machinery, and modern military equipment for which Theodore had asked, and which were already being collected for him. Mr. Rassam arrived in Massawa in July 1864, but his first two letters to Theodore received no reply. It was not until August 1865 that Theodore gave him permission to enter the country, but he then did everything possible to facilitate the journey. Some months after Mr. Rassam's arrival the prisoners were released, and the whole party prepared to leave the country. When they went to take farewell of the king, however, they were

all seized, chained, and thrown back into prison at Magdala. The reason for the changed attitude of Theodore has never been made clear. Whether it was because he feared that the prisoners once out of the country the gifts would never arrive, or whether it was simply due to the deranged state of his mind, remains a mystery. By 1867 it was clear that the prisoners could only be liberated by means of a military expedition.

It was found that many provinces were in revolt against Theodore, and the natives of the country through which the expedition must pass were willing to assist anyone who would free them from the oppression of a bloodthirsty tyrant. Accordingly, the necessary troops were sent from India and joined by some units from England. The force included cavalry, artillery (with a naval rocket brigade), engineers, and infantry, under the command of Sir Robert Napier. They landed at Annesley Bay, which lies to the south of the present Italian port of Massawa. The difficulties of the campaign can well be imagined in view of the meagre landing facilities available at that time, the difficulties of water supply, the mountainous and forbidding nature of the country, and the fact that there was no one who had any practical experience of these districts. Although Magdala was only four hundred miles from the Red Sea base, it took the British expedition three months to get there even with the help of the friendly natives. The force had to advance through a country of high rugged mountains and

lofty plateaux, interspersed with deep ravines. The difficulties for the transport were prodigious, as in some places the supply columns had to pass over tracks alongside vast precipices, and down steep and rocky descents. At one stage of the advance the expedition had to contend with a mountain pass of 12,000 feet where the temperature rose to 110° by day and fell to 10° of frost by night. Meanwhile Theodore decided to march to Magdala and defend it against the English. Before he set out he allowed his troops to raid and pillage the countryside, and he set fire to the town of Debra Tabor. In this difficult and hurried march he once again displayed the old qualities of endurance and courage which had brought about his early successes and had endeared him to his people. On the 10th of April a battle was fought outside Magdala, which resulted in the defeat of Theodore, who retreated to his capital, surrendered the prisoners, and, rather than be taken captive, committed suicide before the British troops entered the fortress. With the death of Theodore and the release of the prisoners, Napier had no further mission to perform in the country. He therefore refused to interfere in any way with the appointment of a new king or with the internal affairs of Ethiopia, and with his forces almost intact withdrew to the coast.

Theodore revived the idea of unity under one crown in the four provinces which at that time constituted Ethiopia. These were the provinces of Amhara, Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, and they should not be

confused with the Ethiopian Empire of to-day, comprising as it does the large areas of territory conquered by Menelik. Although the kingdom of Theodore extended farther north than Ethiopia to-day, into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Eritrea, it did not reach quite so far south as Addis Abeba, and did not include Harar. In area it comprised about one-third of the present Empire. Although Theodore was never able actually to unite these provinces under his authority, he changed the ideas in the minds of the great Rases. Whereas, before his time, they had aimed at local independence, thereafter their ambitions rose to becoming Negus Negast of Ethiopia. By unity should be understood centralisation of power rather than homogeneous unity, which does not and cannot exist under the conditions prevailing in the country. Such success as Theodore achieved was due partly to his own personality and fighting qualities, and also to the fact that he was regarded as the champion of Ethiopian Christianity at a time when Moslem influence was strong and threatening the power of the local national Church. As in the case of most of the Emperors, it has been said that Theodore abolished the slave trade; but, though it is possible that in order to please the Europeans he may have taken some steps in this direction, there is no evidence that the traffic was in any way curtailed. The chief significance of his reign is that he laid the foundations upon which later monarchs were to build.



## CHAPTER II

### ETHIOPIA AND FOREIGN POWERS

THE death of Theodore left three rival claimants to the Ethiopian Crown—Gobaze, governor of Amhara, Kasa, Ras of Tigré (afterwards John IV and hereafter referred to as John), and Menelik, King of Shoa. Of these three Gobaze was the strongest, and, proclaiming himself Emperor, was crowned at Gondar. Gobaze had been on friendly terms with Sir Robert Napier, who, thinking very highly of his character and ability, had offered to hand over to him the fortress of Magdala. But, as Gobaze had no wish to undertake the occupation and defence of such a place, the town was given to one of the Galla princesses, who was in her turn superseded by Menelik. In 1872 Gobaze attempted to subdue Tigré, but in this campaign he was completely defeated by John, who, in spite of inferiority in numbers, had the advantage of the modern weapons which had been left to him by Sir Robert Napier. These weapons comprised a battery of mountain guns and mortars and sufficient smooth-bore guns to arm one regiment. He also had the services of a British non-commissioned officer who had remained in the country. John was proclaimed Negus in 1872, and the Ras of Gojjam, a lieutenant of Gobaze, took an early opportunity of submitting to him, but the

Kingdom of Shoa, under Menelik, remained independent, as did also some of the Galla tribes. These latter caused trouble for several years by continuous raiding and plundering of the surrounding districts. In spite of some unfavourable accounts which have been given of his character, John seems to have been a clever and capable ruler, although he did not possess the military qualities of Theodore. He was a fearless leader and he earned the respect and affection of his people. He is still remembered as the ruler who gave his life for Ethiopia, and who died gloriously in the moment of victory. It is probable that John owed a great deal of his success not only to his own merit, but also to the wise counsel and faithful service of Ras Alula, a man of outstanding personality and great intelligence.

It was during the reign of John that foreign influences first began to make themselves felt in Ethiopia. In 1862 the French had bought the port of Obok from the Sultan of that district, though they did not effectively occupy it until some years later. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 completely changed the aspect of the Red Sea, which till then had been an uninviting gulf whose inhospitable shores had not aroused the cupidity of foreign Powers. All this was now changed and the rush for territorial possession had begun. That same year an Italian steamship company opened a coaling station in the Bay of Assab. It was by these seemingly unimportant acquisitions that

France and Italy, almost unnoticed by others, laid the foundations of their future Red Sea colonies. Shortly after his coronation, in the year 1874, John had to contend with trouble from Egypt; for the Egyptians, seeing the confusion into which Ethiopia had been thrown by the competition between Menelik and John, and by the indecisive campaign of the latter against the Galla, seized the opportunity to attack the northern part of the country. The Egyptians successfully invaded the Bogos district, and occupied Keren, its capital, and they were aided by the governor of Ailet, near Massawa, who sold his allegiance to the enemy. A defeat inflicted by a Shoan force in no way checked the Egyptian encroachment; for the people of Harar, a Moslem community, petitioned the Khedive Ismail to depose a ruler whom they detested, and to annex the province himself. Ismail had no hesitation in complying with this request. He then sent another army which advanced into Tigré with the object of occupying Adowa. The forces of John, however, by their clever tactics inflicted a signal defeat upon the Egyptians. A further Egyptian force fared no better than the previous one, and John was able to extort a heavy ransom for Prince Hassan who had fallen into his hands. In spite of the insult to Prince Hassan, on whose arm had been tattooed "the Mark of the Christian King," Ismail was persuaded to make peace with John by General Gordon, the newly appointed Governor-General of the Sudan. Peace with Egypt

was thus established and lasted until 1884, when the effects of the Mahdi's revolt spread to the south-eastern borders of the Sudan. As the situation now stood, the Bogos country had been restored to Ethiopia, but Egyptian sovereignty still extended along the shores of the Red Sea. The Somali coasts, Massawa, Harar, and Berbera (now the capital of British Somaliland), all remained under Egypt domination.

At the close of this campaign John returned home in triumph. His successes against the well-armed Egyptian forces had greatly enhanced his reputation, and in 1878 he felt himself strong enough to undertake the task of subduing Menelik. He was aided in this enterprise by a domestic dispute between Menelik and his wife, Bafana, which seemed to have grown from a family quarrel into a matter of some consequence. Menelik was defeated, compelled to submit and to abandon the title of Negus Negast which he had used ever since the death of Theodore. It is probable that John showed wisdom in allowing Menelik to retain the Kingdom of Shoa, and in other ways endeavouring to win his allegiance even though his efforts were only partially successful; for Menelik had managed to bring about a certain measure of control in this area, and to have killed or replaced him would have been to restore chaos and confusion. This, however, did not prevent John from inciting Menelik's chieftains and neighbours to rise against him whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself. It was finally agreed

between the two that John should recognise the Harar, Kaffa, and Galla districts as the domain of Menelik, to conquer and hold as best he could, while Menelik in turn agreed not to interfere in the country of the Wollo Galla. This bargain was strengthened in 1882 by a marriage compact between Zauditu, the seven-year-old daughter of Menelik, and Sahla Selassié, aged twelve years, the son of John and Ras of Endarta. By this marriage the succession was secured to Menelik at John's death, to pass eventually from him to Sahla Selassié. With the submission of Menelik in 1878 John entered upon a period of peace. Though his ambition never soared to the same height as that of Theodore, he yet achieved a greater measure of unity and stability, and during the six years from 1878 to 1884 he encouraged trade, and his people enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity than they had known for many years.

Now that peace seemed to be established in Ethiopia, and the traffic in the Red Sea had increased, the possibilities of trade suggested themselves to various European merchants, and for some years trade flourished along the various caravan routes between the interior and the Red Sea ports. During the years 1881 and 1882, the French settled in the port of Obok, and possessed themselves of various other small islands and towns in the neighbourhood. At the same time, the Italian Government officially took over Assab, where an appreciable colony had now settled, and

appointed Count Antonelli to conduct negotiations with Menelik.

By 1884 the successes of the Mahdi led the British and Egyptian authorities to decide upon the evacuation of the Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan; and in order to facilitate this the British applied to John for his assistance. A treaty was accordingly concluded by Admiral Hewitt by which John agreed to assist the retirement of the garrisons through Ethiopian territory in return for the remission of the excessive taxation which the Egyptians had hitherto levied on all Ethiopian goods passing through the port of Massawa. At the same time, John undertook to assist Great Britain in the suppression of the slave trade. (In this connection it is worth noting that John faithfully carried out such measures as he had undertaken.) In respect of this treaty great credit is due to him, for he not only permitted the passage through his territory of the stranded garrisons, as he had undertaken, but sent an army under Ras Alula to the assistance of those in difficulties. The five garrisons which he relieved were in fact the only garrisons in that part of the Sudan that were rescued. One of the chief battles fought by Ras Alula in this campaign was that in which he defeated the Mahdi at Kufit.

The internal affairs of Egypt at that time necessitated her abandoning all claim to the Red Sea ports, the control of which regions was temporarily taken over by the British. Great Britain, however, had no

desire to retain these ports either for herself or for Egypt, and so handed over to Italy Massawa and many other ports and towns in the neighbourhood, hoping in this way to ensure that they did not fall into the hands of the French. On the 5th February, 1885, the same day as the fall of Khartoum, an Italian garrison occupied the town of Massawa. There they remained, in spite of vigorous protests from Turkey, who felt that she had a prior right to Massawa, as Egypt had been a vassal state and had only held the Red Sea coast as a sort of fief from the Sultan. The Italians now began to build up the colony of Eritrea, and to penetrate farther and farther inland, to the increasing dismay of King John. At this point the Italians made the mistake of treating with Menelik and endeavouring to win him over to their side as the future Emperor of Ethiopia. This course may have seemed a sound one at the time, but Menelik was a man of very different character from John, and he was intriguing with the Italians with no other object in view save to further his own interests, and to secure his ultimate succession to the throne. He had no desire to quarrel openly with Italy, though it did not please him to see her penetrate into territory which he had in his mind reserved for his own occupation. Menelik had spent most of his youth under the influence of Theodore, and no doubt he had decided at an early age to follow in this man's footsteps and to set before his own eyes Theodore's ambition of a



[From volume 2 of Sir E. A. Wallis Budge's "History of Ethiopia"  
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KING JOHN



mighty Empire. But where Theodore had relied on military prowess, Menelik was prepared to bide his time, and to resort to craft and cunning rather than to risk failure by hasty or ill-considered action. He had succeeded in occupying Harar as soon as the Egyptians had evacuated it, and he determined to extend rather than diminish his possessions in the direction of the coast. Indeed he had himself been negotiating with Cairo to acquire the port of Massawa when the Italian garrison took possession of it. Had the Italians been content to deal with John alone it is possible that they would have been accorded very different treatment by him; but being of a highly suspicious nature, like the majority of his race, he naturally resented the fact that Italy had any dealings with his rival Menelik. While the seeds of trouble with Italy were being sown, a Russian mission arrived in Ethiopia under Nicolas Achinoff, through whose mediation John saw an opportunity of equipping his army. Achinoff was commissioned to supply large quantities of modern cannon, rifles, swords, and ammunition, in return for which he received a large grant of land and permission to erect a Russian monastery.

As time passed there occurred incidents between Italy and Ethiopia which were smoothed over, but one incident which is significant may be quoted here as typical of the position. The Italian Government sent a mission which was finally to settle all outstanding points of difference with John. This mission was well

received by Ras Alula, but while he was making arrangements to conduct the mission to the Negus, the Italian Government received from Count Antonelli a copy of a letter recently written by John to Menelik, in which he expressed such hatred of the Italians that the Italian Government thought it unwise to let the mission proceed. Although the proximity of the rainy season was the ostensible excuse given, both John and Ras Alula considered themselves insulted. In 1887 the Italian occupation of Saati, an inland caravan halt, led to a direct demand by Ras Alula for its immediate evacuation. An Ethiopian attack on Saati followed in which the Ethiopians were repulsed, but as the Ethiopian army was still present in the neighbourhood in vastly superior numbers, the officer in command at Saati sent for reinforcements. Accordingly a body of about 500 white troops, 50 irregulars, and 2 machine-guns was sent out from Monkullo to their relief. At Dogali they were attacked by an Ethiopian force several thousands strong. After putting up a magnificent resistance for many hours, the Italian column was practically wiped out. The casualties are given as 23 officers and 407 men killed, besides one officer and 80 men wounded. After this reverse the Italians withdrew their forces from the outlying towns and consolidated their position at Massawa, where several forts were built; and before long a strong force of Italians was sent out to garrison Eritrea. British and Italian missions to King John produced no easing of the

situation. Count Antonelli was conducting lengthy negotiations with Menelik promising him, in return for help against John, Italian support for his claims as Negus; the Italians also presented him with arms and ammunition. Though he readily accepted all that he was offered, Menelik did not attack John; similarly, when ordered by John to attack the Italians he refrained from doing so. It was his intention to make use of both sides, but not to allow himself to be made use of by either.

