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AMONG SWAMPS AND GIANTS  
IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA



AMONG  
SWAMPS AND GIANTS  
IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

AN ACCOUNT OF SURVEYS AND ADVENTURES  
IN THE SOUTHERN SUDAN AND  
BRITISH EAST AFRICA

BY

MAJOR H. H. AUSTIN, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.E.  
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

*WITH TWO MAPS AND MANY ILLUSTRATIONS*

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TO

COLONEL JAMES RONALD LESLIE  
MACDONALD, C.B., R.E.

AS A TOKEN OF REGARD AND ESTEEM, AND IN MEMORY OF  
MANY HAPPY DAYS—OFTEN STIRRING AND ANXIOUS ONES TOO—  
SPENT TOGETHER IN INDIA AND AFRICA

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY  
THE AUTHOR

1091932







*Yours very truly*  
*H. W. Austin*

## PREFACE

IT has been my privilege since October 1899 to conduct two separate expeditions, for purposes of survey, into those unexplored regions that lie between the Egyptian and the Abyssinian boundaries, a task for which I had served some apprenticeship by similar employment in the past.

In publishing the true tale of our perils and adventures, many of which are indeed stranger than fiction, I hope not only to interest my readers in the aims and results of our researches, but also to assist those who, as time goes on, may follow in our footsteps.

My story divides itself naturally into two parts, which explain between them how as pioneers we penetrated far into untrodden ground, so that we might thoroughly explore a vast expanse of swamps and desert, the home of savage races whose land we were enabled to map out.

In Part I. I deal with the 1899-1900 expedition to the Sobat region. Some notion of the hardships then endured may be gathered from the fact that though happily only one of our staunch followers

## PREFACE

lost his life, all the transport animals succumbed, except fifty donkeys.

In Part II. the route is from Omdurman to Mombasa, *viâ* Lake Rudolf. It is a chronicle of arduous work, impeded by scarcity of food and water; and of dangers and escapes among hordes of hostile Turkana, a race bordering, and south of, Lake Rudolf, who are veritable giants in stature; for while the average European stands about five feet six inches, these wild children of nature must average close on six feet, and many of them towered above us to a much greater height than that. The Nuer nation may similarly be regarded as of exceptional stature, judged by our European standard.

I have purposely toned down several harrowing details which found a place in my daily diary during these periods of hazard and anxiety, when our prospects seemed hopeless, for there was much compensation in the novel chapter of events. I and my two comrades, to whose loyal co-operation I am much indebted, barely escaped with our lives, and of the fifty-nine Sudanese by whom we were accompanied as escort, &c., only fourteen reached safety with us; but I feel that we can now look back upon that time with a grateful sense that "All's well that ends well."

Intending travellers have often asked me for

## PREFACE

some hints upon outfit; I have therefore added an Appendix, which gives a summary of such things as seem most necessary, and which may serve as a useful basis, founded on experience, to ensure the provision of all that is essential.

For most of the illustrations I have utilised photographs taken by my companion, Major R. G. T. Bright, C.M.G., of the Rifle Brigade, and I have to thank Mr. Ernest Gedge for an excellent photo of a Turkana. The maps to accompany the book have been produced by the Royal Geographical Society, by reducing those prepared by Major Gwynn, D.S.O., R.E., and me to the north of Lake Rudolf; and another embodying Colonel Macdonald's surveys and mine in 1897-1899, of the country south, to the Uganda railway.

H. H. A.

LONDON, *August* 1902.

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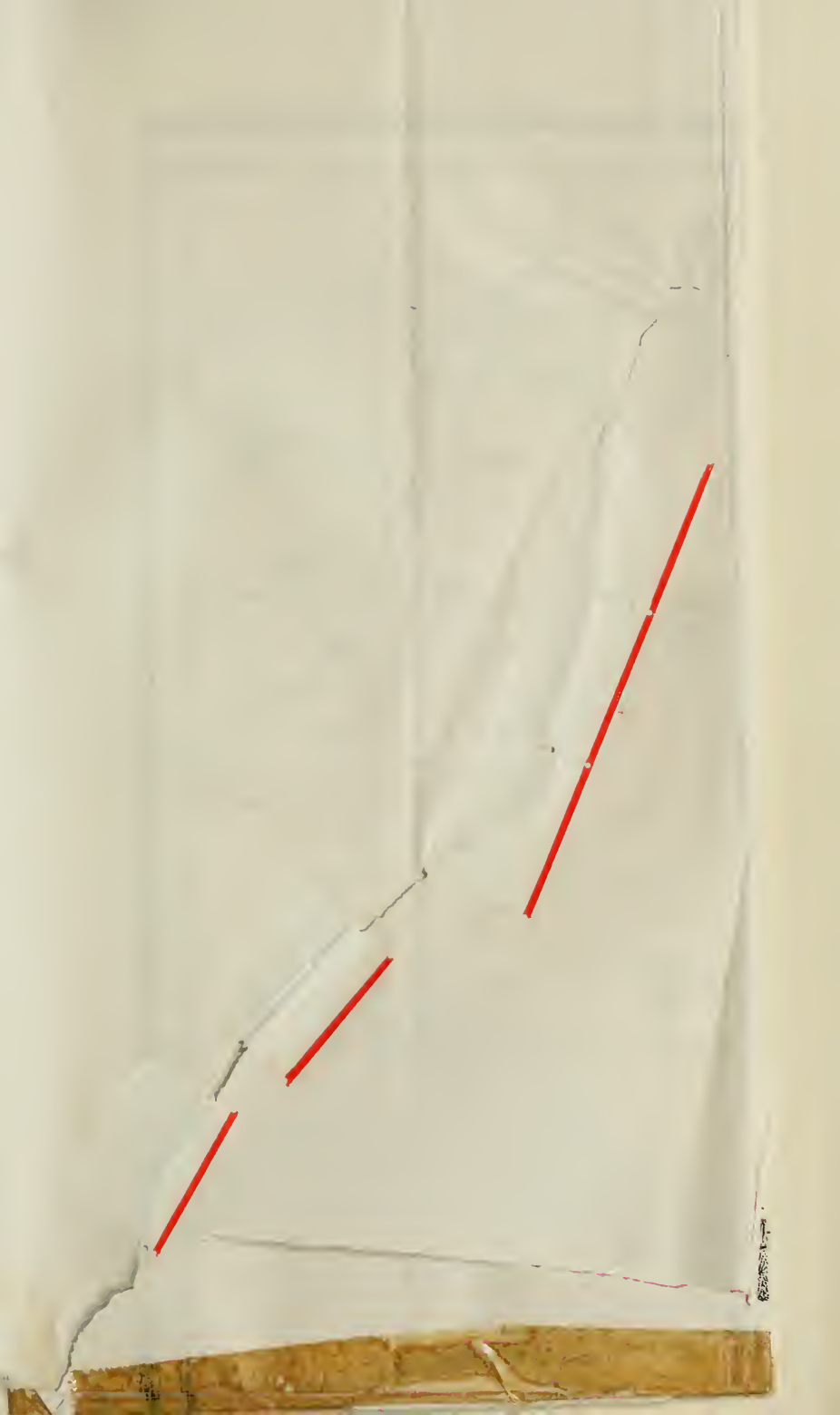


