

an abyssinian slave—trader returning after a successful raid. (Frontispiece)

## SLAVES AND IVORY

A RECORD OF A DVENTURE AND EXPLORA-TION IN THE UNKNOWN SUDAN, AND AMONG THE ABYSSINIAN SLAVE-RAIDERS

BY

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

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#### Dedicated

to

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

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#### ·INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

the fore by natural ability.

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

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

Estimates of the population vary from four

Estimates of the population vary from four to eight millions; in the absence, however, of any statistical organization it is doubtful if the government of the country has any precise know-

ledge of the number of its subjects.

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

At the same time, in the ceremonial of the Abyssinian Church relics of ancient Jewish observ-

ances have survived up to the present day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

effectiveness is open to doubt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. W. H.

October, 1925.

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

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

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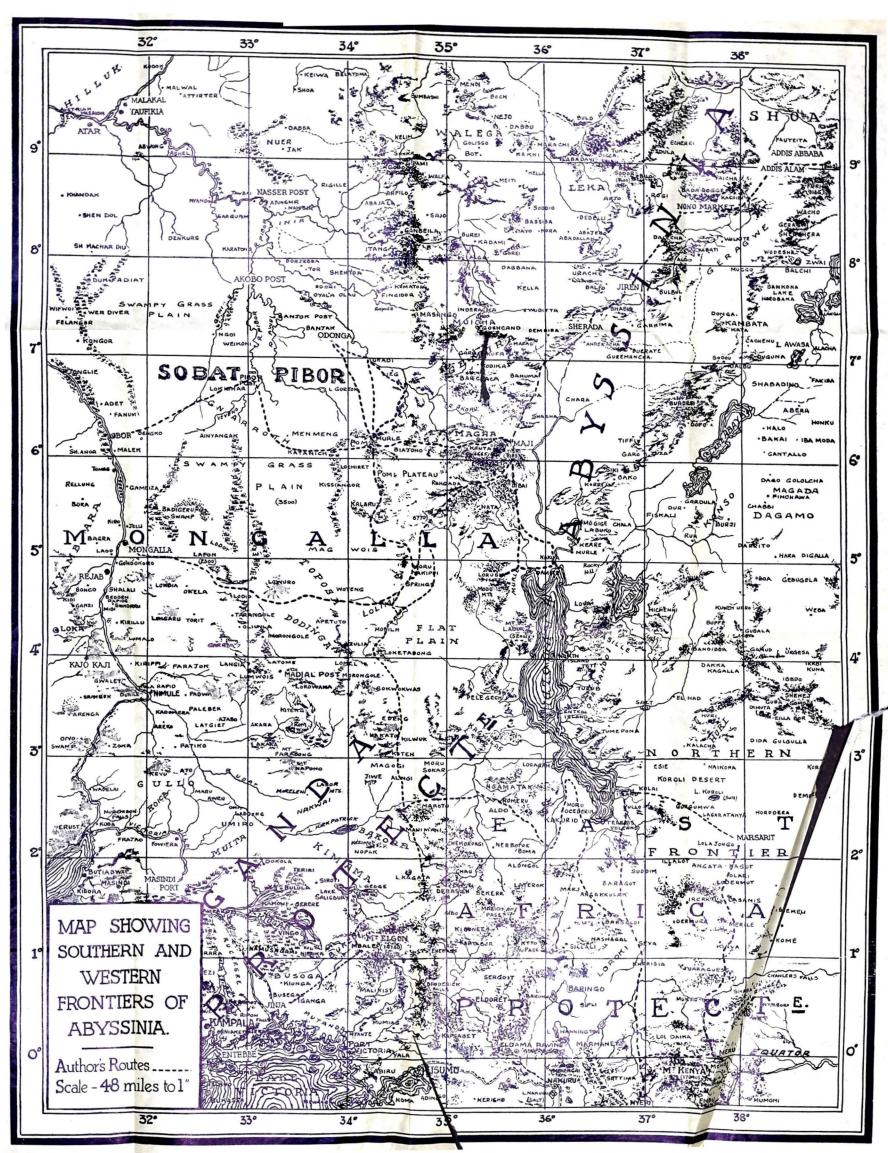
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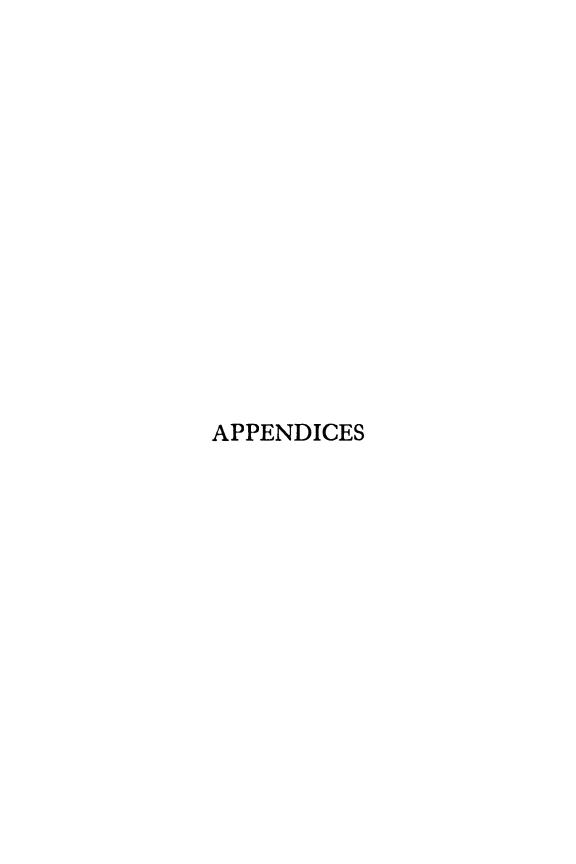
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#### APPENDIX