It became increasingly apparent that war was inevitable, and the Italians prepared to defend themselves at Massawa. The Italian General, Di San Marzano, had been ordered by his Government to take no risks, so, as soon as he was informed of the approach of the Negus, he retired within the double line of forts and awaited developments. The Emperor had by this time collected an army of over 80,000 men and, as he anticipated renewed trouble from the Dervishes, he left behind him the ruler of Gojjam to keep order and to defend the country. In March 1888 John appeared in front of the Italian fortifications, where he remained for over a month. During this time negotiations were entered into, but they proved fruitless. John wisely recognised from the very start that the attacking of a position so well fortified was far beyond the capacity of even the bravest troops, and therefore would not allow any assault to be made. Here news reached him that the Dervishes had attacked and defeated Tecla Aimanot, the ruler of Gojjam, and had sacked and

burnt Gondar, carrying off hundreds of prisoners, many of whom had died as a result of their ill-treatment. Still John refused to allow his men to court destruction by attacking the Italian forts, but Di San Marzano refused to be decoyed from his stronghold to risk his soldiers in the open against superior numbers. So the two armies faced each other without a shot being fired on either side. Suddenly at the beginning of April the Negus and his forces vanished as swiftly and silently as they had come.

Disaffection greeted John on his return, for Tecla Aimanol had lost his children at Gondar, and was filled with resentment that John had not come earlier to his rescue, and Menelik, by now well supplied with Italian rifles, thought that the time had come to make himself more powerful. Unwilling to risk a trial of strength with Menelik, John proceeded to treat with him until news of a fresh invasion by the Dervishes sent him marching northwards towards Metamma. Here he fought his last battle and won his final victory, for he fell mortally wounded before the enemy took to flight.

Before John died he called his chiefs together and acknowledged Ras Mangasha as his son, committing him to the particular care of Ras Alula. As John's only legitimate son, Sahla Selassié, was already dead, this meant in fact that he was appointing Mangasha as his heir. With John's death the country was once more thrown into confusion, and the Italians took advantage

of this to seize and occupy the towns of Asmara and Keren as well as the outlying provinces of Hamacen, Serae, and Okule-Kusai. There General Baldissera halted and established his boundary along the line of the rivers Mareb, Belsa, and Muna, which is the present boundary of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The reign of John will be remembered as marking the entry of European influences into the history of Ethiopia, and it was during his time that Italian ownership of the coasts superseded the Moslem domination by Egypt. The Ethiopians not only resented Italian occupation in itself, but feared that it would lead to further penetration. Although John achieved a greater measure of unity than Theodore, he never enjoyed absolute power. Though acknowledged as Negus Negast he had to share authority with Menelik of Shoa.

## CHAPTER III

### CONQUESTS OF MENELIK

As soon as news of the death of John reached Menelik he lost no time in proclaiming himself Emperor, and applied to the Italians for help in consolidating his position. In spite of the opposition of General Baldissera, who doubted the good faith of Menelik, the policy of Count Antonelli was accepted by the Italian Government; and every possible assistance was given to the aspirations of Menelik, with the result that on the 3rd November, 1889, he was crowned with great ceremony at Makalle by the Abuna Matthew. His claim to the rank of Negus lay in his descent from the old royal house and in the much more practical fact that, thanks to Italian backing, he was by far the most powerful of the great Rases. His only rival was Mangasha, the son of King John, to whom Ras Alula remained faithful. These two had fled to Tigré, to which province Mangasha had a special hereditary claim, leaving the rest of the country to Menelik's undisputed possession. In return for their assistance, Menelik now signed a treaty with the Italians at Ucciali, by the terms of which the Italian possessions were extended as far as and including Asmara (now the capital of the colony of Eritrea). It was stipulated that Ethiopia accepted Italian protection and that all

treaties between Ethiopia and other foreign Powers should be negotiated through Italy. The Italian Government further gave King Menelik a present of fire-arms, and a loan of four million lire with the customs of Harar as security. In the event of non-repayment of this loan the whole of the province of Harar was to be handed over as compensation. The terms of this treaty were communicated by Italy to the other Powers, and Great Britain was one of the first to recognise Italy's protectorate over Ethiopia as provided for by that instrument. By the Italo-British Protocols of 1891 and 1894 the frontiers between Ethiopia as an Italian Protectorate and various British possessions were established though not definitely delimited.

Early in 1890 Menelik attempted to subdue Mangasha, and, with the help of an Italian force, invaded Tigré. He was successful in so far that Mangasha submitted and acknowledged him as Negus; but Menelik had further planned to be crowned in Aksum, the ancient capital. The feeling, however, of the Tigreans against the Shoans was so strong that Menelik had to give up this intention, and hastily took his departure, leaving behind him two of his own followers, Ras Seyum, and another, to divide up Tigré between themselves and Mangasha. Trouble now arose between the Italians and Menelik about the frontiers of Tigré and Eritrea, and later about the more important question of the Treaty of Ucciali,

for Menelik entered into direct negotiations with other Powers instead of using Italy as intermediary. In February 1893 Menelik renounced the treaty, declaring that there had been a mistranslation in the text, and that the treaty had merely granted him permission to use the services of Italy, but did not oblige him to do so. He repaid the money which he had borrowed, but took no account of the help received from Italy which had been instrumental in placing him on the throne. Between the years 1891 and 1895 constant negotiations were carried on between Menelik and the Italians at Addis Abeba, the Emperor's new capital to which in 1890 he had removed himself from Entoto. Various treaties were concluded arranging frontier questions, and on the whole they were slightly in favour of Italy, in spite of a proclamation addressed by Menelik on the 10th April, 1891, to various European Powers in which he made most extravagant claims for the boundaries of his realm. During these years, also, the Italian position in Eritrea had been consolidated and considerable improvements made to the colony, which now covered about 50,000 square miles with 250,000 inhabitants. The town of Massawa had been immensely improved by the addition of new buildings, and had been in every way rendered more suitable for habitation by Europeans; a conduit had been constructed to bring drinking water from Monkullo, the lighting of the streets had been improved, and fresh roads had been made. There had also been great



progress in agriculture. Various criticisms have been made of the administration of the colony at this period on the grounds that it was hampered by its military character, but it must be remembered that the colonists lived in constant fear of invasion and could never relax their preparations for defence.

Negotiations were also entered into with Mangasha, who, in spite of Menelik's attempts to undermine his power, had remained the acknowledged ruler of Tigré. A solemn oath of friendship between the Italians and Mangasha with his principal chiefs was taken at a formal gathering near the River Mareb, where perhaps the most noteworthy event was the way in which the oath was turned by Ras Alula. With an honesty that stood out in contrast to the duplicity around him, the Ras boldly declared his hatred for Italy, although his loyalty to Mangasha forced him to take the oath of friendship. It was not long before the peace thus arranged was broken. All this time there had been continual Dervish raids, but in 1893 the Italians were faced with a Dervish invasion on a scale which necessitated counter action. General Arimondi inflicted a severe defeat on a Dervish force at Agordat, even though he was considerably outnumbered, and subsequently the Governor of Eritrea decided to follow up this victory by a raid on the Dervish stronghold of Kassala. In this decision he was influenced by the certainty that Menelik was preparing to attack the colony, and he realised that the Dervishes would

constitute a serious menace if they chose to attack from the north at the same time as the Italians were engaged with the Ethiopians. Accordingly the raid on Kassala was carried out and conducted with the utmost skill and rapidity, taking the Dervishes entirely by surprise. This operation achieved its object, for the activities of the Dervishes in this region were very much curtailed. The following year Menelik had by some means won over Mangasha and persuaded him to attack the Italians, while some of the chiefs under Italian rule had also been persuaded to revolt. As, however, Mangasha was not backed up by Menelik, he was defeated in three engagements which enabled the Italians to occupy almost the whole of Tigré, including Makale and Adowa, and the revolts were successfully quelled by Italy.

The Italian Government at home was elated by the news of the two successful campaigns against the Dervishes and the Tigreans, but they refused to strengthen the garrison of Eritrea, chiefly on the ground of economy, even though they knew that Menelik had been reorganising his army, and had obtained large supplies of arms and ammunition through the French ports of Obok and Jibuti. They insisted on relying on the friendship of certain chiefs who were alleged to be hostile to Menelik even though recent events had proved the folly of such a course. The greatly increased frontier was held only by scattered and inadequate garrisons. Mangasha now made

overtures of peace to Italy, but the Italians refused to treat with him until his army had been disbanded. Mangasha, however, was not prepared to disband his men; instead, he joined forces with Menelik when the latter advanced against the Italians. The first contact between the opposing forces was at Amba Alaji, where Major Toselli in command of 2,350 native troops and 4 guns was attacked by Menelik's advance force of 35,000 men led by Ras Makonnen, Ras Alula, and Mangasha. Toselli held out as long as he could, in the hope of being relieved, but when he felt that further resistance was impossible he tried to cut his way through to safety. It was too late, and his whole force was cut to pieces and destroyed. The Ethiopians then went on to attack General Arimondi's force near Makale, from which Arimondi withdrew, leaving the fort to be held by Major Galliano with 1,400 men and 4 guns. This fort was repeatedly attacked by the Ethiopians during January, one attack being led by Menelik himself, but they were beaten off with heavy losses. The supplies of the garrison having come to an end, Galliano decided to blow up the fort with himself and the remainder of the garrison; but the Italian Government had meanwhile been negotiating with Menelik, and the Ethiopians allowed him to withdraw his men with the honours of war. Reinforcements for the Eritrean troops now arrived from Italy, and Italians took up a position about ten miles south of Adigrat. Their only line of communications was the

mule road from Massawa which was liable to attack at any moment. General Baratieri, the Commander-in-Chief, at one time wished to withdraw his line to Adi Caje, but he received orders from his Government not to do this, together with complaints about the lack of results achieved by the army. Meanwhile Menelik was doing everything in his power to induce the Italians to attack, for he had only provisions for a few days. Owing to the fact that the Ethiopian troops then relied (and still do) on the surrounding country for their food supplies, they cannot remain in positions for more than a limited time, and their success depends on rapid action and a war of movement.

On the 28th February, 1896, General Baratieri decided to attack and advance towards Adowa with a force of 17,700 men, of whom 10,596 were white and the rest native troops. This force was opposed to Menelik's army of over 100,000. On the following day was fought the Battle of Adowa, in which the Italians were defeated with the loss of nearly half their forces. The casualties amounted approximately to 6,600 killed, of whom 4,600 were Italians and the rest native troops, with 500 Italian wounded. The Ethiopians lost about 7,000 killed and 10,000 wounded. The number of survivors who managed to return to their base was 4,598 Italians and 3,041 natives. The fate of the remainder could never be correctly ascertained. A large number were no doubt killed on their way back to the base, but only

1,760 prisoners ever returned to Italy—of these 30 were mutilated—and it can never be known how many died in Ethiopia of their ill-treatment, mutilation, and privations. Although the mutilation of Italian prisoners was forbidden by Menelik, it was carried out all the same, while 406 Askaris were turned loose after having their right hand and left foot cut off by his command, or at all events with his consent. After this defeat, General Baratieri was replaced by General Baldissera, who checked a further Ethiopian invasion of Eritrea, and successfully dealt with the Dervishes, who, as allies of the Ethiopians, were attacking Eritrea on the north. On the 26th October, 1896, Italy concluded a treaty at Addis Abeba giving up all claims to a Protectorate over Ethiopia, and restoring the frontier of Eritrea to the old line of Mareb-Belsa-Muni.

In the same year the French opened negotiations with Menelik, and concluded a treaty with him, the outstanding feature of which was the concession which they obtained for building the railway from Jibuti to Addis Abeba. Their success was largely due to the good offices of a Swiss engineer whom Menelik had appointed as his adviser. The following year brought further triumphs to the Negus, when missions were sent by Great Britain, Turkey, and Russia, and the submission of the Kaffa and Galla tribes was achieved. And now while Menelik held court at Addis Abeba, graciously receiving missions from the Great Powers and dispensing royal concessions to all and sundry, his

general, Ras Makonnen, was extending the frontiers of the Ethiopian Empire by a series of raids and conquests. This was being done with the assistance of the French, who wanted to extend their influence right across the continent from French Equatorial Africa, through the south of the Sudan, to the borders of Ethiopia, in order to render impossible the British plan for the Cape to Cairo Railway. While Ras Makonnen was conducting operations in the Ogaden, M. Léon Darragon, a French explorer, set out with an army of 15,000 men and marched through the Boran country to the north of Lake Rudolf. He submitted a map of his route to Menelik, who immediately claimed sovereignty over all the countries named in it. In January 1898, when Alexander Boulatowitch marched south with 30,000 men through the country of the Giniros, the Kings of Menu, the Dakas, Kand, Dami, Juffa, Shuor, Garo, and other neighbouring peoples did homage to him as the representative of the Negus. He went on to Lake Rudolf, and the peoples on both banks of the Omo acknowledged Menelik as their overlord. On his return he also submitted a map of his route, claiming to have extended the Empire as far south as 3° N. Lat., and Menelik at once proclaimed himself king of all the countries mentioned in it. During the same year Menelik sent his nephew, Tasama, to take the provinces of Kaderef, Kallabat, and Fazogli, and he had with him as officers a Frenchman, a Swiss, and a Russian. Two further expeditions were sent out

in the direction of the Blue Nile under Ras Gobana and Ras Makonnen respectively. Ras Tasama reached the White Nile in June, and the French intended him to reach Fashoda (Kobok) with his army so as to join forces with Colonel Marchand. Tasama, as soon as he arrived, hoisted two Ethiopian flags at Sobat, and demanded the submission of the Nuers and Shilluks. As Tasama had claimed the right bank of the White Nile for Ethiopia, the Frenchman, Fèvre, crossed the river and set up the French flag on a small island. Tasama, however, failed to join forces with Marchand, who was delayed, and the former got into difficulties because his men were accustomed to live in the mountains and died rapidly in the fever-infested swamps of the Nile Valley. He therefore returned to Addis Abeba, sending a messenger on ahead to announce to Menelik the success of the expedition, and also to carry the news of Kitchener's victory at Omdurman. In the course of time Marchand arrived at Fashoda, but he was forced to evacuate the place on the arrival of Kitchener. When Marchand returned to Addis Abeba he was received by Menelik with great honour, and to this day his flag is used as the standard of the French Minister's mounted bodyguard. But Menelik was impressed with the magnitude of the British victory, and had no intention of trying conclusions with Kitchener. He therefore set himself the task of getting his new acquisitions acknowledged by the European Powers, and to that end signed treaties

during the following years with Great Britain, France, and Italy, delimiting the frontiers as they are to-day, with the exception of the Eritrean-Ethiopian frontier in the region of the Danakil, and the entire frontiers of British and Italian Somalilands.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1898 Mangasha revolted for a second time, and Menelik was obliged to undertake a campaign to suppress him. Then one of Mangasha's vassals turned in revolt, but was easily overcome. Encouraged by this success, Mangasha turned against Ras Makonnen, the leader of the Negus's army, but was defeated and obliged once more to submit. He was replaced as Governor of Tigré by Makonnen, but revolts in the province continued for some time. This year was one of considerable difficulty, as in addition to, and possibly to some degree because of, his expeditions of conquest, there was severe famine in the country as well as cattle disease and an epidemic of small-pox. Although prayers were publicly offered for relief, Menelik had sufficient confidence in Western methods to order a general vaccination of his subjects. The rebellion of the "Mad Mullah" occurred in the following year, and he had penetrated as far as Harar before his followers were defeated at Jijiga. Acting in conjunction with the British,<sup>2</sup> Ras Makonnen was finally

<sup>1</sup> By 1891 Italy had established a Protectorate over the landing places of the Somaliland and Benadir coasts between Cape Guardafui and the Juba River.