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# THE SOBAT RIVER AND PART OF THE BLUE NILE

FROM THE SURVEYS OF  
MAJOR H.H. AUSTIN D.S.O., R.E. AND  
MAJOR C.W. WYNN D.S.O., R.E. 1900.

Scale of Miles  
0 5 10 20 30 40 50  
Nat. scale 1:1,000,000 or 15.78 miles:inch  
Major Austins route  
Heights in feet



PART I  
SURVEY OF THE SOBAT REGION  
OCTOBER 1899—JULY 1900



# AMONG SWAMPS AND GIANTS IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

## CHAPTER I

### FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

IN August 1899 I accepted the command of a survey expedition to the Sudan, and on October 4 started for Egypt accompanied by Lieutenant R. G. T. Bright (now Major C.M.G.) of the Rifle Brigade, who had previously been with me to Lake Rudolf from East Africa. We reached Cairo on October 10, and as stores sent out from England in advance had not arrived, we had leisure to see the pyramids and sphynx, and to lay in a stock of trade goods at the bazaars—cloth, beads, brass and iron ware, and such other things as might take the fancy of the natives.

On November 1 we left Cairo with servants whom we had engaged, and took train for Omdurman, where we were welcomed on the morning of the 8th by Sir Reginald Wingate and Colonel Talbot, who came from the Staff Mess, and most kindly arranged for the removal of our belongings to the town. Quarters were provided for me with Colonel Lewis in the Khalifa's old house, and Bright went to Major (now Lieut.-Col.) Doran. We were thus most comfortably housed on the edge of the great Mosque Square, and

## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

immediately facing the battered remnants of the Mahdi's tomb.

During our stay at Omdurman the Khalifa, who had escaped from the great battle of that name, had collected a force, and was advancing north in the hope that former adherents would flock to his standard. As an answer to this menace orders were received by Colonel Lewis on the 13th to advance against him, and by midday the brigade was off on its steamer journey up the Nile. Aided by reinforcements under Sir Reginald Wingate they subsequently destroyed the Khalifa's following, and the arch-enemy himself was slain.

On the 17th we visited the historic remains of Khartoum, and on the 18th Lord Kitchener arrived. We were introduced to him and were thus able to learn exactly what exploratory work he wished us to carry out, but we could not obtain a steamer and barges for our journey up the White Nile until after the return of the victorious troops.

In the meantime transport animals were purchased for my column, and two dozen Sudanese, ex-dervishes, known locally as Jehadia, were engaged as transport drivers. An escort of one native officer and twenty-two non-commissioned officers and men of the 11th Sudanese Battalion were detailed for us, and 10 mules, 130 donkeys, 7 camels, 6 cows, and a small flock of goats and sheep were secured with some difficulty. Stores of all sorts were also provided and stowed in boxes, whilst special donkey pack-saddles which I had designed were taken to facilitate loading and unloading, and to reduce the risk of sore backs.



## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

November 30 was a gala day in Omdurman, and we witnessed an enthusiastic reception of the victorious troops who had so decisively defeated the Khalifa's forces.

At last at 2 P.M., December 2, 1899, we started up the White Nile on the *Tamai*, which towed a double-decked barge and two sailing-boats to carry the men, rations, equipment, and transport animals. The river was so low that we could only move on safely by day, but in spite of the difficulty of feeding and watering the closely-penned animals, we only lost one donkey during the seventeen days we were afloat. Cutting wood by the water side for fuel was tedious work, as the best is very hard and close grained.

We passed at one point through so shallow a reach that it was not easy to find a channel. Here we entered the region of the notorious sarūt fly. His proboscis has extraordinary power of penetration, but fortunately his bite is not poisonous, as is that of the tsetze fly of East Africa.

At another point we grounded, and after lightening the steamer in all possible ways were just able with strenuous effort, soldiers and Jehadia heaving and hauling at her sides, to clear the bank. In places too it was difficult to land for our supplies of grass, as the ground is very swampy and rotten near the river.

It was on December 9 that we saw Dinka natives in their own country, at the village of Renk or Reng. A group of naked men and boys were fishing, wading in water about knee deep, and hurling their primitive spears, seemingly at random and with very limited success, into water so muddy that no fish could have

## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

been seen. After this we passed a succession of villages, whose huts with high pitched conical roofs of grass stood picturesquely among the palms. Some distance north of Fashoda guinea-fowl were plentiful, and Bright had the luck to bag a nice specimen of the white-eared Kob antelope.