Extracts from a Paper read by Major L. F. I. ATHILL, R.F.A., at a meeting of the Royal Geo-graphical Society, and reproduced by the Society's permission.

In January, 1919, I was sent with a remarkable pioneer, Major Henry Darley, to a place called Maji, some 80 miles north of Lake Rudolf. governor of Maji, whose geography was not his strong point, had made a small error as to the position of his frontier. The unfortunate result of this error was a fight between Abyssinian and Sudanese troops, in which three Sudanese officers and several men were killed. Major Darley and I were sent with three Abyssinian commissioners to investigate and to try to prevent further I propose to describe the country and friction. people we saw in the performance of our work.

Our travels fell naturally into three parts. The first was the journey from Adis Ababa, the capital, to Maji. Our route took us through beautiful and varied country, and we saw almost all the types of Abyssinian scenery, except the rugged and highly denuded peaks which abound in the We were also able to study the varying social conditions produced by the extension of Abyssinian civilization among the conquered tribes

of the south-west.

The second part consisted of our wanderings up and down the frontier, when we were naturally 191

able to form a closer acquaintance with the country and its conditions than we had been able to do during the first and more direct part of our journey.

The third part was not premeditated by us. Our work took longer than we had hoped, and by the time it was finished the torrential rains of Abyssinia were imminent, and during these rains the roads become almost impassable, or at least most exhausting to both man and beast. This consideration, added to the fact that the country between us and the capital was reported to be in a very disturbed condition, decided us to make a dash for the Nile at Mongalla. As we were not equipped or provisioned for travelling in a sort of country we had to cross, and as we were embarrassed by a number of women and children whom we felt obliged to repatriate, we could not explore or survey the area we traversed as fully as we should have liked to do. We were, however, able to make a compass traverse of our route which has turned out to be of some value, and to fill in a small blank on the map.