<sup>2</sup> The British were assisted in this matter by Italian support.





THE EMPEROR MENELIK

able to overcome them and to restore order in the Ogaden.

Soon the question of the succession began to be raised, but though Menelik held a council in May 1902 to discuss the matter, the decisions, if any, were never made public. However, it was generally felt that Ras Makonnen was the most suitable man to succeed Menelik, although he had no hereditary claim to the crown. This conviction became stronger when, in July, Ras Makonnen was sent on an official visit to Paris and London, where he made a great impression. During his absence revolt broke out once more in Tigré under Gugsä, a grandson of King John, but it was suppressed in a short time by troops from Shoa. The death of Ras Makonnen in 1906 caused consternation among the Great Powers, and the death of Mangasha, shortly afterwards, aggravated the situation. Anxious about the state into which the country might return if rival claimants started to quarrel over the succession, Great Britain, France, and Italy arranged between themselves the terms of the Tripartite Treaty. This treaty recognised the sovereign independence of Ethiopia, but divided the country into three spheres of influence, which were defined as follows:

“(a) The interests of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile Basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in paragraph (b);

“(b) The interests of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the hinterland of her possessions and the territorial connection between them to the west of Addis Abeba;

“(c) The interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali Coast, the hinterland of this Protectorate and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Abeba.”

The Tripartite Agreement confirms, as far as the respective interests of Italy and Great Britain in Ethiopia are concerned, the already existing agreements, viz.:—the Anglo-Italian Protocols of the 24th March and 15th April, 1891, and of 5th May, 1894.

When the terms of this treaty were communicated to Menelik he showed great resentment but still declined to appoint his successor. His illness, however, became worse, and he at length appointed his grandson, Ledj Jasu, to succeed him, and arranged for his marriage to a grand-daughter of King John, Rumana, then a child of seven. Owing to a paralytic stroke Menelik was obliged to resign his power into the hands of Ras Tasama, whom he had appointed to be Regent for Ledj Jasu. Menelik's authority once relaxed, Germany and France competed with each other for influence in Ethiopia, and diplomatic missions were sent to countries which were afterwards allied with Germany in the Great War.

It has been rumoured that Menelik really died in 1911, but that, owing to the awe in which he was held, the Council feared that the news of his death would throw the country into confusion, and it was therefore not until 1913 that his death was announced. Although Menelik is regarded in Ethiopia as a national hero, he was in fact an ambitious and unscrupulous intriguer more concerned with raising his own prestige and that of Ethiopia in the eyes of foreign Powers than with the development and well-being of his country. Most of his reforms were chiefly carried out with the object of impressing foreigners. He also made the great mistake of trying to fulfil Theodore's dream of a wide-spread Empire, regardless of his capacity to govern. He was encouraged in his grandiose designs by his successful campaign against the Italians culminating with the Battle of Adowa. The effects of this victory have to this day created in the Ethiopians an almost unbelievable over-confidence in their capacity to overcome any foreign army, European or otherwise; and this self-confidence has led people to over-estimate their fighting qualities.

The conquests of Menelik have radically transformed the Ethiopian State. These conquests began when he was still King of Shoa, for in the year 1886 he established a protectorate over the Sultanate of Gimma, a centre of the coffee trade, though this state was only annexed by Ethiopia in 1934. Gimma, which was therefore not under the administration of Addis Abeba, is described

by Mr. C. F. Rey in his book *In the Country of the Blue Nile* as "being one of the most prosperous and best governed of the subject races." Later on Menelik acquired the Emirate of Harar which had achieved a higher level of civilisation than Ethiopia, as may be seen to-day in the Arab houses, ancient gate-ways, mosques, and other architecture of the town of Harar. But unfortunately the general dilapidation of the place does little credit to Christian rule. Thus, on his accession, Menelik had already extended the boundaries of Ethiopia a great distance farther south than they had ever been before. The expeditions of 1897 and 1898 added to the map of Ethiopia further vast territories inhabited by peoples of widely differing race, language, religion, and customs. One such conquered state was that of Kaffa, which had a complex state organisation of its own headed by a local dynasty which had reigned over the people since the fourteenth century. The political and commercial influence of this state was very strong in all the neighbouring countries, and Kaffa was considered the richest country in that part of Africa. Now it has been impoverished and depopulated by slave raiding and the *gabar* system. Ethiopia of the time of John might be regarded as a unified state, because within its boundaries the population, although of varied origins and speaking different languages, was in a certain sense amalgamated by centuries of common citizenship and by traditional subjection to one dynasty. But the Ethiopian Empire to-day, as handed down by

Menelik, is composed of a conglomeration of states differing vastly in almost every characteristic, and subjected and held together only by armed force.

At the same time, there are many material benefits which Ethiopia has derived from the ambitious policy of Menelik. While the telegraph was introduced into the country, electric light and the telephone made their first appearance in Addis Abeba. The Bank of Abyssinia was constituted as an appendage of the National Bank of Egypt, to be superseded in more recent times by the independent Bank of Ethiopia. In a country with practically no modern medical facilities, the opening of the French hospital at Harar was an event of considerable importance. But perhaps the event most beneficial to the country was the arrival of the first railway train from Jibuti at the railhead of Diredawa. Since then, the railway extension to Addis Abeba has provided a line of communication between the capital and the sea, which is ably maintained and efficiently administered by the *Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Franco-Ethiopien*. The opening of this railway marked an important stage in the development of Ethiopian relations with Europe.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ETHIOPIAN EMPRESS

THERE were many chiefs who did not approve of the appointment of Ledj Jasu as heir to the crown, for he was only a boy at the time, and it was obvious that for some years he would be a ruler only in name. At first the authority was in the hands of Tasama, the Regent, but when he was poisoned in 1911 a Council of Rases took his place. There was the usual scheming and intriguing for power, but plots, among them one by Ras Abate to seize Ledj Jasu, were all frustrated. Chief among those who were opposed to Ledj Jasu's succession was the Empress Taitu, the fourth wife of Menelik, a woman of forceful personality and much opposed to European influence. She supported the claims of Zauditu, the daughter of Menelik and widow of John's son, Sahla Selassié, who was more of her way of thinking. Ledj Jasu, however, was supported by the Abuna and was acknowledged Negus in 1913. Great surprise was now caused by the privacy which was observed over the funeral of Menelik, and this lends colour to the rumour that he had died before this date.

As soon as Ledj Jasu succeeded to the throne he began to show how much he had been influenced by the Moslem agents of the Sultan. At the beginning of

the Great War and the time immediately preceding it, Germany had been conducting a political campaign throughout the Moslem lands of the Near and Middle East with a view to rousing anti-British and anti-French feeling. There is no doubt that Ledj Jasu was taken in by representations made to him, and thought he saw in co-operation with Islam an opportunity for furthering his own ends and expelling Italian influence from Ethiopia. He therefore embraced the Moslem religion, though not openly at first, and frequented the mosques of Harar in preference to the Christian churches. He rejected his Christian wife and started a Moslem harem. He further caused grave offence by presenting the Turkish Consul with a flag of Ethiopia bearing a Moslem inscription, and making no protest when the Turkish Consul took this as a declaration that Ethiopia acknowledged the suzerainty of Turkey. He also had a family tree prepared tracing his descent from Mohammed through his father, Ras Michael, who had been a Moslem of the Wollo Galla tribe and on submission to Menelik had become a Christian. Ras Michael supported his son throughout the latter's reign, and when the European War broke out he prepared a plan for a military invasion of Eritrea, and assembled three army corps of about 150,000 men, while at the same time carrying on an intensive anti-Italian propaganda among the native populations of the Italian colonies. In this connection it is interesting to note that before the death of Menelik there had been a protest by the British,



French, and Italian Legations against the large quantities of arms and ammunition which were being imported into the country.

Throughout the period when the government was in the hands of Ledj Jasu, there was a series of military expeditions, and civil strife prevailed. Following the expedition of Ras Michael against Eritrea, an armed quarrel broke out in Tigré between two of the local chiefs, which only came to an end when one of them was murdered. In 1915 Ledj Jasu led a raid against the inoffensive tribe of Gimirra, the purpose of this expedition being to enable the Emperor to kill in battle a certain number of presumptive enemies, which was necessary, according to the local tradition, before he could adopt a "war name." After this he entered into negotiations with the "Mad Mullah," whom he supplied with rifles and ammunition. As was natural, this conduct of Ledj Jasu aroused consternation among the European diplomatic missions in Addis Abeba as well as in the minds of the Shoan chiefs. While the former protested, both officially and unofficially, and caused troops to be sent to their respective coastal possessions, the latter took resolute action to rid the country of an Emperor antagonistic to fundamental principles of the Ethiopian State. Having mobilised their private armies, the chiefs of Shoa marched to the Imperial Palace; and there, at the head of their troops and with guns in position, demanded the Abuna to relieve them of their oath of allegiance. They declared that they would never

submit to the religion of Islam, and refused to allow their country to be given up to foreigners through the evil intent of Ledj Jasu, who was dragging Ethiopia to ruin. They further declined to be ruled by an Emperor who had renounced his traditional faith, and emphasised their refusal at any time to change their religion. Accordingly, on the 27th September, 1916, the Abuna Matthew proclaimed to the whole country that Princess Zauditu, daughter of Menelik, was to be Empress of Ethiopia with Ras Tafari, the son of Ras Makonnen, as her heir and Regent. The same proclamation excommunicated Ledj Jasu, who was deposed for attempting to overthrow the National Church, of Ethiopia rather than for his close association with Islam or his attempts to aid the "Mad Mullah" and German activities in East Africa. Although Ledj Jasu disappeared after his deposition, he continued to cause trouble in the country until 1921, when he fell into the hands of Government troops and was handed over to the Ras Kassa for safe custody. In 1932 the prisoner succeeded in escaping, but was captured by Ras Tafari (now Emperor Hailé Selassié), and his fate remains a mystery. While some authorities insist that Ledj Jasu is dead, others maintain that he is confined in gold chains somewhere in the neighbourhood of Harar.<sup>1</sup>

Although Ledj Jasu was by no means a fool—for he had a quick brain and considerable intelligence—he fell an easy prey to the systematic propaganda of agents

<sup>1</sup> Ledj Jasu is now reported as having died.

working for or in the interests of Germany. Though there may have been something to recommend the course which he adopted, he ought to have realised the impossibility of trying to force the Moslem religion on a country steeped in the traditions of an ancient Christian Church. He has been referred to as dissolute, cowardly, and a dabauchee, but there seems little reason for attributing these characteristics to him much more than to other Ethiopians of his time. He was only sixteen years of age when he ascended the throne, and though he was undoubtedly pleasure-loving, his preparation for the responsibilities he was called upon to undertake was quite inadequate. While his predecessors had to bear hardship at an early age, and were used to war from their earliest youth, he was brought up in comparative security and luxury.

The first thing with which the new Empress had to cope was the counter-revolution of Ras Michael, who had gathered an army in the country of the Wollo Galla and seriously threatened the stability of the new regime. A battle was fought near Ankober, where the army of the Empress, led by Ras Tafari and Hapta Georgis, routed the enemy and captured their leader; but no attempt was made to follow up this victory. And now Ras Tafari embarked on the definite but difficult task of gradually establishing his own power so as to assure effectively his succession to the throne. To gain his object he had to contend not only with the Empress, who distrusted foreigners and was



THE EMPRESS ZAUDITU

opposed to change, but also with Hapta Georgis, an old warrior, who was still more reactionary in his views. The Regent, on the other hand, wished gradually to introduce Western ideas into Ethiopia. It was a well-known fact that there was a considerable divergence of view between the Regent and the Empress, and it is obvious that, in order to consolidate his authority, Ras Tafari was obliged to gain ground *vis-à-vis* the Crown, the power of which it was, for the moment, in his interest to weaken. Limitations were progressively and astutely imposed on the authority of the Empress, and Tafari profited greatly from his relationship with foreign diplomatic representatives. Having assured to himself the direction of foreign affairs, he had become the necessary channel of approach between Ethiopia and Western Powers, thus appearing in Europe as the true ruler of Ethiopia, and in Ethiopia using the prestige which he had so acquired.

This European orientation on the part of the Regent led to a step since regretted by the European Powers, although the personal impressions created by Ras Tafari on foreign diplomats during his subsequent visit to Europe seemed at the time to have justified their action. In 1923 the Regent formally applied for the admission of Ethiopia to the League of Nations. Although Great Britain and certain other countries were opposed to the immediate admission of Ethiopia, advocating that steps should first be taken to investigate the internal conditions of the country and her capacity

to carry out the obligations she would have to undertake as a member of the League, her application was supported by a majority including France and Italy. Italy's support of the application was partly owing to a desire to show confidence in the capacity for civil development of backward countries who applied for membership, and partly to a belief that under Tafari the foreign policy of Ethiopia had undergone a great change, and that in fulfilling the obligations of a member of the League the co-operation of Italy would be welcomed in the gradual development of the country. Among the obligations which Ethiopia accepted on admission to the League, partly through the terms of the Covenant and partly through her special undertakings, were—the progressive abolition of slavery in all its forms (including forced labour); the suppression of the slave trade; the provision and maintenance of humane and equitable conditions of labour for men, women, and children in their own territory; the securing of just treatment for the native inhabitants of territories under her control; the provision and maintenance of freedom of communications and transit; compliance with the Convention on the control of the traffic in arms and ammunition and the Protocol of St. Germain-en-Laye. Not only have none of these obligations been fulfilled, but everything points to the conclusion that they were undertaken with the full knowledge that they could not be carried out.

As early as 1924 Sir Robert Coryndon, the Governor

of Kenya, complained of the inability of the Ethiopian Government to control the migrations of population into the North of Kenya, both hostile raids and flights of fugitives from persecution at home, and he advised that the area involved should be put under a mandate. Indeed, it is inconceivable why Ethiopia should have been admitted as a member of the League of Nations without passing through a transitional period, when Iraq has had to work hard for her admission, and such countries as Syria are still excluded from membership. The result of this failure on the part of the League to insist on a probationary period has been to permit the continuance of a state of internal misgovernment and external aggression on the part of Ethiopia which has led to the present dispute.