On the 12th we reached Fashoda, steaming up a fine reach with open plains on both banks, and villages among the trees about a mile from the river. Soon after our arrival Bright and I set out for Marchand's fort, where we could dimly discern the ditch and old wall built by Gordon when Fashoda was a flourishing fort and convict station. The modern fort built by the French was in excellent repair, and occupied by Sudanese police.

Early next morning we steamed away from Fashoda, accompanied by the *Abu Klea*, which we had found awaiting our arrival with Hayes Sadler, the Mudir, on board. When we again landed, some four hours up stream, we were visited by numbers of friendly Shilluks who were not unwilling to be photographed. Quite naked in earlier days, they have worn coarse cloth since the occupation of Fashoda, and some of them have ivory bracelets on the upper arm. Their quaint and varied head-dresses are remarkable. They are great fishermen, these Shilluks, and may be seen in light canoes of reed, or hollowed trunks of trees, high and pointed fore and aft, driving their spears into the tall swampy growth where fish most do congregate, or into skilfully constructed little weirs across narrow side-channels. They also hunt the hippopotamus, which abounds in the neighbourhood. Their circular

## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

huts, made of mud and wattle, have but one low entrance, and are scrupulously clean.

At the Sobat Fort we parted company with Hayes Sadler, and continued our course up the Sobat river. Next day we crossed the Shilluk border, and came to the Dinka villages, where clothing was decidedly at a discount. Here we were much hindered by the rapidly diminishing volume of water, and about half-way between Sobat and Nasser forts we reached shallows which we could not hope to pass. Fortunately there was a Dom palm tree on the bank, and some thorn and bush and scrub, which would provide grazing for the camels, and material for zeribas and firewood.

Next morning we disembarked, and got the animals ashore, much to their satisfaction. On the 21st camp was pitched on a clearing, all the equipments of the expedition were landed, and final letters were written, and on December 22 the *Tamai* started down the Sobat, cutting us off from all intercourse with home till our return to Nasser at the end of May 1900.

As grazing was abundant, and our donkeys were in wretched condition and quite unfit for a long land journey, I determined to give them a week's rest. During this time we sent on a party with nine mules, carrying four days' rations, to stock a small depot three marches ahead, and busied ourselves detailing the loads for donkeys, mules, and camels, and in making astronomical observations to obtain marching rates for our chronometers.

On Christmas Eve I secured a couple of water-buck, and our Christmas menu consisted of hare soup (tinned), roast doves, venison, plum pudding (brought

## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

from home) and fried sardines, with a half-pint bottle of champagne ahead, well diluted with sparklet-soda; quite a regal meal in such surroundings to celebrate the great festival.

We left Dom Palm camp on December 28, 1899, and our excellent start was a proof of the qualities of the new pack-saddles. Our Anuak guide, who had relatives at Nasser, went with us. Anxious not to overstrain our animals, who could now have no grain food, we made a short march of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Going after guinea-fowl we found the woods trampled down in all directions by herds of elephants, which are a danger to the natives at night time.

Early next morning we reached the village of Yakwoik, which stands high at a rectangular bend of the river. Turning east we came next to Fatiwanyang, the home of a friendly chief to whom we had given a lift on the steamer. The old man came out to greet us, and was flying the Egyptian flag in our honour. Passing on through several other villages we found the natives as a rule very low in the scale of humanity. The only attempt at ornament which I saw there was an iron ring worn round the wrist, studded with long iron spikes at intervals!

On New Year's Eve we camped near the village of Gehinyar. The people in these parts are indolent, and regard the white man with suspicion. The men carry spears and oval buffalo-hide shields. Much of the country we were passing through was really park-like, though to the east and south of it were dismal swamps, without a single tree to break the dead-level monotony.



*The author and Major Bright after shooting their Christmas dinner.*

[To face page 8.



## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

On January 1, 1900, we reached a khor (water-course) which issues from the Sobat at Nyangdeng, and re-enters it near Sobat Fort. The following day we passed a succession of huts, whose occupants seemed to be scared at our approach, and camped under a fine grove of trees. Bright and I shot some of the beautiful straw-crested cranes, thus reprieving the life of a sheep for a few days.

At an important village, Nyakwoik by name, the natives were less suspicious, and many stood outside their huts to see the column file past, including coy, well-developed maidens, "mid nodings on" beyond a surprised and interested smile! Asked by the natives to shoot two hippos who were disporting themselves in the river, I did so, and they both sank. Whilst we were at lunch the men came to tell us that they had secured one of them. This they towed up stream to within half-a-mile of camp, and the afternoon was spent in cutting it up with their spears, which are almost as sharp as razors. Several hundred natives were thus employed relieving each other from time to time, and making such an infernal din as I have seldom heard, as they quarrelled over the titbits. The lower jaw we took with us, for it held the finest set of teeth I have ever seen. It is now among the treasures of my English home.

After a hot tiring march we reached Nasser post on January 4. It had been invisible from the land until we suddenly came upon it in a clearing on the river bank. Talat Effendi, who had arrived six days before in his sailing-boat, was there to greet us.

The fort is constructed on the site of an old

## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

Egyptian post, and we camped in the original enclosure, the trace of which was clearly discernible, although the station had been abandoned for years. A crow's nest is arranged in the branches of a conspicuous Dom palm, whence there is an extensive view. The fort was now held merely by a small force of Sudanese police under an Egyptian officer. In a small hut was an influential political prisoner, who had been banished from the Sudan.

The garrison had made no attempt to raise crops, and I pointed out to Ali Talat what a boon it would be if he could induce the men to take some interest in agriculture. My words bore fruit, for on our return in May 1900 we found the place completely metamorphosed by his industry and initiative. A nice house had been built for himself, and new huts for the men, which were beautifully clean and wholesome, and each family had its little cultivated plot, in which they took the greatest interest.