We left the capital with twenty-five servants and muleteers, all enlisted locally, while our pack train consisted of twenty-five mules. The mongrel civilization of Adis Ababa soon fell behind, and a few hours' march took us to the col from which we obtained our last view of the town. Before us lay the wide valley of the Hawash, and beyond it the hilly mass of the Guragê country. The Hawash valley or plain is rich in cultivation. The deep black soil bears good crops of maize, millet, linseed, tef grass, and a kind of pea called

shumburra. A certain amount of wheat is grown, while the barley, which is one of the most important crops of the country, hugs the hillsides or in some cases crowns the summits. This Hawash plain becomes a bog in the rains, and is dotted with small Galla and Abyssinian homesteads built on knolls which become islands in wet weather.

On our right the highlands continued in apparently unbroken line, and before us lay a somewhat corrugated valley of most attractive appearance. I should perhaps say a series of valleys, for the trend of the drainage was still from north to south, at right angles to our route, down numerous parallel stream beds. To the south of our route they all turned eastwards joining each other and flowing into the Omo in one stream which took the name of its largest feeder, the Walga.

The Walga is a stream of no geographical importance, but typical of the many brooks which make this country so productive. It narrows in places to 25 feet, and has a mean depth of 3 feet, with numerous shallows. Above our camp it passed through a beautiful wooded gorge, and a short distance below, among some rather fantastic contortions of the ground, tumbled over a ledge with a drop of 50 feet into a rocky basin of great depth. Its grassy banks were in places shaded by great fig-trees. Wildfowl abounded, chiefly mallard and the common Egyptian goose. Irrigation channels tapped it at frequent intervals, though

they did not seem to be put to very scientific use. The kloofs in the foothills through which it flowed afforded ideal sites for farmhouses, and in fact Darley and I spent much of our time laying out in our imagination the estates on which we decided we should like to spend our old age.

The true native life of this delightful country was purely Galla, and socially resembled that of an English countryside. The yeoman farmer, like his British counterpart, was usually a cheerful and portly individual with a chronic grouse against the weather. He appeared to have no political ambitions beyond the fervent desire to avoid being dragged into political controversies. His house showed that he had a shrewd notion of comfort and a good cuisine.

The inhabitants of the small huts or tukels which dotted the landscape were similarly the counterpart of our own country labourers. Their relations with the farmers were cordial. The men were hard working, slow to start speaking but fairly voluble when started, and friendly in an unimaginative way. Their women were sometimes buxom, very talkative, and quite unimpressed by the white man. Their children were legion, and delightfully merry and ready to make friends. Agricultural methods were extremely primitive.

In this part of the country Abyssinian administration has been in force so long that its oppressive weight is regarded in the same light as any other natural curse, such as a malarial climate or drought—things to be endured without opposition. The Abyssinian population is limited to the local officials, large and small, with their parasitic following of soldiers. The officials seemed busy people, always running hither and thither collecting

the dues of their overlords in the capital, or extracting revenue for themselves by the instrumentality of what is called "chiqachiq." This expressive term means intrigue, and usually takes the form of embroiling the Galla in a lawsuit, either against the crown or among themselves, from which escape can only be obtained by bribing the local magistrate. To describe the code of administration is beyond me, but it is obvious that the presence of these functionaries, unproductive, unpaid, and rapacious, cannot but hang as a blight over the countryside.

For two days our road lay through deserted ridge-and-furrow country, more or less parallel with the river Omo, while to our right rose the mountains of Oche, Hola, and Feco. turning westwards again, we entered the autonomous province of Jimma. We now crossed the southern end of the Feco mountains, which presented the first really serious obstacle to roadmaking which we had seen since leaving the capital. These hills were covered with juniper and other coniferous trees. The climate in the forest was cool and damp. Game seemed scarce except for a few bush buck and numerous leopards. The woods were the home of a much-dreaded band of shiftas, and I visited several villages which had been deserted only a few days before owing to the depredations of the band. We entered these hills by a winding bridle-path with precipitous gradients, and left them by a slightly better-graded track, which led us into the rich undulating country ruled for the Abyssinians by a benevolent despot, Jimma Aba Jifar. The aspect of this country was often European. Some of our camping-grounds, on the verge of pleasant water-meadows and backed by charming little copses, made it almost impossible to believe that we were really in Africa.