The success which Tafari achieved in this respect naturally added to his prestige at home, but, in spite of an excellent reception given him on his European tour, he failed to extract concessions from the French with regard to the port of Jibuti, and on his return to Ethiopia found that a body of Ministers had been appointed to curtail his authority. He received a further cause for uneasiness when the terms were communicated to him of the notes which had been exchanged between the British and Italian Governments on the subject of the prospective work in the neighbourhood of Lake Tana and the proposed Italian railway across Ethiopia within the Italian zone of influence. Meanwhile the internal affairs of the country remained in a

state of confusion and the struggle for power still continued. In 1926-27 Ras Tafari secured a reduction in the strength of the army, and divided it into two separate commands, thus reducing the power of the armed forces of the Crown. In 1926, also, he lost one of the most formidable of his opponents with the death of the Fitarauri Hapta Georgis. During the following years he successfully quelled the rebellion of the Governor of Sidamo, a supporter of the Empress, and dealt swiftly with the "Palace Revolt," a mutiny against him on the part of the Imperial Guard. On the latter occasion the Empress resigned what remained of her power into the hands of Ras Tafari and permitted his coronation as Negus and Regent Plenipotentiary. Ras Gugsu Olie, however, who was the ex-husband of the Empress and overlord of the region round Lake Tana, openly declared himself hostile to the Regent, and a general rebellion was even predicted in some quarters. This prediction, however, was not fulfilled, but Ras Gugsu, who was a man of very limited mentality and bitterly anti-foreign, remained unconquered until 1930, when he was killed in what was practically a well-planned ambush.

In spite of dissatisfaction at home Ras Tafari was able successfully to negotiate a treaty of friendship and a road convention with Italy, which was to promote and develop trade between the two countries and to open up communications between Ethiopia and Eritrea. While Italy gave Ethiopia an outlet to the sea



in the form of a special free zone in the port of Assab, and undertook to construct a motor road from that port to the Ethiopian frontier, Ethiopia was to be responsible for the continuation of the road on the other side of the frontier as far as Dessié. This treaty, which was the result of a mission headed by H.R.H. the Duke of the Abruzzi in the previous year, was carried out on the Italian side, but the Ethiopian Government took no steps to build their part of the road, and finally issued a decree that no roads were to be built unless they connected with Addis Abeba.

After about two years of retirement the Empress Zauditu died on 2nd April, 1930, aged fifty-four, a few days after the death of her husband, Ras Gugsa. Although she was Empress for nearly fourteen years she had no opportunity of showing whether she had any capacity as a ruler. The powerful and unruly chiefs of her time were not likely to submit to the authority of a woman, and the whole of her reign was a struggle for power out of which Ras Tafari emerged successful. While the Empress was supported by the older chiefs who were opposed to foreign influence in the country and by the ultra-conservative Church, the Regent was surrounded by the more progressive elements who wanted to see Ethiopia modernised by the introduction of reforms from Europe. Unfortunately such reforms as were carried out were put completely out of perspective by foreigners, official and otherwise, who pursued a policy of flattery and empty compli-

ments. This, together with an intense racial pride, has caused many Ethiopians to believe that they are well on the way to civilisation, and that there is little more, if anything, to be done before they can be considered on a level with civilised nations. There is nothing that could be more detrimental to their prospects of real progress. Even the most insignificant steps towards a less barbarous system have been exaggerated out of proportion and made the occasion for public functions in which Ethiopian civilisation has been acclaimed. A similar trait is apparent in the attitude of the Ethiopians towards their membership of the League of Nations from which they hope to extract privileges without incurring any obligations. The plea that they are a backward African race can no longer be accepted as an excuse for their shortcomings, because from 1923 onwards they have been members of the League, and must therefore be judged by Geneva standards.

## CHAPTER V

### HAILÉ SELASSIÉ

THE Coronation of Ras Tafari as Hailé Selassié I took place on the 2nd November, 1930. This Coronation was the occasion of a great ceremony, and was attended by the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Genoa, cousin of the King of Italy, and important representatives from the European Powers. Although the miscellaneous functions which took place, imposing to some and amusing to others, attracted much attention at the time, the chief deduction is that the whole affair was regarded entirely out of proportion. At that time all the principal Rases were called into Addis Abeba, where they were kept throughout the following year, far from their own territories. It has been seen that, whereas the policy of Hailé Selassié as Regent had been to undermine the power of the Crown by getting rid of those chiefs who had been loyal to the Empress, it now became necessary for him as Emperor to increase the power of the Crown. With this object in view he continued to break down the power of the Rases and gradually to introduce his own supporters as governors of the various provinces. As the feudal system is strong in Ethiopia, the result of this policy was to weaken any local control; for he removed the traditional rulers whose authority the tribes were

accustomed to recognise, substituting for them men, often from other provinces, to whom the tribes had no obligations of loyalty. This policy naturally caused discontent and weakened the institutions of the old Ethiopia, without putting anything substantial in their place. Nor had Hailé Selassié himself the authority belonging by tradition to a descendant of the old Ethiopian dynasty—the so-called Solomonic line. Although in adopting this new policy he achieved some apparent successes, in reality he has not succeeded in re-establishing the efficiency of the sovereign power which he himself weakened by his action over a long series of years, from 1916 to 1930. Whereas in England this success has been hailed as real progress towards the reorganisation of the Empire, in Ethiopia it has more the appearance of a personal victory.

At the time of the Emperor's accession there were powerful chiefs still in possession of their own domains. Among these were Ras Kassa of Northern Shoa, and Ras Hailu of Gojjam. Ras Kassa held a winning card in the person of the dethroned Emperor, Ledj Jasu, whom he held in custody. The Negus, therefore, brought pressure to bear on Ras Kassa to surrender Ledj Jasu to him as the newly crowned Negus. Ras Kassa, however, tried to get round this on the pretext that he had sworn to the late Empress under pain of excommunication by the Ethiopian Church not to hand over Ledj Jasu to anyone, not even to the reigning Emperor. But the Negus succeeded a little later in

achieving his object without Ras Kassa being obliged to break his oath. Ledj Jasu, though strictly guarded, succeeded in escaping from the camp of Ras Kassa, and was swiftly recaptured, not by Ras Kassa, but by the troops of the Negus. At the same time, Ras Hailu was accused of complicity with Ledj Jasu and was removed from his governorship and banished to a remote district. The new Governor of Gojjam was a Shoan, a friend of the Emperor, who had no political following. This measure, which deeply wounded the susceptibilities of Gojjam, has been the cause of a whole series of revolts in that part of the country. Ras Seyum of Northern Tigré, who had been accused of complicity with Ledj Jasu in 1921 and deprived of his province for some years, was restored and his successor, Gabré Selassié, in his turn removed. But friction was fostered between Ras Seyum and his kinsman, Hailé Selassié Gugsu. These two chiefs were the direct descendants of John IV, and as such had a strong hereditary claim to the position of Negus Negast. Furthermore, the Fitarauri Berru, a survivor of the political tradition set up by Menelik, was removed from the province where he had established a hold, and finally accusations were brought against him which led to his exile. The discontent aroused in the country by these methods showed itself in frequent revolts, and has contributed to making the internal situation in Ethiopia yet more unstable than it was in the time of Menelik.

The Emperor, Hailé Selassié, is generally regarded as a man of sincerity, with a mentality not usually associated with an Eastern country whose traditions are those of violence, disruption, and lack of government. Surrounded as the Emperor is by conditions comparable with those of the early Middle Ages, it is surprising that he should be so advanced in his ideas. He is clever and calculating, and has a fair knowledge of European thought, chiefly due to the education which he received from a Roman Catholic missionary, the Bishop of Harar, and from his father, Ras Makonnen. He is a hard worker, often keeping his Ministers fully occupied from five or six in the morning until midnight. These Ministers, however, are not entrusted with any real responsibility, partly owing to their untrustworthiness, and partly because the Emperor is afraid of them becoming too powerful. The Emperor, therefore, keeps everything in his own hands down to the smallest details, and personally attends to comparative trifles which ought to be delegated to subordinates. An Ethiopian officer in need of new uniform, sword, accoutrements, etc., has to obtain the personal permission of the Emperor; and I was more than surprised when I found that the highest authority was necessary to obtain permission to photograph the lions at the Imperial Palace. The consequence of this state of affairs is that Ministers have acquired a habit of going to foreign legations for information about their own country. As in his audience-room hangs a portrait

of Abraham Lincoln, the Emperor evidently regards himself as a believer in the ideas which we in the West think to be right. Hailé Selassié has a certain moral ascendancy over most of the great Rases, which is remarkable in view of the striking personality of some of these chiefs. But, owing to the scarcity of communications in general and almost complete absence of roads, the outlying districts are virtually independent of the central authority. Although the Emperor realises the need for modernisation, his ideas are far in advance of those of the country over which he rules, and he can see the dangers of internal revolt and the formidable opposition of the Church, which offers a stubborn resistance to change of any kind. The primary object of all Ethiopian Emperors is to keep their throne, to which all other matters are subordinated. For example, the difference between his actions and his words in regard to the abolition of slavery, the impression that he created with Europeans, and the entry of Ethiopia into the League of Nations at a time designed to strengthen his own position, all point to the same conclusion. Further, he seems to have followed the example of Menelik, who courted the friendship of Italy until he had attained his object, and then adopted a hostile attitude after his succession to the throne. The Emperor is far better suited for the political manœuvring associated with the conduct of foreign affairs than with the practical control of the tribes under his rule. It is therefore largely on foreign policy

that he depends for his prestige at home, and he has been astute enough to deceive the British public by maintaining a strictly correct attitude ever since the beginning of the dispute with Italy. He has even gone so far as to use the League of Nations in order to bolster up his position in his own country. Owing to the natural courtesy and personal charm of the Ethiopians, many of them have been credited with a degree of culture that they do not possess and a minimum of ulterior motives for their actions. In this respect the Emperor is conspicuous as the most intelligent of a small body of men who have received a European education or who have had the experience of foreign travel.

In his desire to introduce modern ideas, one of the Emperor's first conceptions was to make a beginning in some kind of parliamentary system, though he realised that for a long time it could not be of any practical value. Therefore, in 1931 he started a model parliament; but, as he is careful to explain, this institution was intended chiefly as a school of instruction in the methods of government, and not as a legislative body. In point of fact it made no difference to the government of the country, for the Emperor continued to exercise complete control. As the members were chosen by the Emperor personally and were changed every few months, the limitations of this innovation are obvious. At the same time model provinces were started in Bali, Asba Tafari, Sailu, and Maggi, where



the administration was centralised under the Emperor. In these districts an attempt has been made to regularise the police and customs, to improve the system of posts and telegraphs, and to regulate the presence of Government troops. A beginning has also been made in the opening of schools and in the building of roads. As these undertakings are merely of an experimental nature, there is as yet very little to show. Among the Emperor's further efforts at modernisation have been the appointment of foreign advisers, although he usually takes special care to choose them from countries with no direct interests in Ethiopia. Among these experts are (or were) a Swiss for juridical questions, an American for financial matters, and a Swede for foreign affairs. It is also significant that a Belgian military mission was engaged for the general training of the army, and that the special instruction of officers was entrusted to Swedes. Although the Emperor finds these advisers essential, any kind of influence on the part of foreigners is resented in Ethiopia owing to a fear that it is a step towards depriving the country of its complete independence. Apart from the advisers already mentioned, there are various Powers with definite interests in the country, political as well as economic. British political interests are connected with the control of the waters of Lake Tana for the irrigation of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and with the safeguarding of imperial communications with the Far East passing through the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb.

Great Britain is therefore opposed to Ethiopia being a heavily armed country in a state of misgovernment and anarchy, or being in the possession of a strong and highly civilised European Power. France, on the other hand, is chiefly concerned with safeguarding the Jibuti-Addis Abeba Railway and in opposing any policy likely to set up competition. But she also has to take into consideration the preservation of Jibuti as an important link in the line of communications with her colonies in the Far East and elsewhere. As the interests of Italy are a dominating feature of the present work, they cannot be dealt with here. Although European nations have to a certain extent penetrated into Ethiopia on the economic side, possibly the most interesting prospect is the attitude of Japan, about which there has been a great deal of misunderstanding. Whereas there has been much talk about the Japanese having large cotton concessions in Ethiopia, the truth is that their community at present consists of approximately two men and one woman who carry on a trade in Japanese cotton goods in Addis Abeba! Yet the situation is not so farcical as it appears. Japanese policy is to extend political and commercial influence among the coloured races of Africa, with a view to gradually securing an increasing degree of control, and Japan has decided that commercial influence should be the forerunner of political moves. In the case of Ethiopia the Japanese Government began several years ago by sending a small mission of experts to travel through



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the country, and carefully to study the prospects for Japanese commerce. After a thorough and exhaustive investigation, this mission submitted to Tokyo a report on which the Government will act when they consider the time is appropriate. Meanwhile, the Japanese know exactly the value of Ethiopia from their commercial point of view, and are quietly distributing their cotton goods throughout the country as a preliminary to more intensive action. It is, therefore, at present on commercial grounds that Japan favours Ethiopia in her conflict with Italy, and it is significant that the Japanese Government have decided to open a Legation at Addis Abeba. As far as actual trade is concerned, foreign interests are chiefly in the hands of Greeks, Armenians, Levantines, Egyptians, Indians, and Arabs, who form a large bulk of the foreign communities, a fair proportion being British subjects.

The Ethiopian reaction to foreign influences in general, and European influence in particular, is of two kinds, conservative and progressive. As there are no political parties, these reactions must be regarded merely as tendencies which have never taken form in a definite programme of governmental action. The conservative chiefs oppose the adoption of Western ideas, preferring the old Ethiopian traditions which they contend were responsible for the conquests of Menelik. They regard any deviation from his methods as contrary to the interests of the country. They feel that the

methods used to extend the territories of Ethiopia are the right methods for preserving them. They even go to the extent of arguing that the conquered races are inferior and destined to obey the Amharas, the elect of God, led by a descendant of Solomon the son of David; and that any attempt at modernisation has no traditional basis. The progressives, on the other hand, consist chiefly of the "Young Ethiopians" who have received some education from Greek, Armenian, or Syrian immigrants or in the schools of the Protestant Missions, and want to see Ethiopia liberated from what they call "Mr. Tradition." They want the country to be westernised, not through a love for Europe, but as a means of strengthening the independence of Ethiopia and of preventing foreigners from carrying out the same work. Indeed, in their effort to persuade the masses to accept their new modernising movement, they have resorted to a policy of stimulating hatred of foreigners. But the Young Ethiopians should not be confused with the more intelligent men with experience of Europe, who hold important appointments under the Emperor and form a small intellectual hierarchy. Among these might be mentioned Dr. Martin, Ethiopian Minister in London; Dejasmatch Nasibu, Governor of Harar; Ato Tecla Hawariat, formerly Ethiopian delegate at Geneva, educated at the Gunnery School at St. Petersburg; and Georges Heroui, who was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, and now employed in the Foreign Ministry.