We had only lost two or three donkeys since we left the Dom Palm camp, and one had been left with the Sheikh of Manajok, who promised to send it on to Nasser. It never arrived, for with the best possible intentions he tied the unfortunate ass to a tree, and tried to feed it on fish! Can any one wonder that it preferred death?

On January 7 we again started up the river accompanied by a guide, who agreed to take us as far as the Pibor, and obtain fresh guides for us there. On leaving Nasser we cut across country to avoid a swamp-area, and next day came to the junction of the Sobat and Pibor. Both rivers are nearly a hundred yards wide,



## FROM CAIRO TO THE PIBOR

and the banks were so bare that fuel became a difficulty, and zeribas had to be constructed with the pack-saddles and their loads, as no thorn was available.

The Sheikh Kwoindai after much palavering agreed to supply us with guides as far as Barrakwik, a village some five marches to the east. Next day with the help of our Berthon boat we crossed the Pibor, making use also of an island at the mouth of the river, to which the men carried the donkey loads, while the mules and camels were able to negotiate the shoals up to that point. The boggy nature of the far bank was our chief difficulty, and there the animals became terribly involved, and had each to be man-handled out of the swampy margin by the soldiers and Jehadia, who worked grandly, plunging stark naked into the mud to lift out the flounders, and singing together as they worked.

Before camping in a small clump of trees about a mile away, I shot a hippo at the request of the natives. The bullet entered his brain, and he sank stone dead. This the natives could not credit, but moved round the body in most ludicrous uncertainty in their canoes, till one, bolder than the rest, ventured to close quarters, and jabbed his spear into the beast. No result. Much relief. With insults and spear points they all fell upon that poor dead hippo, and soon he was towed ashore to be cut up by the howling mob.

## CHAPTER II

### A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

WE now moved on eastward along the Baro, as the Sobat is called after its junction with the Pibor, but were again much delayed by a succession of small swampy khors. Next day, January 11, we reached the Adura, which we crossed easily, as it was shallow, with a bed of fine hard sand. This stream is in truth a loop of the Baro, from which it branches off some forty or fifty miles up stream. As the region was treeless, and the natives had recently burnt the rank growth of grass, it was no easy matter to procure necessary fuel. The tramp through these ashes if any breeze is stirring leads to much discomfort, and often to inflamed eyes, besides giving one the appearance of having crawled through a sooty chimney. Even when camp is pitched, and you have tubbed to your satisfaction, a whirlwind may bring a cloud of black ashes into your tent, and you must get back into the bath, round which a blue haze of vituperation will assuredly hang! As a set-off against these discomforts it must be remembered that it is almost impossible, and in any case most exhausting, to force a passage through large tracts of the tall unburnt grass.

On January 13 we reached Barrakwik, where the natives led us to a suitable camping-ground near two

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

solitary trees. At the Pibor we had been overtaken by an Anuak from Nasser, who professed to be familiar with the country on ahead to the foot of the Abyssinian highlands; he was, however, an utter fraud, and later, when he had led us many a dance over swamps and through long grass, unable to tell me the name of any village, stream, or other feature to note down on my map, I asked him when he had last been in those parts which seemed so familiar to him, and he simpered in reply that he had been born in Anuak country, but had been taken away from it as a child!

Our Arabic interpreter, Bakhir Ahmed, who spoke English like a book, had suffered from lumbago, and was carried on a camel. The rest did him good, but he was disturbed several times during the halt by snakes, big black brutes, which appeared suddenly out of the ground near where he was lying. We saw many snakes in this swampy region; one was certainly a black cobra, who threw out his hood angrily when bolting from Bright and the menace of his stick. It will be seen in later pages how fortunate we were in obtaining the services of Bakhir, and how at most critical times he proved his sterling worth. Wonderful was his knowledge of colloquial English. I remember that once, when I asked him what had become of some natives, he gravely told me that they had "slunk their hook!" "Do you mean that they have gone?" I said. "Yes, sir," he replied, "they have *all* slunk their hook!"

On January 15 we went forward along the Baro some three miles to Machar, a village full of natives, and then on by two other villages and several small

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

khors. During the march we saw Senegal hartebeeste and water-buck, and I was fortunate enough to bag one of the latter with a very fine head. As a belt of trees to the south indicated that we were close to the Adura, we decided to strike across country in search of geographical facts, and also of better "going."

At the end of two miles and a half we came upon the Adura, on January 16, and we followed it approximately for the rest of the march, finding the track along its banks much better than that by the Baro. We gathered from a number of Nuers, who were congregated here in temporary huts, that their permanent Gunjang homes were three marches to the south, but as there was no water in their river—the Mokwai probably—they had come north to spear fish. They seemed more friendly than the Nuers west of Nasser, but bore the same horizontal tribal markings—four parallel cicatrices across the forehead from ear to ear.

Next day we followed the bank, sometimes in the river bed, but generally on the south side, until we came to the point where this large loop takes off from the Baro. There we camped under fine sycamore trees, a most grateful refuge after the long grass plains where the temperature was up to 108° under the shade of the tent, even when it was open to the breeze. In the morning we started again on a longish march to Tadiok village, passing a small khor about five yards wide, which is said to develop into a big stream of the Adura type, south of which it flows, until joined by other streams—it is known as the Mokwai—and finally enters the Pibor ten miles or so before its junction with the Sobat.

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

It was then that we first caught sight of distant hills, lying almost due east of us just short of Tadiok, which the heat-haze had before obscured, but which during the rainy season can be clearly seen from a steamer on the river. Before we reached Tadiok we came upon a herd of water-buck, two of which fell to my rifle. We brought on all skins, having heard that they are highly prized by the Anuaks, who are skilled in the art of curing them. One we gave as his fee to an Anuak youth who agreed to guide us to Gambela.