The nature of the crops was unchanged, except for a good deal of a sort of arrowroot called "gudaré." The population consisted of Moslem Gallas, and the chiefs affected an Arab type of dress. Abyssinians appeared only as wayfarers, and the peasantry seemed to profit by their own labours to a far greater extent than those under purely Abyssinian rule. On the thirty-fourth day after leaving Adis Ababa we climbed up a steep hill and entered Jiren, the capital of Aba Jifar. The distance could easily have been covered in seventeen days had we kept going all the time.

The palace and court of Aba Jifar presented a more ordered aspect than that of Ras Tafari, and Aba Jifar himself, in Arab dress and seated on a divan was a dignified and patriarchal figure. He gave us a warm welcome, and both then and at subsequent interviews plied us with shrewd questions as to the number and condition of the Moslem subjects of Great Britain. So searching were his questions that we had to arm ourselves with a 'Whitaker's Almanac' before entering his presence. Aba Jifar encourages trade and gives much assistance to the foreign merchants in his province. The market dues imposed in the three markets of his capital are very low, and his taxation is far lighter than that of the Abyssinians. He even goes so far as to remit, partially or even wholly, the taxes of such of his subjects as have been incapacitated for any length of time by accident or disease. A grave blot on his otherwise enlightened administration is that Mandara,

the Galla town lying below his palace, is the largest centre of the slave-trade in Abyssinia.

Leaving the palace, we passed Mandara and, crossing the Awetu river, camped at Hirmata, where the chief European and Armenian merchants are established, and here we stayed ten days.

With renewed transport and supplies we again took the road westwards, and for two days passed through the smiling garden province of Aba Jifar. Georges Montandon, as shrewd and unbiassed an observer as ever travelled in Abyssinia, points out that Jimma owes its riches, not to any great natural superiority over the rest of the country, but to the liberal policy which encourages instead of cramping the industry of its inhabitants. On the third day we entered a zone of high forest, which lies to the east of the Gojeb river. Here the road assumed a switchback nature, and the dead body of a newly shot robber lying by the roadside bore witness to the recent presence of shiftas, who everywhere cripple the internal commerce of Abyssinia.

We now entered the stricken land of Kaffa, second to none in natural beauty and fertility. The cruelty and shortsightedness of its conquerors have turned it into a lovely but deserted wilderness.

The original Abyssinian occupation and Christianization of Kaffa took place at least five hundred years ago. During the great Islamic invasion of Mohamed Grayñe in the sixteenth century, the Abyssinians lost their hold on the country. Its reconquest was undertaken by

Menelik in 1897. Before this date, Roman Catholic missionaries had gained a footing on the Kaffa, and their converts numbered several thousands.

Confronted by the formidable forests and mountains of Kaffa, Menelik enlisted the aid of Aba Jifar. Jimma and Kaffa were traditional enemies, and by the help he gave to the Abyssinians against his ancient foes Aba Jifar bought the degree of autonomy he enjoys to-day. On the very edge of Kaffa we found traces of the deep trenches dug by the Kaffa warriors to oppose the advance of the Galla horsemen. These defences were of no avail, and Menelik clinched his victory by the slaughter or deportation of two-thirds of the unhappy population. His lieutenants ably carried on the work begun by him, and to-day the peace of death reigns in the glorious forests of Kaffa.

Bazabi, the son of the last king, is now a hangeron in the following of the Abyssinian ruler of Kaffa. He accompanied us for two days, during which we passed close to the spot where his unfortunate father, Galito, fell into the hands of his conquerors. A story is told of Galito which testifies to the mineral riches of Kaffa. When dragged in chains before Menelik, he protested against his fetters being of iron like those of a common slave. His followers produced chains of gold, which Menelik graciously allowed him to exchange for the ones he was wearing. Montandon relates that so much prestige was attached to the royal crown that Menelik had it sent to Switzerland for fear that its presence in Abyssinia should encourage the descendants of Galito to rise in rebellion for its recovery. Switzerland was therefore the dumpingground for cast-off crowns before the rush set in in 1918.