One of the most formidable obstacles to modernisation is the Church, whose relationship with the State is one of the most important features in the political structure of Ethiopia. The Church of Ethiopia, which is monophysite and dependent on the Coptic Patriarchate of Alexandria, is of a barbaric and strongly conservative nature. The Christian religion so expressed is upon the lowest possible plane; the Church upholds the feudal system of slavery, and its influence is very great. Magic plays a more or less prominent part, and the Church has inherited many of the beliefs of the old Syrian and Coptic religions. Some of its beliefs also bear a strong resemblance to the cult of ancient Egypt; Jewish and purely pagan rites are interspersed with its ritual; and the Bible, which is different from ours, is regarded as the first authority on almost all questions. The Church, with its Abuna and about 100,000 priests, most of whom are supremely ignorant, wields a strong political influence in the Empire as one of the important elements of national unity. It has made no attempt at proselytism nor does it desire to make converts; it has rather entered the conquered territories with the army as a representative of the new rulers. Thus all the new churches built in the recently conquered territories have been for the use of the Ethiopian soldiers; and, in order to enable them to live in the new countries, the priests have been granted the same treatment as the troops. Hence priests and soldiers live directly on the work of the subjected

families, who are forced to keep them. The attitude of the Church towards these people is in accord with that of the Amharas—that is, to extract from them the greatest possible economic utility, holding them to be an inferior race. As far as religion is concerned, the chief consequence of the formation of the Ethiopian Empire has been the spread of the Moslem faith in many regions in the west and south. Islam has made the best use of the prevalent opposition to the Ethiopian overlords as represented by their Church. Although this has been in part counteracted by the fact that some of the Galla tribes have adopted Christianity, such conversion has usually been a formality and hardly more than changing the names of their deities. The Young Ethiopians are fully conscious of the difficulties presented by this attitude on the part of the Church, and attribute it to the fact that the Abuna is a foreigner; but they seem unable to grasp that the cultural and moral decadence of the Church cannot be remedied by any one man. As has been the case in many other countries, education in Ethiopia has long been entirely in the hands of the priesthood and all literature has been the work of priests. As in Europe of the Middle Ages, learning has been entirely in their hands with priest and scribe as synonymous terms. The schools opened by the missions during the reign of Menelik, and the State schools recently founded in the capital, have encroached on the monopoly of the Church and are another reason for opposition to the modernising

tendency. The Emperor, Hailé Selassié, in a speech made some years ago, proposed, as a means of conciliation, that the pupils of the State schools (in which the instruction is given in foreign languages) should study at the same time the traditional subjects taught by the priests. The opposing conceptions, however, of tradition and modernism could not be reconciled. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether the Ethiopian State could, without endangering its very existence, attempt to build up a new civilisation of foreign extraction, disregarding the traditions of the Church which have for centuries formed the basis of such culture as exists in Ethiopia. The Emperor himself comes under the authority of the Church in so far as he has to conform to the long services and rigid fasts imposed by the Church as a part of their religion, and he uses the strict observation of these obligations as an apparent means of balancing his more radical reforms. But as regards the political power of the Church, he was able, when the Abuna Matthew died, to curtail in some measure the power of his successor. When the Nationalists were clamouring for the appointment of some Ethiopian Bishops to counterbalance in some way the Egyptian origin of the Abuna, the Emperor (then Regent) succeeded in finding a compromise. The Abuna was duly chosen from among the Egyptian monks according to custom and nominated by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria. He, however, had no longer any territorial rights and was paid a fixed



monthly emolument. At the same time, five Ethiopian Bishops were nominated, thereby ensuring that the new Abuna would not be able to exercise the political power which his predecessor had gained for himself in the country.

## CHAPTER VI

### ETHIOPIA TO-DAY

BEFORE describing the conditions at present prevailing in the country it is necessary to give a rough idea of Ethiopia's topographical divisions, climate, races, and religions. Ethiopia is divided into three distinct areas—the deserts, tropical areas, and the high plateaux. Practically all the frontier districts between Ethiopia on the one hand, and Eritrea, French, British, and Italian Somalilands on the other, consist of deserts sloping up towards the foothills of the mountains. Composed as they are chiefly of sand, stones, and umbrella-trees, their climate is one of intense heat and water is very scarce. The tropical areas, which lie in the direction of the Sudan and Kenya frontiers, are rich in tropical vegetation, damp, malarial, and generally unhealthy. The high plateaux, on the other hand, extend from Tigré in the north to a point about half-way between Addis Abeba and the Kenya frontier in the south, and from near the Sudan frontier in the east to Harar in the west. In these highlands in the dry weather the climate can be compared with that of South Africa, where it is warm by day and cold by night. In the rainy season it is usually dry in the morning with heavy rainfalls in the afternoon, and cold at night. The deserts are almost on sea-level, and the

tropical areas are low-lying, but the plateaux rise to an altitude of about 10,000 feet, the altitude of Addis Abeba being 8,000 feet and that of Harar 6,000 feet. The population of Ethiopia is estimated at anything between five and ten millions, but only rough estimates can be given as no census has ever been taken. The population is divided into two distinct divisions: (1) the ruling Amharas, who number less than three millions and occupy about one-third of the country, and (2) the conquered races, occupying about two-thirds of the Empire, and differing from the Amharas in almost every respect. The peoples of these territories have been subject races since they were subdued by Menelik, and they have since become much depopulated owing to slavery and other forms of servitude. Ethiopia cannot therefore be regarded as a unified African State. In religion the Amharas and some of the Galla tribes are Christian, while Islam covers the province of Harar, the Somali and Danakil tribes on the eastern frontiers, and some of the Gallas and smaller sultanates. There is also a small community in the north-east centre of Ethiopia, known as the Falashas, who are Jewish in religion but not in race. The remainder of the population are pagan, chiefly in the south and west, and there is little doubt that a considerable proportion of the so-called Christians and Moslems are bordering on paganism in their beliefs.

The Ethiopian capital is spread out, extending for long distances on all sides, the Legation quarter being



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about five miles from the centre of the town. Although Addis Abeba possesses a modern hotel, an up-to-date cinema, and luxurious taxis, the inhabitants live in round wattle huts with thatched roofs and no windows, or in ramshackle houses roofed with corrugated iron. Practically everything modern and up-to-date was constructed for the Coronation of the Emperor in 1930. Before that date there were no ministries, no roads fit for any traffic other than horses and mules, and no other means of locomotion. Even now the Foreign Ministry is housed in a dilapidated building which would be considered unfit for habitation in any civilised country. During the rains a heavy douche of water from the decrepit roof usually greets the arriving visitor. There are still practically no Government records and no registration of births, marriages, and deaths. While a few of the streets are now macadamised for motor traffic, the vast majority are rocky causeways of an ankle-spraining variety, with mud or dust according to the season of the year. Most of the streets have no names, and the houses no numbers; yet limousines glide along some thoroughfares and crash through others in the hope of reaching some unchartered destination. And all day there is a moving mass of humanity, mules, and donkeys in a rocky sea of mud or dust. Ethiopian notables mounted on mules pass along accompanied by their slaves and retainers, debtors go about chained to their creditors till the debt is discharged, and Europeans of many nations try to

apply modern commercial methods to a system of the Middle Ages. There is practically no sanitary system and the streets are invaded at night by scavenging hyenas; water has for the most part to be drawn from wells. In many cases courts of justice are held by the roadside and casual passers-by are called upon to act as judge and arbitrator in disputes. The prisons are indescribably filthy, with the death-rate amongst prisoners exceptionally high. Prisoners are in many cases chained together, brutally flogged and mutilated; and there is no differentiation between sex, age, or crime committed. Although a model prison has now been opened, what is really required is a complete reform of the whole system. Such hospitals, schools, and similar institutions as exist are mostly in the hands of foreigners. The capital is connected by telegraph and telephone with some of the principal centres, and the French railway connects Addis Abeba with Jibuti; otherwise the only means of communication—and that intermittent—is by mule caravan. Hence travelling in Ethiopia is a slow process, costly, and full of obstacles for foreigners. In Harar, the second most important town, there is no veneer of European civilisation; most of the buildings are flat-roofed Arab houses and the people live under primitive conditions. At the same time, such places as the Emperor's palace, the French hospital, the local hotel, and a few consulates are of modern design. Harar is connected by wireless with Addis Abeba, whence messages can be sent direct to

London. In Dire-dawa, the principal centre on the railway, there is a considerable proportion of foreign residents of French and Greek nationality, but within a few miles are districts inhabited by savage tribes. The road from here to Harar is one of the very few possible to motor traffic. In the north, where the mountainous country can be compared with the North-West Frontier of India, there are such centres as Adowa, Aksum, Makale, and Gondar, in all of which the conditions of life are little touched by European civilisation, but there are some historical remains of the ancient dynasties of Ethiopia.

A feudal system prevails throughout the land, government in the European sense of the term does not exist, and any method of preventing crime only exists in or near the capital. The village has its headman, and the district its sub-governor, an official whose remuneration depends on forced labour and the extent to which he can extract taxes from the inhabitants. The whole social and economic structure of the country is dependent upon slavery, which is supported and practised by the Church as well as by high Court and Government officials. The practice has continued since the earliest times, establishing a tradition which is deeply ingrained into the minds of the people—indeed, it is recorded that one Ras declared that the Ethiopians would sooner die than give up their slaves, and the Church regards slavery as an institution decreed by Jehovah. As regards slave-trading, Ethiopia is not

only a source of supply for the slave markets of Arabia, but forms a trade route connecting the sources of supply in the Sudan with the shores of the Red Sea. There are therefore three aspects of the matter—domestic slavery, slave-raiding, and slave-trading. About one-fifth of the population are slaves who are employed in practically every Ethiopian home, rich and poor alike. Female slaves are for the most part engaged in the grinding of cereals, gathering of wood, and drawing of water, while males are employed as servants to follow their masters with the caravans during their journeys, carry rifles, look after cattle, and transport food; rich landowners also employ them on their land. The Ethiopians as a whole consider menial tasks humiliating, and employ slaves to fetch and carry for them, and to create an impression of their own importance. Although in many cases domestic slaves are treated as members of the family, all slaves are not so fortunate as to have good masters, and in the outlying districts the opportunities for cruelty are unlimited. Many instances of such cruelty have been described by travellers in the country. Although slave-trading is forbidden by law, the practice is widespread and is likely to continue so long as slave-owning is tolerated. The Edicts against slave-trading have now made a certain amount of concealment necessary, and the transfer is often conducted under the pretext of a gift, payment being made through a series of intermediaries who may be servants or personal friends. If,



however, the transfer is discovered, it may result in the liberation of the slave. For example, at the Slavery Court in Addis Abeba there was a case in which a woman claimed from another a slave who had been stolen. Although the theft was admitted, the plaintiff lost her case on the grounds that the slave had been sold subsequent to the Emperor's Edict of 1924 forbidding the practice, and the slave was set free. Another form of trade is carried on in men and women who have recently been caught as slaves, and are sent off to a part of the country unknown to them as a precaution against escape. As such removals may involve a month's journey by mule, it is necessary to employ the services of professional slave-traders. These traders conduct small caravans of children which travel from north to south and *vice versa*, some of which pass dangerously near the capital. They also run caravans of captured negroes from the districts in the south-west and west, many of whom are intended for transport to the coast and for shipment to Arabia. It is estimated that at least a thousand slaves pass through Ethiopia every year, and cross the Red Sea on their way to the Arabian slave markets. Some of these caravans carry as many as fifty boys, and their state of emaciation is often pitiful. If they try to attract attention in the hope of release they are usually shot, and left to be eaten by the hyenas. Although the export of slaves to Arabia has diminished, this is only on account of the control exercised by the bordering European colonies, and

because the areas subject to Ethiopia, which formerly provided slaves, are now depopulated. Moreover, slave-owners in these regions take care that their own slaves are not carried off.

Slave-raiding is chiefly confined to the western lowlands of Ethiopia inhabited by negro or negroid tribes, who have no means of resisting the raiding parties. These bandits shoot up the villages at night, rapidly dispose of the older people, and carry off as slaves the younger natives of both sexes. As Government administration in these lowland districts is practically non-existent, and the illiterate natives are unable to read the Edicts posted in the villages, the traffic in slaves continues. Furthermore, as the Ethiopians strongly dislike the hot and unhealthy climate of these areas, they lose no time in collecting slaves for sale on their return journey to Addis Abeba. While raiding in some parts, such as the district of Kaffa, has diminished owing to the almost complete depopulation of the area, in other parts it is a common practice to pay taxes with boys and girls and to sell children in exchange for rifles. Another evil is that of kidnapping. Young boys are known to be caught even in Addis Abeba, and girls are often taken away when gathering fuel or drawing water. Although long terms of imprisonment and heavy fines are inflicted for this offence, it is well known that kidnapers can usually obtain their release by a distribution of money in the right quarters.

Yet another form of servitude, largely responsible for the agricultural backwardness of the country, is the *Gabar* System. Throughout the conquered territories of the Ethiopian Empire Amharic officials, priests, and soldiers, with their families, have been settled on the land at the expense of the inhabitants, who have been registered by the local Rases according to families. To each Amharic family one or more families of the vanquished tribes are assigned as *gabars*. The *gabar* family has to support the Amharic family, supplying them with land, building and maintaining their dwelling-huts, cultivating the fields, grazing the cattle, and performing any sort of labour required. No remuneration is paid for this work; it constitutes a perpetual serfdom resulting from the defeat inflicted by Menelik forty years ago. The *gabars* can never be liberated, even by payment, and they are not permitted to leave the land on which they serve. If they escape they are subjected to barbarous punishments, and their village has to hand over to the Amharas another family to replace the one which has run away. In consequence of this pernicious system, and of slavery in general, vast fertile areas in the conquered territories are lying waste. When a Ras leaves a conquered territory on transfer elsewhere, he carries off as many slaves as possible for use in his new headquarters, permitting his subordinates to do the same with their *gabars*. This constant abduction of human beings from the conquered territories is the cause of much cruelty, as many of the slaves

and *gabars* undergo great suffering owing to hunger, thirst, and brutal treatment during the long marches through the country. But from a national standpoint one of the most serious results of this system is the disinclination to cultivate the land more than is necessary for the immediate needs of daily life.

It is satisfactory, however, to observe that in the capital slavery is diminishing. As the possession of a motor-car is sufficient proof of a man's importance, there is less need for him to have a display of slaves. But when one considers the little that has been done towards abolishing slavery, one is forced to the conclusion that the Ethiopian Government have not only failed to carry out the obligations imposed by Article 23 of the League Covenant, but have also failed to carry out one of the essential undertakings under which the country was admitted to the League of Nations. Article 23 of the Covenant imposes upon States Members of the League the obligation of assuring and maintaining equitable and humane conditions of labour for men, women, and children in their own territory. As slavery is still the basis of the Ethiopian economic system, it is obvious that these provisions of the Covenant have been ignored. Ethiopia has also ignored the Convention on Forced Labour, to which Liberia has adhered; and it is perhaps appropriate at this point to quote what Mr. Anthony Eden had to say about Liberia in July 1934: "The Council will recall that, under Article 23(b) of the League Covenant,

the members of the League undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of the territories under their control. It is the view of His Majesty's Government—and I state it with the utmost earnestness—that Liberia has so grossly failed to observe these obligations attaching to her as a member of the League of Nations that the League would be quite entitled to consider her expulsion under paragraph 4 of Article 16."