We were now approaching the eastern limits of Nuer occupation, and looked forward eagerly to a relief from the monotony of the Nuer scenery and its uninteresting natives, who harass and bully their neighbours. While we were east of Nasser, the sheikhs never visited our camp, or brought in any present for the white man. As we passed they merely shouted "Bābā bābā," their form of salutation, pumping their hands up and down from the elbow in prayer to the Supreme Being for protection against strangers. They shine as beggars, but offer nothing in return.

We saw no standing crops in Nuer territory. For six months of the year the natives live almost entirely on fish, which are easily speared in pools during the dry season; and when the rains break they go to winter quarters, and sow between May and November: Our last camp in their district was near the village of Methok, where the Nigol, a swampy stream, spills into a large expanse of marsh, and gradually filters into the Baro.

The Nigol stream confronted us on January 20,

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

and we crossed it with some difficulty. Certainly in the rainy season it and the marshes that surround it would be quite impassable. After skirting a broad expanse of swamp we eventually reached the Baro again, and found the river not far short of 300 yards wide where we struck its firm, well-defined banks. We were now in Anuak territory, and here we suffered our first, and I am happy to say our only, loss of human life during this expedition. One of the very best of the Jehadia, who alone in the whole column seemed to understand camels and their ailments, had been unable to walk for several days owing to some affection of the face and stomach. Hearing after camp had been pitched that he was complaining of severe pains, I applied a mustard leaf, which seemed to soothe him, but as he was expressing his satisfaction he suddenly expired.

We remained in camp next day, and were visited by several Anuaks, who exchanged for small Egyptian coins some curious fishing spears, on which giraffe-bone heads were mounted, nearly two feet long, rounded and polished to a diameter of about three-quarters of an inch, and finished in a sharp point.

The peaks we had seen from Tadiok now stood clearly out to the north-east, crowning the low range which underlies them, and is known locally by the Anuaks as the Pam hills.

It was a pleasant change on January 22 to come upon the cultivated tracts of the Anuaks along the river. Both banks were rich in crops now nearly ripe, and the country was full of cheery life. Passing two settlements, we finally camped at Itang. We

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

had skirted a swampy area on which ducks, geese, crested crane, and other water-fowl were feeding, and while I waited for my orderly to retrieve some birds, a small herd of six elephants suddenly appeared upon the scene, but they turned and bolted on catching sight of us. I must confess I love to watch elephants at large, there is something so majestic in their movements; and though I have only shot one in my wanderings, I have no ambition to make a big bag of these mighty beasts. Too much slaughter of this sort is indulged in both by natives and by sportsmen, who destroy them for their ivory without pity.

Next day we reached Pokum district, in the heart of the Anuak country, nearly due south of the most prominent peak of the Pam hills. The scenery here is charming. One village, Ideni, formed a perfect picture, nestling on the bank, beneath a fine grove of trees on a glorious broad reach of the river. The natives were most sociable, and turned out in numbers to see us. After passing another island village we were able to cut off a big bend by traversing a thick belt of bush. We saw several small lakes near at hand. In the afternoon we obtained fowls from the natives in exchange for white beads. It is particularly cheering to the traveller who has crossed inhospitable wastes to be roused before dawn by the hearty crowing of cocks from villages around, for the homely sound removes the sense of loneliness.

As we approached the Abyssinian hills the nights became very close, and thunder threatened, though the rainy season is not due till April. Leaving the river at Pokum, where a low hill extended to the

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

water's edge, we struck eastward through waste grass land and thorn bush. Near a small village, Ogara, we had to cut a path. We were soon on a stretch of gravel, and saw stones for the first time since we had left the Nile! Round an enclosure at Ogara the owner had with a curious conceit carved the heads of all the long posts, which supported the matwork fence of grass, into the form of horns, which gave the place a most quaint and picturesque appearance. We still kept in touch with the stream, and camped in the Penkio district amid clusters of huts.

Through thickly wooded country and on rising ground we drew near to the Abyssinian escarpment, and saw lofty hills to the north and east which seemed to bar our advance. The Anuaks build huts of mud and wattle near the river, which are always scrupulously clean and neat, and usually surrounded by a reed fence, within which granaries and folds for sheep and goats are formed. The people are peaceful, friendly, and industrious, and raise splendid crops twice in the year from the generous soil. Grain of various kinds, cotton, and tobacco are cultivated with success. Not so tall a race as the Nuers, the Anuaks are finely developed; many of them wear beautifully cured skins round the loins as soft as chamois leather, and splendid ivory bracelets on their arms. In general appearance they are smart and well groomed, and in character lovers of peaceful pursuits.

The older women wear skins round their loins, often daintily picked out with beads; younger women and girls are most attractively decked with beads, thick-set round the neck and waist, of many colours,





*A group of Annak maidens of the Baro or Upeno river.*

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while a fringe, opaque white or light blue and white, hangs round the body. With their bright laughing faces grouped together they form a charming picture of modest maidenhood.

When crops are ripening regular platforms are rigged up in the fields, and crowned by open domes of cut saplings. On a grass floor at top the Anuak women and boys take their stand to scare the birds with unearthly yells, and pellets of clay slung from the end of a pliant twig. Others pull a long rope strung with shells and old gourds, which is attached to their perches, and thus make such a rattling din that no bird will feed within range of it.

Their language is distinct from that of the Nuers, and friendly as they are they seem to use no form of greeting. Their method of ploughing and sowing is most primitive. A half-moon implement of iron turns the ground at intervals, a few seeds are dropped from a basket, and a little soil is drawn over them with the foot. Nature does the rest.

Their dead are buried where they die, the grave is neatly plastered over with mud, and the family continues to occupy the quarters as before.