We now plunged into a country of exaggerated

ridge and furrow, thickly covered with magnificent forest. The road dwindled to a tiny path, masked by foliage through which we had to brush our way. It disdained the subterfuges by which modern roads mitigate the steepness of our hills, and dived headlong into the gorges, to emerge by an equally direct and heart-breaking method on to the crest of the succeeding hills. Signs of a vanished population abounded, and one could easily deduce the stages by which human industry had been stamped out by noting the varying height of the comparatively recent growth of forest. For four days no human being not connected with our caravan crossed our path, with the exception of a convoy of seventy newly caught slaves. Then the monotony of the forest was broken by the wretched little Abyssinian settlement of Aberra, where we were joined by our senior colleague, Dediazmatch Damté.

The Dedjazmatch was a charming man, reputed to be most humane. All his slaves and mules were rolling with fat. He himself was a courtly and cheerful soul, and celebrated our meeting by drinking twelve glasses of brandy without turning a hair. He wore brown leggings and a broad-brimmed felt hat, and usually carried a large telescope which gave him a nautical air. He was always accompanied by a kind-hearted but senile Fitaurari. During our political arguments, which were sometimes rather heated, the Fitaurari would become much perturbed and would retire to a corner, where he would sit clucking like an old hen.

Two days' more marching through forest brought us to the market of Wotta, where for the first time we met the real Negroid type, devoid of clothes and classified by the Abyssinians under the general term of Shankalla. From here we crossed a hill with exposed chalky faces, and the forest took on a rather different appearance. The chief characteristic was the abundance of beautiful tree ferns and bamboos, while there were large numbers of a kind of tree rather resembling a larch, called by the Abyssinians "Tuqur Inchet," or black wood, and highly valued for building. One day's march from Wotta brought us to the important Abyssinian settlement of Shoa Ghimirra. The Governor of Shoa Ghimirra was a lordly gentleman called Kenyasmatch Aba Wukum, which means "The father of the fist." He was reported to have earned this name by his methods of subjugating his province, and by what I saw of his subjects, I should think he thoroughly deserved it.

The Kenyasmatch was expecting shortly to be relieved of his command, and was therefore catching and selling the local population as rapidly as possible in order to provide for a rainy day. However I think that his little kingdom reached a pitch of natural beauty which I have never seen equalled. Its gently rising and falling surface, here and there brightened by emerald green meadows, with numerous running streams and great stretches of glorious forest suggested an almost supernatural peace which was only too marked a contrast to the lives of its hunted inhabitants.

Two days further brought is to more rugged country, and leaving the forest we entered the district of Golda. Though hills persisted into this area, and the great ridge of Benesho lay on our northern flank, our path now dropped to lower levels, and at once thorn trees replaced the bamboos and other highland vegetation. Now we found anarchy let loose.

Exasperated by oppression, the Shankallas had risen against their lords, who had retaliated by all the means in their possession. Abyssinians could only move in large parties, and far and wide rose the smoke of burning huts, while the only natives visible were occasional spies, who marked our progress from treetops. I cannot allow myself to enlarge on this subject, but I will give one instance, which should suffice.

Our humane Dedjazmatch was preceding us. Behind him flocked his soldiers, his slaves, and his mules, laden with supplies. Fat women panted along the road bowed under the weight of great jars of tej, or honey wine. Then came Darley at the head of our cortège, while I brought up the rear. At the outskirts of a burnt village I saw Darley stop, and hurried on to join him. I found him literally choking with rage. At his feet lay a skeleton, but a living one. A wretched little slave boy, crippled by an injured leg, had been left to die by the Abyssinian inhabitants of the village as they fled from the Shankallas. For seven days he had lived on roots, and now, too weak to crawl to the stream, he lay dying of thirst. Of the three hundred Abyssinians who had filed by within a few yards of him, not one had thrown him a crust of bread or offered him a drop of water. What remained of him we gathered up and brought to camp, where we were told by our friends that we were wasting our time, as even if he lived he would never be of any use. He did live, and when I left Adis Ababa last November he was a plump, cheerful, and exceedingly naughty little boy, rejoicing in the highflown name of "Ya Igzier Chernet," or "Grace of God," and earning his living as my stable boy.