Among the attempts made by the Emperor to conform with his obligations with regard to slavery were his Edicts of 1924, covering nearly all the transitional measures proposed by the Slavery Commission of the League of Nations. These were as follows: (1) children to be born free; (2) ill-treated slaves to be liberated; (3) slaves to possess civil rights; (4) owners to have no right of sale; (5) registration to be enforced; (6) right of self-redemption to be granted. While the first four measures were introduced in 1924, the remainder were replaced by a decree that, on the death of an owner, his slaves should be liberated. In Ethiopia, however, it is one thing to issue Edicts but quite another to ensure their execution. This was evidently appreciated by the newly appointed British adviser on slavery questions, who submitted his resignation as soon as he realised his impossible task. As long as the government of the country remains centuries behind the times, and there are no proper roads or other communications, there is no hope of

carrying out such measures; and the Ethiopian Government must have been fully aware of this when they undertook the obligation to abolish slavery. If the officials charged with the duty of enforcing these anti-slavery measures are themselves owners of slaves, and therefore privately sympathetic to the traffic, no progress can be made. The abolition of slavery in Ethiopia involves a complete social and economic reformation, and can only be carried out by external pressure and the exercise of European administration.

Closely connected with slavery are the conditions prevailing in the conquered territories and the policy adopted towards them by their Amharic overlords. The ruling race, generally known now as the Amharas, are composed of the peoples from the four provinces of Amhara, Shoa, Gojjam, and Tigré, who are closely akin to each other and speak dialects of the same origin. The Tigreans differ most in their language, which is derived from the now dead ecclesiastical Ge'ez. Both Amharic and Ge'ez are of Semitic origin. While the borders of the Amhara state have already been roughly outlined, it is perhaps as well here to define its precise historical, geographical, and racial frontiers. To the west, towards the Nile basin, and to the east, towards the country of the Danakil, the frontiers of the Amhara state coincide with the edge of the high plateau. To the south its borders are defined by the course of the Blue Nile to where it is joined by the Adabai, from the watershed between the

Blue Nile and the Awash, and by the course of the Awash to where this river loses itself in the Danakil lowlands. The Amharas, who are a mountain race, are definitely distinguished by race language and religion from the peoples inhabiting the other parts of Ethiopia, who have through the centuries been hostile to the Ethiopian State.

To the south and east of this original Amharic State lies a vast area inhabited by many different races of different origins and speaking widely differing languages. The most important of these races, at least from the point of view of numbers, are the Galla, who outnumber the Amharas. This race is subdivided into many sections, which are spread all over the country; among them are the Wollo, Shoan, Arussi, and Boran Galla. They were fierce fighters, and for four hundred years maintained their independence, even endangering the Amharic State. They are well known as horsemen, and some of them have risen to high positions by marriage or by other means. Although the different Galla tribes vary very much in their state of civilisation or otherwise, in religion, etc., they all speak dialects of the same Galla language, and one Galla can understand another from any part of the country. The other conquered races are partly composed of many states previously independent, such as the Emirate of Harar, the Kingdoms of Kaffa and Wallamo, and the Sultanate of Jimma. The remainder consist of negroes or negroid tribes of the south and west, usually known in Ethiopia

as "Shankallas." It has been estimated that at least seventy different languages are spoken in Ethiopia.

The policy of the central Government in the conquered territories has been to place Amharic governors over the local chiefs, gradually replacing these by Amharas, and to maintain the *gabar* system and slavery. The so-called modernising movement has had anything but a beneficial effect upon the conditions of these subject peoples. The policy of the Young Ethiopians, supported by the Emperor, has been persistently to carry out the replacement of the non-Amharic chiefs which is illustrated by the following examples. In the region of Nakamti, a Galla country conquered by Menelik forty years ago, the local chief was left in power but made to take an Ethiopian name and title. When he died in 1926, the then Regent, Ras Tafari, wished to appoint an Amhara to succeed him. The Regent, however, was opposed by the Empress, and the old chief's son was allowed to succeed his father. After the death of the Empress, strife was stirred up between the young chief and his followers, so that he found himself in the position of being despised by his own people as the tool of the Ethiopians, and also by the Ethiopians as being of inferior Galla origin. When the Kingdom of Kaffa was conquered, under Menelik in 1897, the King was taken captive to Shoa and an Ethiopian Ras appointed in his place. Under the modernist movement the chiefs of the districts in Kaffa were reduced in number and their power



curtailed. Later on it was announced that one chief only was to be recognised by the Ethiopians, and two years afterwards this chief was deposed, so that the whole district was left with no local representation whatever. In the case of Jimma also, although Menelik had only claimed a protectorate over this sultanate, complete control was established by carefully planned stages, and in 1934, on the death of the Sultan, the country was annexed. While the peoples of these territories have suffered very severe oppression owing to misgovernment, slave-raiding and the *gabar* system, many of these areas have been very much depopulated and country once fertile has been laid waste. Jimma, for instance, was described as having vast areas partly cultivated and partly grassland, dense forests of valuable trees and numerous water-courses. Coffee, wheat, maize, barley, cotton, indigo, and citrus fruits were grown. However, recent travellers in the district tell of regions, where formerly cultivated fields and villages stood, that are now covered with forest and scrub, and without a sign of human habitation. The extent to which these areas have been depopulated is shown by the fact that, prior to its conquest, the population of Kaffa was estimated at 1,500,000, but owing to the slave-trade and the removal of populations by the *gabar* system, it has been reduced to 20,000. In the same way, the slave-trade in men, women, and children has so reduced the population of Gimirra that it dropped in fifteen years from

100,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, and the same may be said of many other states.

While the modernising movement might have been expected to try and eliminate, or in any case to reduce or modify, the *gabar* system, the reverse has been the case, although certain futile measures have been introduced in order to make an impression at Geneva. Not only has this pernicious system been extended to other territories, but it has been intensified in areas depopulated by slavery, the burden becoming all the more oppressive on those who remain. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the subject races of Ethiopia are ready to welcome any newcomer who can liberate them from the heavy oppression to which they are at present subjected. Moreover, the oppression and depopulation of the conquered territories, continuing as a recognised system since Ethiopia became a member of the League, shows no desire to improve the moral and material conditions of the native inhabitants in accordance with Article 23 of the Covenant and the special obligations assumed by Ethiopia as conditional to her admission to the League of Nations.

## CHAPTER VII

### ETHIOPIA TO-DAY (*continued*)

As the railway from Jibuti climbs round the mountain-sides and over the plateaux, separating the parched and forbidding deserts of the low-lying country from the cool, fresh climate of the capital, the Ethiopian problem gradually unfolds itself. With cultivable soil, some of great fertility, situated at heights varying from 9,000 feet to sea-level, there is scope for agriculture of great variety. The country is well watered with a season of heavy rains. There are few cereals, vegetables, or fruit, or even flowers, which cannot be grown somewhere in the country, while the soil is one of the richest in the world. Almost every grain does well, with two to three crops a year, and cattle and other stock can be raised under most favourable conditions. Yet the methods of farming have not changed since the earliest times, and practically nothing has been done to exploit the natural resources of the country. The Emperor told me that progress was being retarded by the Italo-Ethiopian dispute. Be that as it may, the chief reason for stagnation is the feudal system by which money is extorted from the peasants by provincial governors, Government officials, and soldiers and the *gabar* system is generally applied to vast areas of territory. As the people submitted to this

form of extortion have to supply their master's requirements to the utmost limit of their resources, the cultivators of the soil have no reason to grow more than they need to meet their actual requirements. Indeed, it is contrary to their interests to show any signs of prosperity. Hence a large proportion of the country's produce that reaches foreign markets is simply what is left over from the daily lives of the people. When sheep are killed for food, the skins are kept until there are sufficient to send to the local market, and the same principle applies to other products. As the country is self-supporting as far as the Ethiopians are concerned, there is no desire for any form of improvement; and although the Emperor has for several years made a superficial attempt to introduce modern conditions of agriculture, he has preferred merely to scratch the surface through fear of formidable opposition from patriarchal and conservative elements of the country. In any case, it is quite impossible to achieve anything worth doing without foreign capital, and the Ethiopians pride themselves in refusing anything in the form of foreign loans.

The Ethiopians possess a fertile country rich in raw materials, which they cannot develop themselves; and they have steadfastly refused to allow any European Power to develop it for them. Although the Emperor makes a show of carrying out a campaign of progress, foreigners are not allowed to own land or even to

lease it for longer than thirty years. The Ethiopians cannot, or do not want to, see the benefits that would be derived from European help. And, what is more, they refuse to recognise the fact that, by shutting their doors against an over-populated Europe craving for expansion and sources of raw materials, they are practically committing national suicide. The country most in need of an outlet is Italy, and it is therefore with the Italians that the inevitable clash has taken place. Judging from what I have seen of Italian development and colonisation in Libya under the most difficult conditions, there is no doubt in my mind that the Italians could transform Ethiopia in course of time into a wealthy and prosperous country. Let us therefore consider the special inducements which Ethiopia has to offer for Italian expansion. First, the climate is suitable for the settlement of a European population under healthy conditions, and it is estimated—this is not an Italian estimate—that at least one million Italians could be settled on the land in ten years. Not only could they support themselves in all the necessities of life, but they could export to Italy and thereby relieve the economic position of the mother country. Secondly, Italy could be supplied with sufficient grain and meat from Ethiopia to enable the Italians to discontinue their imports of these commodities from foreign countries. As Italy is at present still dependent in this respect on foreign imports, this question is to her one of great importance.

It is estimated that the agricultural areas of Ethiopia, cultivated under modern European conditions, would in ten years make Italy self-supporting in these commodities besides producing a surplus for export purposes. This and the foregoing estimate are those of an impartial observer with considerable experience of Ethiopia, who is in a position to compare agricultural conditions with those in other parts of the world. It is contended in some quarters that with native labour a million Italian immigrants is a fantastic figure. The reply, however, is that if the Italians can work side by side with native labour in Libya, they can do so equally well in Ethiopia. A position such as has been here considered would make the economic relationship of Ethiopia and Italy somewhat similar to that already existing between Algeria and France, and would provide a new market for Italian industries, thereby creating an obstacle to Japanese commercial activity.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that an over-populated Italy, which is far from self-supporting, should wish to penetrate into territories of great fertility which the Ethiopians themselves can only utilise to a small extent. But, although the grain-growing and stock-raising aspects of the country are those which appeal most strongly to Italy, and are undoubtedly Ethiopia's greatest potential sources of wealth, there are other aspects to be taken into consideration. The coffee grown in the Harar district,

situated between the high plateaux and the desert bordering on Somaliland, and conveniently close to the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway, is a valuable commodity of export. With improved methods of cultivation and marketing, the Italians could reasonably expect to derive income from this source. Coffee is also grown in the provinces of Jimma and Kaffa, the latter of which gives the name to the plant in question. There are also districts in which the cultivation of cotton can be carried out. In the same province of Harar cotton-growing has already been successfully carried out by a Franco-Belgian concession, using American plants previously acclimatised for some time in the Congo; and cotton is also grown in the province of Gojjam, in the valley of the Blue Nile. On the other hand, the mineral wealth of Ethiopia has been in many cases exaggerated, and tall stories have been told of the quantities of gold, platinum, and precious stones simply waiting to be found, picked up, and removed. Although minerals do exist, reports of experts who have made expeditions in search of them are disappointing. Gold has been found in small quantities, but apart from such gold deposits as are in the hands of the Emperor, it has been considered that the prospects do not justify the cost of exploitation. Platinum, on the other hand, which has hitherto been worked by an Italian concession, can be produced to the extent of about £50,000 per annum, and there is little doubt that the output could be increased.

Diamonds are about the size of pin-heads and very scarce. It is, therefore, quite clear that Ethiopia is far from being an "Aladdin's Cave." It is impossible to estimate the real mineral wealth of Ethiopia, and whether petroleum may be found there or not, as opinions differ on this point. But attempts to investigate are usually beset with every conceivable difficulty. For instance a concession will be given to investigate, but not to dig, and when permission to dig has been obtained the concessionaire will be refused leave to remove anything for testing purposes. In many cases, after months of delay, the concessionaires have decided in disgust to cut their losses. During an audience at the New Palace at Addis Abeba the Emperor told me that he had no objection in principle to European influence in Ethiopia, provided that it was purely economic and unaccompanied by any form of political inspiration or control. But while the Emperor uses these words, in practice everything possible is done to exclude foreigners from participating in the development of the country.

In reviewing the situation it is difficult not to sympathise to some extent with the Ethiopians in the plight in which they now find themselves. Yet, when it is realised that their continuous refusal to change with the times has only been postponing the evil day, their position appears in quite another light. The Ethiopians, as they are to-day, are not only an obstruction to civilisation in Africa, but a serious obstacle



to the forward march of European culture. Although the Ethiopian case may in a narrow sense be a good one, exciting widespread sympathy in England, the civilised world surely upholds the principle that the honest and urgent needs of a highly civilised country like Italy should take precedence to the immediate desires of a country that obstinately refuses to break with the feudal and corrupt systems of centuries ago. If Italy is denied her right to expand as a healthy and progressive nation, this will establish an unhealthy principle of obstructing the natural growth and expansion of nations well qualified to carry European civilisation to the more remote parts of the earth. It is difficult to conceive of anything more injurious to the future of the world in general, and of the more backward nations in particular. What Ethiopia might lose in temporary prestige she would gain many times over in moral and material benefit, through the instruction and assistance of a European Power and the development of her own natural resources.

It has long been the custom in Ethiopia for every man of any standing to carry firearms, with the result that raiding into neighbouring territories by frontier tribes has been a common form of aggression, ignored, if not encouraged, by the central Government. In many cases these raids are carried out for the purpose of obtaining slaves, while in others the motive seems to have been plunder. This applies to the frontiers of Kenya and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, as well as to

the Italian colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea. But if frontier raids are a continual nuisance to Kenya and the Sudan, they constitute a real danger to the Italian colonies, where raiding has assumed a much more serious nature. The frontiers of Kenya and the Sudan, with vast hinterlands, can be reinforced, if necessary, from Nairobi or Khartoum. The Italian colonies, on the other hand, are mere strips of territory with their backs to the sea, and all reinforcements have to come from Italy. It is also well to remember that this sea-board formed at one time part of Ethiopia. British Somaliland and French Somaliland have been less affected by Ethiopian aggression, as they have little to offer, have no European colonists, and are held by Powers with whom the Ethiopians do not wish to quarrel. Although Italy has been accused of being an aggressor and judgment has been given against her at Geneva, this other side of the question—not yet sufficiently appreciated—points to aggression on the part of Ethiopia over a long period of years. Whenever Italy has been involved in difficulties in other directions the opportunity has been seized to threaten by armed invasions the safety of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland.