On January 25 we moved eastward up the river till we reached some low broken hills, with one of sugar-loaf shape in the foreground. Cultivation dwindled and the soil became more stony, while the stream ran with swifter flow. At the end of our march on the 26th we reached the point beyond which Marchand could not navigate the Baro on account of the rapids, and we found the small steamer *Faidherbe* as she had been beached by him and his

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comrades. Bright and I, guided by natives, waded over to the small island where she was housed, and saw that the boat, fifty or sixty feet long, had been hauled up and secured by iron chains made fast to adjacent trees. Her whole length was neatly covered by a long grass shed. It was a pleasant spot, and one could imagine with what regrets its owners must have left it, and the trusty craft which they had navigated almost across the greatest width of the African continent.

That evening the first Galla we had seen turned up with a sheep for sale, and agreed to accompany us to the Gambela district, which we reached next day.

We had now left behind us the great grass plains, and the stony track passed over many undulations and through thick woods, so that we made slow progress, having to cut a way for the camels at times. A few Anuaks went with us, and as I whistled to encourage the donkeys to quicken their pace, an Anuak youth in front echoed my whistle note for note. I branched off into bars of "Old Madrid," and again he took up each bar, and his whistle was absolutely true. At Itang the small boys imitated our bugle-calls with wonderful accuracy, so that we may certainly infer that these natives are gifted with an excellent ear.

We camped on that day among isolated hills. On the 28th we had desired to halt opposite Sheikh Moro's village, but were misled by the guide he sent to us, and overshot our mark by three or four miles. I killed a hippo by the river, and some natives put off in a canoe to tow the bulky carcass ashore. As,

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however, they had no rope, I sent one of my men to camp to fetch some. At the end of an hour he had not returned, and I found from a native that we had already passed the sheikh's village. Furious that Bright should have been led astray, I hurried off in pursuit of the column, and overtook it after two and a half miles, when we all trudged back to where we should have originally halted.

I had to send a peremptory message to the sheikh before he would come to pay his respects to us, and he made very lame excuses for his lack of courtesy. Our food supply was short, and he was asked to provide runners to take a note to the Abyssinians on the summit of the plateau to the east, to tell them of our arrival and to obtain food, and also to let his own people know that we proposed opening a market on the morrow.

Sheikh Moro is a young man of slight build, with a pleasant face pitted with small-pox. He wore merely a dressed skin round his loins and a few beads on his neck. His people treated him with marked respect, doubling themselves up as long as they remained in his presence. It was evident throughout our interview that his soul was set upon flesh-pots, and his thoughts with the yelling crowd who were hacking away at the hippo by the river side.

I was on the point next day of sending off a letter to the Abyssinians, translated into both Arabic and Amharic, when four Gallas turned up in hot haste from the direction of Buré, to say that the Abyssinians had already heard of our arrival, and wished us to come on at once. We therefore added a postscript to

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

the effect that they might expect us after a few days' rest, and sent it forward by two of the runners, retaining the other two to act as guides.

All along the Baro, Bright and I had kept the men well supplied with meat, and ourselves with birds, so that we still had nearly a dozen of the sheep we had brought from Omdurman, or received as presents from the natives.

On February 1 we again started for the highlands, but did not make much way along the rocky hillside. At the mouth of the gorge we crossed the Bonga, a clear stream about twenty feet in width. Here the Baro river bed was thickly set with boulders, round which the water flowed in a series of rapids and small falls. Opposite our camp was a large colony of Gallas and Sudanese who were washing sand for gold. Next day, after a still shorter march, we stopped at one of Marchand's old camps, having reached a point below the junction of the Baro and the Birbir, where we were met by runners with letters from the Abyssinians. Petros, a young Abyssinian who was with us, told its purport to Bakhir Ahmed, and he in turn translated it into English for us, assisted by our native officer Ahmed Effendi, a skilled Arabic scholar, who, however, knew no English, and their combined talent evolved the following wonderful documents:—

“To be reach Presence Dear friend to People, Major Austin, and all the officers whom they are with him. Peace to you all. The letter that you have sent is received, and his excellency Dejjaj Sama proceeded to King, and we have sent him message after when we heard of your coming. It has gaved us a great Happi-

## A TRAMP THROUGH ASHES

ness when we heard that you have come, so we sent people to meet you, and also for to show you the way, and I shall meet you at Goré. Don't think of any thing—your requests will be done. From Kanaizmaja Waldah Gabriel.”

The writer was acting governor of the Goré district during the absence of Dejaz Tasamma, who had evidently gone to the capital to see King Menelek. A second letter was translated thus:—

“To reach presence Major Austin, and peace to whom with you. When the letter came it gaved us happiness, and we come for to meet you at village called Buré Kachalin, and waiting there. Come immediately. All food ready, as all food and drink is sent on road from Wakil Buré.

“Signed (1) Azaj Sheerinet, (2) Kato Katalin,  
“ (3) Kafahafi Kaleka Waldah Hanna.”

It was indeed a warm welcome, for it is no light thing in the heart of Africa to be told to “think of nothing,” and that “all food and drink” is “ready and sent on road!” With pleasant anticipations, therefore, we began to cross the Baro, which was forty yards wide and six feet deep. By the help of a cable and the Berthon boat, we were established by 1 P.M. on February 3 on the right bank of the gorge, the animals being driven over a ford farther down stream. We had thus left the Anuak territory, and our further experiences would be among the Gallas and Abyssinians.

## CHAPTER III

### SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

A STIFF climb confronted us as we looked up from the bottom of the Baro gorge to the mountains that towered above, but the guides assured us that the French had constructed a mountain road which our animals could easily negotiate. With light hearts we set out on the morning of February 4, but found it weary work to surmount the frequent obstacles. It was only by help from Gallas and Abyssinians, who came to meet us, that we made our way by night-fall to a rocky nullah on the heights, some 1400 feet above the Baro, having to abandon a mule and two donkeys on the steep ascent. At one spot, where the narrow track ran along the hillside on the edge of a precipice, several camels lost their footing, and away they went out of sight, to fall and roll with an ominous thud on to rock some sixty feet below! How they and eight loaded donkeys, which also went over in their rush to secure the safer inside places, escaped with their lives, is more than I can say, but they did all struggle back to safety.