We hurried on through this inhospitable land,

and on the twenty-second day after leaving Hirmata crossed the Maji river and camped at the foot of a precipitous slope. On the following day we climbed this slope and made our state entry into the important frontier settlement of Maji.

Geographically and administratively, Maji is an outpost of the Abyssinian Empire. The valleys, which drain to the Omo on one side and to the Akobo on the other, interpose a lowlying zone of what the Abyssinians call "Quolla" between the "Dega" or highlands of Maji, Shasha, and Beru, and the rest of Abyssinia. The two regions are absolutely different, the Quolla bearing its characteriestic vegetation of mimosa, and the Dega rejoicing in a climate and fertility similar to that of Kaffa and Ghimirra.

Naturally Abyssinian occupation has denuded Maji and Shasha of their forest, which still survives on Beru. The line of demarcation between the two zones is abrupt, usually marked by an almost sheer escarpment, due, I imagine, to a fault and not in the first instance to erosion. The three plateaus are joined by knife-edged cols, and spurs of similar character jut out. most striking is that of Siski, the nature of which is shown by the map and by the illustration. The Maji plateau is over 8000 feet high. Its climate is temperate by day and bitterly cold by night, and it is often shrouded by a dense mist. At least four streams fall in cascades from its precipitous cliffs, and its general appearance in some ways recalls the high parts of the Isle of Wight.

The town of Maji is the last typical Abyssinian "Ketemma," with its triply stockaded *gibbe* or palace, its circular church, its market-place, its crowds of loafing soldiers, and its innumerable

brothels. It also marks the limit of organized serfdom. Petty officials may claim to administer the country further west, and do effectively maintain a regime of oppression over wide areas in that direction. The natives, however, shun contact with them as far as possible, and such revenues as are collected are the fruits of armed raids, while the work of slave-catching goes on from day to day. At Maji the poor cowed Shankalla has accepted his fate, and tills the land of his master without protest. The population has dwindled until thousands of acres once under cultivation are now abandoned. The surviving inhabitants of Maji are no longer subjected to open violence, and enslavement conceals itself under the cloak of legal recovery for debt. Dibo, or, to give him his native title, "Maji Kuri," the native chief of Maji, is a pathetic figure. years he tried to defend his people with a rare combination of courage and diplomacy, but broken in spirit he at last welcomed the anodyne of arika to which he was introduced by his Abyssinian conquerors. His fall was so complete that he came to take an active part in the enslavement of his people. I hardly know which sight was the more melancholy—the physical wreck of little Ya Igzier Chernet, or the moral degradation of the wretched Dibo.

Here at Maji began the real work of our mission. Our duties were twofold. Firstly we had to visit Kangalla, where the action between the Sudanese and Abyssinian troops had been fought; and secondly, to point out on the ground the position of the provisional frontier. We decided to start southwards with donkey transport, as we were going into a tsetse fly area. Having pointed out the frontier as marked by the lower reaches

of the Kibish, we intended to replenish our almost exhausted grain supply at Gullop, on the spit of land between Sanderson Gulf and the Omo mouth. Partly through real scarcity and partly through obstruction, we could get no supplies at Maji. Then we intended to visit Kangalla, and to follow the frontier northwards between Tid and Tomadur. Here we hoped to be rejoined by our extra men and mules. We would then make a fresh excursion as far as necessary northwards, still following the frontier, and would afterwards return to Tomadur. It was by this time plain to us that a direct return to the capital would be impossible, and Tomadur was a good jumping-off point for our journey to the Nile.

With these intentions we started southwards from Maji, taking with us twenty-one donkeys, only ten of our Abyssinians, and fifteen locally engaged Swahilis. The latter were part of a numerous clan of outlaws and poachers who have settled in Maji and who make their living by raiding Uganda and the Sudan. We eventually repatriated about twenty-five of these men, with their wives and families, who added not a little to the embarrassments of the last part of our trip.