During the Italo-Turkish War in Libya a strong publicity campaign against Italy was carried on in Addis Abeba, calling attention to the opportunity of attacking Eritrea while Italy was engaged elsewhere, culminating in an advance on Eritrea by the Governor

of Gondar at the head of an armed force of 50,000 men. As this threatened attack was encouraged by the central Government under Ledj Jasu, Italian troops had to be withdrawn from Libya for the defence of the colony. Later, during the Great War, Eritrea was again threatened with armed invasion, and throughout European hostilities a large body of troops had to be kept there for protective purposes. Then in 1925-6, while police operations were being carried out in Italian Somaliland, the Ethiopian Government gave hospitality to the rebels, providing them with arms and ammunition, while giving pensions and grants of land to their leaders. On another occasion, in 1925, thirty armed Ethiopians crossed the Italian frontier near Dolo, carrying off cattle belonging to Italian subjects, but the raiders were driven off and the cattle recovered. On the following day, however, the Ethiopians reappeared on the frontier, and were met by a party of Italian soldiers with whom they entered into discussion. While the discussion was in progress, the raiders opened fire killing the Italian in charge. As result of this incident, a protest was made by the Italian Minister in Addis Abeba, who received assurances from Hailé Selassié, then Regent, that strict control would henceforth be exercised over the frontier tribes. In spite of these assurances the raids continued with unabated frequency right up to the outbreak of actual hostilities. For example, in 1931, 10,000 men armed with rifles and machine-guns

threatened the Italian frontier in the Ogaden, and in 1934 the plunder carried off in one single raid amounted to 3,656 oxen, 546 goats, 17 camels, and 4 donkeys. From the time of the now familiar Wal-Wal incident up to the end of May 1935, ten raids took place into Italian territory, in some of which machine-guns were used. A typical instance of these raids was one into the Assab zone in May 1935, when 300 armed Ethiopians took part; 4 men and 10 women (Italian subjects) were killed, while 6 men and 6 women were wounded, 5 children castrated, and 4 men and 3 women carried off as slaves. During the same period there were nine attacks on Italian legation and consular staffs. The foregoing are only a few examples chosen haphazard from a long list of acts of aggression carried out by the Ethiopians during a long period of years. In all cases it is either a question of premeditated action on the part of the Ethiopian Government, or else the result of their utter inability to control the large area over which they now claim authority. Although British and French Somalilands have suffered much less than the Italian colonies, the position in French Somaliland became sufficiently serious in 1933 to justify the despatch of reinforcements and aeroplanes to Jibuti, and in spite of these precautions a raid in 1935 resulted in the murder of a French Commissioner.

There is a similar story to be told of Ethiopia's relations with Kenya and the Sudan. The raids into

these territories from 1913 to 1927 numbered 139, although it is probable that some of the smaller raids were not reported; and raiding still continues. These raids fall into four distinct classes: (1) Incidents arising out of the unsettled condition of the Ethiopian district concerned, and warfare between local feudatory chiefs; (2) tax-collecting raids in districts claimed by the local Ethiopian authorities to be within Ethiopian territory; (3) poaching expeditions; (4) raids for slave-trading purposes. The following examples are typical of these activities on the frontiers of the Sudan. In March 1920, a body of 700 Ethiopians burnt a village, captured the entire population, and carried off a large quantity of live-stock. Again, in 1923, 360 armed men led by officers of an Ethiopian chief raided a Sudanese village, nominally to collect taxes, inflicting casualties and carrying off women and children as slaves. In Kenya similar conditions prevail. Although details of the later raids are not at hand, the following are three typical examples of what has been going on ever since the War. In April 1919 a fight took place with cattle raiders from across the Ethiopian frontier in which 57 Rendile were killed and their stock captured. In November 1923 three men were killed and many wounded in a combat with a band of Ethiopians led by Kanyazmatch Laku, who had been on a visit to the Kenya post of Kakuma and perpetrated this outrage on his return journey; on this occasion the plunder amounted to 300 head of cattle, 70 donkeys, and

numerous sheep and goats. Again, in September 1925, 29 men were killed and 5 wounded in an encounter with Ethiopians from the neighbourhood of Lake Rudolf, who crossed the frontier and carried off 4,000 to 5,000 camels.

The foregoing facts make it increasingly obvious that an armed and warlike Ethiopia can but be a source of danger to her neighbours on all sides. Taking into consideration the lack of government, the feudal system, slavery, and the cruel oppression and depopulation of the conquered territories, it will be seen that, whatever happens, things cannot be allowed to continue as they are at present. Ethiopia cannot remain a drag on African progress, even as a member of the League of Nations. The people are backward, stubborn, and proud; some of their worst traditions and customs are supported by a delapidated form of Christianity. No kind of control or guidance by the League of Nations, or any foreign Power, is possible without previous conquest, irrespective of treaties or agreements made; for the Ethiopians merely ignore obligations that are distasteful to them, and their opposition to European control could be expected to take the form of murder and violence to such administrators as were entrusted with the task. It is as well here to remember that the success of the British mandates in Iraq and Palestine has arisen from the effective conquest of these regions during the War.

As the Ethiopians are a warlike race accustomed to

fighting among themselves, the profession of arms comes more or less naturally to them, although they have had little experience in modern methods. The fighting forces consist of the Regular Army, the Government Army, and the private armies of the important chiefs. The Regulars, dressed in khaki uniform, are armed with modern Mauser rifles, machine-guns, and automatic rifles. Any knowledge of modern military methods which they possess has been taught them by a Belgian military mission, while special instruction for officers has been given at a special school for the purpose in the neighbourhood of Addis Abeba, under the supervision of Swedish officers. Although the number of officers who have received this training are limited, those who have attended the course have shown quite a remarkable aptitude for picking up modern methods. The Government Army, dressed in white *shammas*, consists of natives trained to some extent in the use of arms, who give military service in return for the holding of land. These men carry any arms which they happen to possess and a miscellaneous collection of ammunition. The most efficient modern weapons are mixed up with arms that saw service in the Franco-Prussian, Russo-Japanese, and Boer Wars, and in many cases the ammunition seems to bear no relationship to the owner's rifle. The dress, arms, and equipment of the private armies differ little from that of the Government Army, spears and knives being used in many cases to

supplement firearms. The Ethiopians are also in possession of a few field-guns and anti-aircraft-guns, and have a few aeroplanes of obsolete design which they use for communication purposes. As, however, practically every man of any position carries arms, and there is almost no system of administrative control, there is no means of knowing either how many men or how many rifles are available. The Ethiopians can march great distances on the minimum of food, and their transport problem is a small matter compared with that of a European army. Owing, however, to the fact that they are largely dependent on local supplies it is essential for them to conduct a war of movement. Indeed, their rapidity of action is such that they can carry out surprise tactics and enveloping movements in a most effective manner. But their tactical mobility is somewhat counterbalanced by their strategical immobility. Owing to the lack of railways, roads, and other internal communications, movements of troops from one theatre of operations to another is a slow process. In modern military technique, as well as in organisation and administration, the Ethiopian army is backward, but this is to some extent made up for by the fighting qualities of the men and the nature of the country in which they have to fight. At the same time, it is probable that their fighting qualities have been exaggerated owing to victories which have been due chiefly to superiority of numbers. One of the most important factors, however, in favour of the Ethiopians



is the unsuitability of their country for modern methods of warfare. Aviation loses much of its power when aircraft have to fly at an altitude of at least 12,000 feet in the mountain districts, where there are very few landing grounds. Tanks have little effect against a mobile and harassing enemy; and artillery power is considerably reduced by lack of adequate targets.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ITALY AND ETHIOPIA

IN view of the continuous aggressive attitude already described, and the fact that the Ethiopians have been arming themselves at an ever-increasing rate, the Italian Government have found it necessary to take steps to protect their East African colonies, and to undertake the task of forcing civilisation upon a country for which a radical reformation is long overdue. There is, however, another reason why Italy has embarked on this bold enterprise. Most other Great Powers have valuable colonial possessions suitable for European settlement. Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Holland have all the colonies they want; but Italy, who was the last to achieve national unity, was late in the general scramble for African possessions, and has hitherto had to content herself with what was left over as circumstances permitted. While Libya can only be colonised in the coastal oases, the value of Eritrea is confined to a comparatively small district, and Italian Somaliland has little to offer beyond the possibilities of development in Jubaland. With the exception of a few localities, the Italian colonies consist of sand and palm trees, and in many cases only sand. Yet Italy urgently needs fertile territory for the settlement of her surplus

population and as a source of raw materials and food-stuffs. Although she was promised something substantial of this kind in return for her entry into the Great War on the side of the Allies, she has as yet received nothing but miserable concessions scarcely worth the cost of administration. Once it is realised that Italy's attempt to make use of the last remaining African territory suitable for European colonisation is compatible with the future interests of the peoples of Ethiopia, as well as with the establishment of public security in the whole Ethiopian zone, it will appear in an aspect different from that generally accepted in England. The task is one which would in any case have to be undertaken sooner or later by one or other of the Great Powers.

Meanwhile the gravity of the frontier situation between Ethiopia and the Italian colonies came to a head with the Wal-Wal incident on the 5th December, 1934, when definite hostilities took place. There are two questions to be settled with regard to this incident—naming the aggressor, and deciding whether Wal-Wal was in Italian or Ethiopian territory. While it is exceedingly difficult in desert regions inhabited by nomadic tribes to define clearly any frontier, and previous treaty arrangements are of a completely nebulous nature—Menelik's line was purely arbitrary and unconsidered—there is little doubt that these wells in question had been for some time under the control of tribes under Italian protection. It is also

significant that the Italians had been in possession of Wal-Wal for some years and had fortified the place without protest from the Ethiopians. An acceptable solution of who was the aggressor will probably never be reached, but I was informed by an unprejudiced native authority, who was present, that the incident had been engineered by one of the local Ethiopian chiefs not under the Emperor's control. In any case, this incident was followed by other attacks, both in Italian Somaliland and in Eritrea, by regular and irregular Ethiopian bands; and during this time warlike preparations were being made in Ethiopia, with purchases of war material from Europe as well as an almost threatening attitude on the part of high Ethiopian officials. As there were only 5,000 troops in Eritrea and 4,000 in Italian Somaliland, steps had to be taken to reinforce these garrisons. Moreover, time was an important factor in view of the fact that the former colony is 2,500 miles from Naples, and Somaliland almost twice as far. These considerations are usually lost sight of in judging the action which Italy has taken.

At this point it is necessary to draw attention to the agreement between Italy and France reached in January 1935, by which the two countries showed a united front in Europe and settled their differences in Africa. As far as the Ethiopian zone is concerned, Italy received 2,500 shares in the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway besides a piece of territory at the north of

French Somaliland and the island of Dumeira. While these concessions seem in themselves almost trivial, the full import of the agreement has an influence on the whole situation little appreciated by the general public. After the matter had been brought before the League various proposals for a settlement began to be put forward. Amongst these was the Zeila offer, which was abortive. In the first place there seems to be no adequate reason for Ethiopia to have an access to the sea, which is not as yet justified by her export trade. Secondly, the recognised outlet for Ethiopian trade is via the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway, an enterprise which entailed heavy expenditure and the overcoming of great difficulties, and has been most efficiently carried out and maintained. In any case it is unlikely that France would tolerate such interference. Thirdly, the Italians have already offered Ethiopia a special free zone at Assab. Fourthly, it would merely add another channel for the slave-trade and gun-running. More important, however, were the peace proposals put forward in August 1935, as the result of a meeting in Paris of the signatories of the 1906 Tripartite Agreement. These proposals suggested what practically amounted to an international mandate over Ethiopia, and included the organisation of a police and gendarmerie for the suppression of slavery, the regulation of arms, and the safeguarding of foreigners; economic development with the participation of foreigners and foreign capital; and the reorgani-

sation of finance and justice. Advisers were to be chosen by the League subject to the power of veto by the Emperor. On these lines a Charter of Assistance was to be drawn up to which the consent of the Emperor would be necessary; and Great Britain and France declared in a Protocol that they were prepared to recognise the special interests of Italy in the development of Ethiopia. Ethiopia expressed herself as willing to negotiate on these terms, but stressed that no scheme of assistance should be put into effect before it had been freely discussed by Ethiopia and assented to by the Ethiopian Government. As the Emperor had the power to veto all Italian advisers, and as Italy had learnt by experience the value of Ethiopian agreements, they rejected the proposals. A careful study of the Ethiopian reply in the light of previous treaties makes it abundantly clear that Ethiopia had seen many possibilities for delay and obstruction. It is perhaps as well here to repeat that it would be impossible to establish any form of European control in Ethiopia until the possibility of resistance has been eliminated by force of arms.

Italy, therefore, decided to go ahead, realising that no satisfaction could be obtained by relegating a case calling for immediate action to the slow-moving machinery of the League, dominated as it is by those who have all they want and are opposed to any change. It also seemed to Italy that the Ethiopian question must be settled without delay by the only remaining

method that seemed any longer practicable—resort to arms—while there was still little prospect of actual trouble in Europe, calling for Italy to take her place in the united British–French–Italian front reached at Stresa. Italy felt that delay might later on expose her to stabbing in the back in Africa at a time when all her resources were most needed in Europe. When Italy is accused of violating the Covenant of the League of Nations, it should not be forgotten that Ethiopia has not only failed to carry out her obligations to the League in respect of slavery, but has also made no attempt to fulfil the terms of her treaties with Italy concerning frontier questions, road construction, administrative and economic co-operation, and the status of foreigners in the country. Further, she has violated her agreement with Great Britain, France, and Italy regarding the import and use of arms and ammunition. Hence, if Italy has actually violated the Covenant, it is evident that she has done so under very great provocation and in circumstances demanding special consideration. The unwise attitude of the League can, in my opinion, only be attributed to ignorance of the facts and conditions existing in a little-known country which no practical attempt has been made to investigate. Indeed, much mischief would have been avoided if the League had realised the true facts of the case instead of merely insisting on the restatement of abstract and theoretical principles. Strongly supported by the British Government, the League's attitude

towards Italy is of a highly discriminating character in view of the attitude previously adopted towards other members in similar circumstances. The League has failed to exert itself in the timely removal of the causes of war, which was one of the primary objects for which it was created. The result is that hostilities have broken out and now the League is enforcing in a special case preventive measures provided by the Covenant as a guide for general use. Although sanctions may be a useful means of stopping war under conditions in Europe, it is quite another matter when a civilised European Power is engaged in conflict with a coloured race in Africa, which has proved itself to be unqualified for League membership; and when the expansion of the former could be the complement of the other's need for European development and guidance. There is a strong tendency, especially in Great Britain, to regard the Covenant as a gospel of peace the interpretation of which must be rigidly applied, even in cases where it clearly appears to be inapplicable. In any case the voting declaring Italy to be the aggressor was carried out in the most irregular principle of silence meaning consent.