The final ascent of 1800 feet was too steep for any loaded animals, so the pack-saddles were removed, and the donkeys started off to the plateau without encumbrance, and hundreds of Gallas were sent the



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next day to carry up the loads. A most exhausting ascent in company with friend Takalin the Abyssinian, who met us the previous day, landed us also on the summit.

The prospect from this plateau, 5200 feet above sea-level, reminded Bright and me of Savé on the northern slopes of Mount Elgon in East Africa; beautiful were the trees and foliage and butterflies, and the fine mountain air was most exhilarating after the intense heat of the Baro Valley. The bold mountain scenery was in striking contrast to all that our men from the plains had ever seen. Bright's Berberine boy, astonished at the labyrinth of hills, cried in bewilderment, "Sir, there are hills at all four corners!"

On February 7 six of our camels at last scaled the heights, but one, the finest of the lot, succumbed in the effort. I was taken ill on that day with a form of gastritis, an old African complaint of mine, but feeling better on the 8th, we decided to push on for the station prepared for us by Azaj Cheronet. Hearing that quite a regal reception was prepared for us, Bright and I wore khaki uniform in place of our ordinary khaki shooting suits.

I was mounted on a mule gaily caparisoned with gorgeous trappings, and a saddle with a high cantle, and stirrups fashioned to admit no more than the big toe. Unprepared to ride Abyssinian fashion without boots and socks, I was compelled to requisition a string stirrup on either side, and went on with a few Askaris, whilst Bright came along with the caravan in rear, and made a route sketch of the country.

## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

At intervals we were joined by fresh horsemen, and at length a hum of expectation arose, and there before us on the road was a large array of Abyssinian soldiery, armed with modern breech-loading magazine rifles, grouped round a distinguished-looking old man with grey beard, who wore a slouch felt hat, with a black cloak or gown thrown over his other garments. As he sat alone on a raised dais it was evident that this was the Governor of the Buré district, Azaj Cheronet. As I approached and dismounted he came forward and led me to share his seat, where we conversed for some time through interpreters.

Presently we moved on, Cheronet and I riding with much pomp and a full escort to some grass huts which were pointed out as our residence. *En route* the horsemen had given us a very fine show, dashing hither and thither in pursuit and flight, and hurling long sharp-pointed sticks to represent spears, which they caught on circular shields with much dexterity. After tea and biscuits the Governor left for his own home, seven or eight miles distant on the road to Goré.

I was now again prostrated with violent fits of vomiting, and there is a gap of ten days in my diary. For a time my life was despaired of, but Bright did all he could to keep up my strength, and at last when nearly played out I took a turn for the better, and was able to retain small quantities of milk and sparklet-soda, and eggs beaten up with brandy. One day when my servant Hanna broke an egg for me, out came a *live* chicken! Uttering an astonished "Allah!" he broke another, when out came a second chicken equally alive! The Abyssinians did not fail to in-

## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

quire after me, and Cheronet came over twice himself, and was regaled with tea, and received by a guard of Askaris, who presented arms, with the flourish of a bugle-call for further effect. We heard that Marchand and his party had also been affected by the bracing air of these mountains until they were acclimatised.

On February 20 we gave presents to the three prominent Abyssinians, and on the 21st we started for Goré, the capital, camping on that day near Azaj Cheronet's residence. The district of Buré is densely populated by Gallas, and its fine valleys and ridges are extremely fertile, while an abundance of grass was most welcome for our animals. Again we were met by Cheronet and conducted to an open plot of turf, on which a rough grass hut had been erected for our use. Resting here for a day we were much struck by the contrast between the naked savagery we had left behind us and the well-dressed semi-civilisation of the plateau, where the contented condition of the Gallas spoke well for the firm but just administration of the Abyssinians, their conquerors.

As we had received such hospitality from them, we presented Azaj Cheronet with a revolver, ammunition, three Terai slouch felt hats, and some glossy yellow cloth with silken surface, which is worn on special occasions over the head; and to Walda Hanna we gave a sword, two Terai hats, and some fancy cloths. On the 23rd we resumed our march through charming scenery which at times recalled the country lanes of England. Four miles brought us to the end of the Buré district, where we pitched our camp. Next

## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

morning we descended from the ridge into a wooded hollow, and made our way to a charming expanse of grass which divides the valley of the Yato from another which is as deep.

The cold nights at this high altitude were beginning to tell upon our transport animals, so that many died upon the road, and we made but slow progress, traversing a thickly-wooded uninhabited tract, and crossing rocky fords, and a bridge skilfully constructed by the Abyssinians. On February 27 we came to the Gomoro river, which flows through a swampy hollow 1100 feet below the summit of the Goré ridge. At 10 P.M. we were roused by a noisy crowd of Galla men and women, who had come to bring us food and drink from Walda Gabriel at Goré. On the 28th I pushed on with a small party of Askaris, having heard that all the high officers of state awaited our arrival at the Goré ridge. After a rapid ascent we reached its foot, and as we gained its summit we found the plateau lined with two or three hundred soldiers armed with rifles, with Kanyazmach Walda Gabriel, and many other officers, at their head. I gave the order to unfurl the Union Jack and the Egyptian flag, which were borne in front by two Askaris, and advanced to meet Walda Gabriel, who also left his retinue to greet us. Having introduced us to several officers, he took us to the buildings allotted to us.