In spite of our protests, the Abyssinians insisted on taking with them a mob of useless soldiers, women, and little boy slaves, who all suffered severely from hunger, thirst, and malaria, and of whom several died before we regained the

plateau a month later.

We now followed the eastern foot of a low escarpment, passing through thorn bush with frequent open spaces of black cotton soil. After three days we crossed the route followed by Austin and Bright in 1901. Here we had the luck to round up a convoy of twenty donkeys bringing back poached ivory from the Sudan. On the fifth day after leaving Tomadur, we emerged from a narrow pass between two hills and camped below the southern face of the volcanic mass of Moru a Kippi, or "hill of water."

We now debated our plans with some anxiety. We had no means of carrying water, and some of our baggage was carried on slow-moving donkeys who were already rather tired. The presence of twenty-six women and children, the latter ranging in age from a few months to ten years, complicated matters. Our Swahilis encouraged us by pointing to distant hillocks where various of their friends had died of thirst. We knew that by twelve hours rapid marching we could reach the water of Kwamkunyu, but we doubted the capacity of our motley throng to stay the distance. Any one who has seen a young child dying of thirst knows how distressing it is, so Darley and I, standing in loco parentium to our numerous broad, were rather oppressed by our responsibilities. However, with the convoy we had caught a few days before we had acquired several valuable though reluctant guides, who had just come from the country we were trying to reach. reported that heavy rain had fallen in the Dodinga hills, which had caused the rivers flowing from them to come down in spate, and that the pools in these river-beds still held water. Accordingly we headed due south into the more or less unknown. with the happiest results. Four hours' marching brought us to a low hill where a tiny trickle of water was welling out of the rock. Here we halted during the heat of the day, and about

three o'clock in the afternoon pushed on southward. As night fell we reached another small hill, and saw beyond it the trees marking a riverbed. We did not try to reach it that night, but some of our men went forward and soon returned with the welcome news that they had found plenty of water. Early next day we reached it and followed its course upstream for six days, thus being able to add it fairly accurately to the map. Its name is the Lomayen. It is of no geographical importance, but a knowledge of its course and water-providing capacity will be of value to any one who is sent to bring that part of the country under administration.

I should like to make a little clearer the good luck which attended us during this part of the trip. The country we crossed is nearly all black cotton soil. When rain has fallen on it it becomes a bog, almost impassable to man and absolutely so to pack transport. On the other hand, the water in the river-beds rapidly dries up, and then practicable amount of digging will reach water. It is therefore only at the psychological moment when the river pools are filled by water which from the hills, while the surrounding country is still firm and dry, that the route is practicable. Donaldson-Smith, confronted in 1895 by the same problem as ourselves, was driven back by drought and obliged to find another route. Had his caravan contained as many weak elements as ours did, he could hardly have avoided loss As it was, Heaven not only sent us the psychological moment, but also the guides who enabled us to seize it.

Since leaving Tirima, thirteen days earlier, we had seen no sign of human life beyond the convoy we captured. This camp on the Lomaven was therefore of interest, as we here found traces of a a recent fire made by famine-strickenToposans in search of edible berries. In our camp we also found a human skull, a relic of a fight which had taken place a short time before between the Toposans and Swahili raiders. Next day we moved on towards Lolimi, a place well known to Darley in his elephant-hunting days, and on the way we were joined by an aged Toposan, obviously chosen as a scout because he was not worth stealing as a slave and too old to be missed much if he was killed. He was the first British subject we had met during a march over 140 miles of British territory.