Now that Italy has fully launched her East African campaign, in which she has already invested great sums of money and is making important progress, it is futile to imagine that she will be forced into withdrawing by any form of sanctions insufficiently strong to lead to a general war in Europe. As Mr. Baldwin



said on the 13th May, 1934, "There is no such thing as a sanction that will work and does not mean war." Even weak sanctions cause irritation and increase the difficulties of reaching a settlement. Meanwhile, Italy is resolute, and Signor Mussolini intends at all costs to obtain adequate satisfaction for an undertaking on which he has staked the man-power and resources of his country as well as his own power and prestige. On the other hand, the defeat or peaceful humiliation of Italy would lead to the gravest dangers to the British Empire wherever native races come under British rule; and the same applies to other European nations with colonies in Africa and Asia as well as to the United States of America. To one who has recently returned from Ethiopia and the surrounding countries, the attitude of the League of Nations in general, and the British Government in particular, is incomprehensible. Indeed, the ignorance and prejudice of large sections of the British public is scarcely in keeping with the love of justice and fair dealing inherent in the British people, whose idealistic side seems to have completely obscured their sense of reality. While the League and Ethiopian sides of the question are heard on all sides, the Italian case is either unknown or purposely shelved. Many ardent supporters of League policy even go so far as to say that there is only one side to be considered, and do not want to hear anything further. This attitude is probably partly due to the fact that Ethiopia is completely unknown to all except

a mere handful of Englishmen, and partly to a natural dislike of any form of dictatorial government. Hence, the British public, which in the nineteenth century was filled with righteous enthusiasm for the suppression of slavery, is now an ardent supporter of a country in which slavery flourishes. But there is another reason of a more practical nature. While the British Government have followed a policy of no further advance commitments in Europe, they probably feel that in giving their full support to League action against war they are providing an alternative means of exerting their power for the preservation of peace, and at the same time showing to the world their future intentions in this respect. This appeals to the general public, who take it as a warning to Nazi Germany in the belief that a certain amount of trouble with Italy now can avert more serious trouble with Germany later on. There is, however, a failure to realise that British policy in this matter, if persistently pursued, may well drive Italy into the arms of Germany<sup>1</sup> and create a situation of the utmost danger to European peace. Furthermore, it must not be imagined that Italy will tamely submit to League pressure sufficiently strong to transform her East African enterprise into a fiasco. If she is brought into a position where humiliation and downfall are inevitable, she is much more likely to

<sup>1</sup> Italy joined Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Triple Alliance as a result of colonial disappointment with regard to Tunis.

move in a direction destructive to others as well as to herself. Among the Italian interpretations of British policy is an impression that Great Britain, having secured all she wants, is now using the League as a means of safeguarding the *status quo*, which is most favourable to her, but most unfavourable to some other countries. It is useless to strive for peace if one is unwilling to make sacrifices in order to secure it. Peace is an expensive commodity, and it cannot be maintained without paying the price. So far there have been no visible signs of any of the League members being prepared to pay the price of the great ideal for which the League stands. Fortunately France, as a mutual friend of Great Britain and Italy, exercises a restraining influence on either side, and it is due to her that the situation has not become worse.

There are many reasons why an agreement should be reached as soon as possible. The restoration of peace is an object which should come before any attempt to prove the efficacy of the League Covenant. A prolongation of hostilities is jeopardising the prospects of European security, and, besides this, Italy is expending vast sums of money in East Africa, thereby endangering her financial stability, apart altogether from the loss of human life and material. Ethiopia is being raised to a frenzy of anti-European feeling, with possible repercussions in other parts of Africa, and the amount of arms and ammunition in the country is steadily increasing. The conflict affects

British interests in the region of Lake Tana and the Blue Nile as well as with regard to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. French interests are affected by the threat to the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway, as well as by the very difficult position in which the French Government is placed *vis-à-vis* Great Britain on one side and Italy on the other. The conflict also has an unsettling influence in Egypt, where political ties with Great Britain and economic interests with Italy are mixed up with a natural sympathy with Ethiopia, particularly among the Copts whose religion is closely akin to that of the Ethiopian Church. Although the contribution which Lake Tana can make to the waters of the Nile has been somewhat exaggerated, it is obviously in the interests of both Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan that this potential source of supply should be safeguarded. Moreover, a conflict between black and white races within the frontiers of Ethiopia and Eritrea may well have a disturbing effect on the native population of the Sudan. The worst effects, however, will be felt in Europe. But, as there will certainly be a lull in hostilities when the rains start in the spring, every use should be made of this pause to prevent their continuance later on.

The most hopeful aspect at present lies in the manner in which the Italians are conducting their advance into Ethiopian territory, and the way in which Ethiopian chiefs with their followers are submitting to Italian rule. But, in order fully to appreciate the value of this

unforeseen development, it is necessary to take into consideration the present composition and conditions of Ethiopia together with the aims of Italy in this direction. In a country which is far from being united and homogeneous there is good reason to believe that a large proportion of the conquered races, inhabiting fertile territories, are glad to welcome the Italians as liberators from the oppression of the Amharas. Indeed, it is probable that many more would submit were it not for lack of knowledge of the progress of events, lack of contact with the Italian forces, and fear of Amhara vengeance. The Italians have in their advance preserved the methods of a civilising expedition by providing with considerable benefits the country through which the army has passed. Careful provision is made for the welfare of the inhabitants, and prisoners are well treated. Large numbers of slaves have been liberated. Civil government has been set up by colonial officials specially sent from Italy, and communications have been established. Most significant is the way in which many Ethiopian chiefs have reacted to this Italian policy. Ras Gugsä has been appointed Governor of Tigré and has taken up residence in the official palace. This Ethiopian chieftain claims the higher and purer blood of the House of Solomon in comparison with Hailé Salassié;<sup>1</sup> and regards the present Shoan dynasty as a usurpation. This is only a

<sup>1</sup> Strong claims are also held by Eutaié Gulullatié, the two sons of Ledj Jasu, and Ras Kassa Dargié.

beginning. If the Amhara people of Tigré are prepared to meet the Italians in this way, there is all the more reason to anticipate similar action on the part of the peoples of the conquered territories. Italy has two objects in view; first, the protection of her colonies from Ethiopian aggression, and secondly, the provision of territories for the settlement of her surplus population and for the supply of raw materials. The achievement of both these objects demands the introduction of a civilising influence into Ethiopia. Italy, therefore, wants an Italian mandate over the conquered territories, with some form of international control—an international mandate has been suggested—over the strictly Amharic part of the country. This, however, does not include Tigré, for which a special regime is desired, including as it does the much coveted district of Adowa. The Italians also attach special importance to the disarmament of Ethiopia to a level considered necessary for police purposes. As Ethiopia has no civilised form of government outside the capital and one or two other centres, and in view of the barbarous application of an antique feudal system to the conquered races involving slavery in its worst forms, it is obvious that a League of Nations mandate is essential. I was told in Addis Abeba that the Emperor would readily accept a British or French mandate, but neither Great Britain nor France is willing to undertake this task involving at least fifty years' work and heavy expenditure of human life,

money, and material. Italy is, therefore, the only Great Power available and suitable to carry out the work. The Ethiopian authorities, however, though they refuse at present to consider an Italian mandate, are prepared to consider an international mandate with adequate representation for Italy among other Powers. The argument that strong Italian influence in Ethiopia would be a danger to British communications with the Far East is rather offset by the position of Italy in the Mediterranean in relation to her Red Sea possessions; while the British rights over the waters of Lake Tana are fully guaranteed by Italy, who is much more likely to satisfy British interests than any Government of Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, sanctions in general, and the possibility of oil sanctions in particular, brought the British Government face to face with a difficult and dangerous situation, which led the Foreign Secretary to work out with France a possible basis of peace negotiations. By December 1935 it had become apparent that sanctions were largely ineffective owing to wide leakages on nearly all the frontiers of Italy. Serious discontent was manifest in important industrial centres of England. The possibility of effective oil sanctions was becoming more remote owing to the difficulty of obtaining adequate support from the United States in time to prevent Italy laying in sufficient stocks for some time to come. Also, certain of the important oil-producing countries were announcing their inten-

tions of claiming heavy compensation for their losses in oil exports. But the most serious aspect of the whole situation was the real danger of a European war. In these circumstances Sir Samuel Hoare and M. Laval, realising that further pressure on Italy (which was shortly to be decided at Geneva) was likely to have the gravest consequences, produced the Paris Peace Plan for the consideration of Italy, Ethiopia, and the League as a possible basis of negotiation. This attempt was undertaken at the special request of the League of Nations. Before, however, the terms had been duly considered by the British Cabinet, they leaked out in Paris, and through the Press became common property. The British reaction appeared to be one of strong hostility, although there is good reason to doubt the strength and substance of this attitude in view of a growing desire throughout the country to hear aspects of the whole question which had hitherto been carefully concealed. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister, after the Paris proposals had been endorsed by the whole Cabinet, gave way to the clamours of a one-sided public opinion led away from the appreciation of reality by a hysterical crusade of self-righteousness more likely to lead to war than the presumed object of its endeavours. This crusade induced the British public to believe that the Paris proposals constituted a reward for aggression and were grossly unfair to Ethiopia. The consequence was that Sir Samuel Hoare felt compelled to resign from



the Foreign Office, although his subsequent defence in the House of Commons fully justified his action in supporting terms better than the Ethiopians are likely to see again. Moreover, as the proposed terms were partly designed to rectify past injustices to Italy, they could not be interpreted as a reward for aggression. In any case, whatever terms are agreed, no rectification of injustice can be classed as a reward, nor can peace terms so based constitute an encouragement to others if adequate steps are taken at Geneva to rectify such other injustices as are likely to lead to aggression in the future. Those who still fail to realise the futility of trying to inflict punishment for aggression are invited to cast their eyes across the North Sea to Nazi Germany, which is a direct result of punitive policies. In this case, however, everything points to the wisdom of profiting by past mistakes, and of trying to secure peace by negotiation, followed by an honest attempt to remedy the defects of the League Covenant, and to deal with those remaining injustices to nations that may constitute the causes of future wars.

A situation likely to bring about the termination of hostilities is one in which the civilising benefits of the Italian advance combine with Ethiopian submission to create a desire for Italian rule in many of the Ethiopian conquered territories. A solution to which both sides contribute would be based on realities, and would, therefore, have good prospects of permanent results. It could also be brought about without

endangering European peace or creating widespread dislocation by the continued application of economic sanctions. If the League of Nations stands for "self-determination," it would be wise to take into account the possibility of an automatic settlement. Otherwise Geneva may well be faced with the humiliating position of supporting the oppression of subordinate races against the desire of these people to determine their own destinies—one of the main principles on which the League was constituted.

The Paris peace proposals were based on the three principles of international supervision, territorial exchanges, and opportunities for Italian economic expansion and settlement—the same principles as those of the Report of the Committee of Five which were accepted by the Emperor of Ethiopia—and there is reason to anticipate that these principles will form the basis of an ultimate settlement. Fortunately, the masterly speech of Sir Samuel Hoare created a profound impression both in this country and abroad, and has placed the people of Britain in possession of certain of the vital facts that caused the Foreign Secretary to make a supreme effort to protect their real interests. There is no doubt that these grave considerations will sink into the public mind as soon as calm common sense has replaced the effects of political hysteria. The time has come when it is most desirable to review the whole Italo-Ethiopian dispute from the outset, and calmly to consider all its aspects

from a common-sense point of view, eliminating all pious pretensions and principles involving impractical ideals. It is for the people of Britain to consider where sanctions are likely to lead them, and what would be the reactions in Italy and in Europe if the Italians were compelled by sanctions to withdraw from North-East Africa. In comparatively recent years the British nation has come through a World War, and more recently through an economic crisis of the first magnitude, with their train of confusion and distress. This surely should be a solemn warning to think well before committing ourselves to the danger of further disaster.

## AMHARA TERRITORIES

AMHARA, TIGRÉ, GOJJAM, AND SHOA

### TERRITORIES CONQUERED BY MENELIK

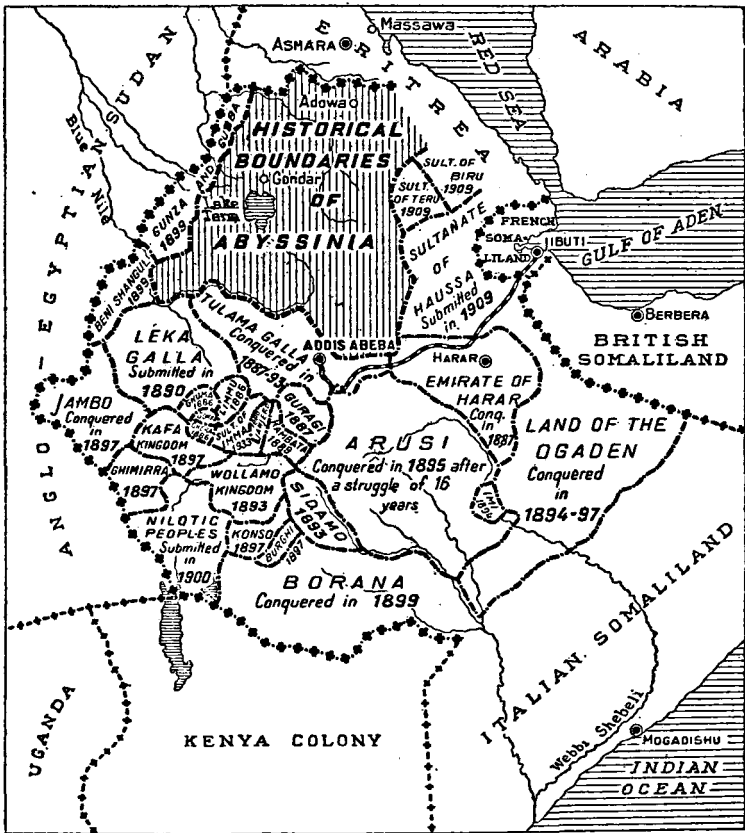
#### *As King of Shoa*

- 1886. Guma. Gomma. Ghera. Limmu. Gimma (as protectorate).
- 1887. Harar. Gurage. Galla Tulama (conquest begun).
- 1889. Cambatta.

#### *As Emperor of Ethiopia*

- 1890. Leca Galla. Jianjero.
- 1893. Wolamo. Sidamo. Galla Tulama (conquest completed).
- 1894. Ogaden (conquest begun). Imi.
- 1895. Arussi.
- 1897. Ogaden (conquest completed). Kaffa. Jambo. Gimirra. Conso. Burghi.
- 1899. Gubba. Gunza. Beni Shangul. Boran.
- 1900. Nilotic Tribes.
- 1909. Aussa. Beru. Teru.

Gimma was annexed by the Emperor Hailé Selassié in 1935.



MAP OF AMHARIC AND NON-AMHARIC REGIONS OF ETHIOPIA

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