For the next five days we marched round the foothills of the Dodinga highlands. These lay on our left, while to our right stretched the wide expanse, alternately impassable bog and waterless desert, which extended to the Pibor river. Outlying and more or less isolated hills, broke the monotony, and the country was furrowed by many river-beds running northward. At this time of the year (July) water was standing in pools in most of them, and the natives know of many places where water can always be found by digging. The sand in their beds suggested that the hills from which they flowed were granitic. ground between them was mostly covered with black cotton soil, and a form of bush bearing a bulbous-shaped thorn, and through whose branches the wind whistled with a characteristic sound, usually marked the places where the going most readily became boggy. Lolimi alone was slightly different from the rest of the country, for there the hills projected further northward, and the landscape became what, for want of a better term, is usally called "park-like." At Lolimi we again came upon traces of the Swahili raiders, and from it we made a forced march down the Liyoro river in hopes of catching them. Although we approached their zeriba at crack of dawn, and with much stealth, the birds were flown, and there was only a smallpox-stricken Toposan in possession.

Three days later we reached the Zangaiyetta river, and encountered palm trees for the first time since leaving Abyssinia. The banks were covered with Toposan villages, and there was a good deal of durra growing. It was not yet ripe, and as the two preceding crops had failed and most of the cattle had been looted by the Turkana, the people were starving. Near here we met an enormous herd of giraffe, over sixty strong, and, braving the game laws, we shot four, which were wolfed with marvellous speed by the starving Toposans. We here found two men who were prepared to take on messages for us, and therefore sent news of our approach to the Sudan post at Losinga. We had a healthy respect for the vigilance of the Sudanese troops, and had no wish to wake up one morning under machine-gun fire. This might easily have occurred, as our party in very way resembled a band of Abyssinian and Swahili raiders. The castellated crags of Boya had now for several days been luring us westwards. These mountains rising from the plains are the greatest encouragement to wanderers in the otherwise dreary wilderness. At first they appear like fairy castles, visible only in the golden clearness of the evening. Day by day they grow in size and reality, until at last they loom

above one, only to fade once more into the dim horizon, eternal milestones in the desert.

As we approached the Locheriatom river, at the base of Boya, we were rejoiced to see a party of men in uniform sitting under a tree. It was a detachment of the Equatorial Battalion, sent out to meet us by the Commandant at Losinga, and carrying every sort of supply we could possibly want. The name of the Commandant, Bimbashi Wilkins, will always be coupled in our minds with thoughts of vermouth and heartfelt gratitude. On the following day, the one hundred and sixty-sixth since we left Adis Ababa, we entered Losinga Post, and there I propose to conclude my narrative.

No account of this journey, however, would be complete without some tribute to Major Darley, who was my leader and long-suffering friend throughout it. Such success as we achieved was due to the care and knowledge which he brought to bear on the outfitting of the expedition, to his patient and skilful handling of the rather difficult political situations which arose, and above all to the prestige attached to his name among the little-known savage tribes through which the last part of our journey led us.

#### APPENDIX II

"KENYA OBSERVER" (Nairobi) (Leading article, May 13th, 1925)

"The British Consul at an Abyssinian town named Maji proceeded with representatives of the Abyssinian Government to a Sudanese Government mountain station named Dodinga 120 miles, from the Abyssinian frontier, to discuss, we understand, the relations of Abyssinians to their neighbours—a relationship that is too often, and too exactly, synonymous with slave raiding, and the discussions took place in a reasonable atmosphere.

"The British Consul was detained at Dodinga on other business, and the Abyssinians returned

to their own country alone.

"En route, they are said to have swept the area over which they travelled clear of human and animal domestic life. And the completeness of devastation by Abyssinians is the completeness

of the locust, but more cruel.

"The British Foreign Office has maintained for many years an impenetrable and unexplained secrecy in regard to the repeated raids of Abyssinians across British territory, and public opinion, as represented, to the great credit of that organization, by the Anti-Slavery and Aboriginal Protection Society has lately tended to be lulled by the assurances and demonstrations made last year

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against the export of slaves across the Red Sea, and has thus ignored the continued risks of land raids on the West and South.

"The devastation of their territory and the loss of their freedom, treasure, and lives are matters for the prevention of which the Toposa, a race very closely similar to the Masai of East Africa, have a right to look to Great Britain, etc."



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