Here, seated in the place of honour, with Gabriel at my side and a crowd of officers around, I expressed my gratification at the kind reception accorded us and for all the help we had received, and added that their friendliness had touched us deeply. Walda Gabriel



*Our native officer, Ahmed Effendi, on the left, and little Bakhir Ahmed, our interpreter.*

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## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

thanked us, and replied that as England and Abyssinia were now on such good terms he had instructions from his master, Dejaz Tasamma, who had been summoned to the capital by the king, to show us all honour, and to supply our needs. Presently he withdrew, but returned later with a long line of men, women, and boys, who carried bread, fowls, eggs, and jars of marisa and asalia, drinks made from grain and from honey. A grand fatted ox brought up the rear, wild as a buffalo, and kept in check with difficulty by many men. Gabriel would eat no meat with us, as it was Lent, a season during which his people eat nothing but bread and the produce of the fields. After lunch, however, he joined us in biscuits and coffee when we had assured him that there was no butter in the gingerbread!

As we had now reached our farthest point on the Abyssinian plateau, it may be well to give some account of the country and its inhabitants. The subject race of Gallas, who occupy the high grounds and extend north as far as the Blue Nile, once held the southern portion of the present Abyssinian country, but subjugated by force of arms, they now own allegiance to Menelek alone. I can only speak from personal experience of the Gallas of the Buré, Goré, and intermediate districts.

In addition to cereals of all sorts, such as dura, Indian corn, peas and beans, tomatoes, potatoes, and coffee are grown by the Gallas. They are rich in sheep and goats, but possess few cattle. Fowls, eggs, butter, and honey are abundant. Mules and donkeys are bred extensively, and ponies and horses are numerous.

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The Gallas trade with the Anuaks for cotton, and may often be seen returning in large parties from the plains with great skins full of raw cotton on their backs. This they weave into a coarse strong cloth, with which the better class of their own people and the Abyssinians are clothed. They smoke tobacco, which is sold in their market-places in solid lumps not unlike hardened clay.

As a subject race the Gallas pay taxes to the Abyssinians, and perform for them all sorts of manual labour, but they enjoy a large amount of liberty, and prosper under Abyssinian rule, yielding ready obedience to officials placed in authority over them, and cultivating their own tracts of ground in peace. Many of them are allowed to carry arms, and all are decently clad. The men wear cloth pyjama trousers, and a long sheet of homespun cloth wound round their bodies. The better class of women too are dressed in cloth. With but few exceptions they are Mahommedans.

All buying and selling among them is under strict supervision; for instance, a man who sells a donkey has to pay into the treasury a tax of one dollar from the sum received. The current coinage consists of bars of salt about eight inches long, two inches broad, and rather less in thickness. These are bound at intervals with protecting grass, and their value varies in different parts, according to whether salt is easily procured or not. In the Buré and Goré districts ten such bars without a flaw are equivalent to one dollar. These people are very suspicious of silver coins that are not absolutely new; beads they refuse, but cloth and single Terai hats are in great demand.



## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

The following list of prices may be of use to intending travellers in the parts we visited. A baggage-mule cost us from 40 to 45 dollars, but good riding mules run up to three or even four times that price. Donkeys from 8 to 14 dollars, according to size and condition. Three bags, 55 lbs. each, of unground Indian corn we purchased for 10 slabs of salt, or 1 dollar. For four bags of peas we gave 4 dollars, and for six bags of condemned dura, 2 dollars. A goat or sheep is valued at from 1 to 2 dollars. A Terai hat was equivalent usually to a small sheep. These hats were obtained from Messrs. Rylands & Sons, 55 Wood Street, London, E.C., at an average cost of about a shilling, and were most successful articles for barter in Galla land.

Physically the Galla men are generally thin and slight, with little muscular power. Their skin is far less dark than that of natives of the plains, who are quite black, and in complexion they resemble the natives of Northern India. The women are much finer than the men, and are often quite pretty, but, unlike their naked sisters of the plain, they are not above suspicion in matters of morality. After travelling many thousand miles in Africa I have come to the conclusion that absolute nudity is a true indication of the purity and innocence of a tribe. Where these conditions prevail the morality of the women could never be questioned.

The Abyssinians, a powerful nation under the strong rule of Menelik, are now an important factor in African affairs. They are Christians of the Coptic Church, and their services are conducted by priests

## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

trained from early youth in the tenets of the church. In the graveyard adjoining the little church at Goré a French officer, M. Clochette, who died there a few years ago, is buried.

Exceedingly well armed in this region, the Abyssinians prize ammunition, but waste it in a dangerous and senseless way. No feast or drunken orgie is complete without reckless firing of rifles, from which the bullets on more than one occasion passed unpleasantly close to our tents. Officers all wear swords, and seldom move about, however insignificant their rank, without a train of followers; one carries his rifle, another his embossed shield, while a third holds his horse. A high official may probably be accompanied by twenty or thirty armed retainers.

All these people are well clothed, and it is their habit, in addition to cloth shirts and trousers, to wrap themselves in large winding-sheets of coarse home-made cloth, white, with a broad red band across the centre. Cloth of all colours is much prized. The higher officials wear a black cloak, sometimes lined with red, or furnished with a hood.

In comparison with their neighbours the Abyssinians are highly civilised, and yet we met but few officers of rank who could read or write their own language. Special clerks are retained for this purpose, and must, of course, be in the confidence of their employers. Fond as they are of outward show and pomp, the Abyssinians live in very humble style. We found many of our aristocratic friends sharing their home not only with their wives, children, and Galla maid-servants, but with horses, mules, and donkeys;

## SCALING STEEP HEIGHTS

while sheep and goats walked in and out of the houses at will. They never smoke, but are partial to many sorts of drink, especially to marisa, made from grain, and asalia, from honey. A potent liqueur is distilled from asalia, not unlike Benedictine, but very fiery. Strong coffee is used in large quantities, and cognac is much appreciated.

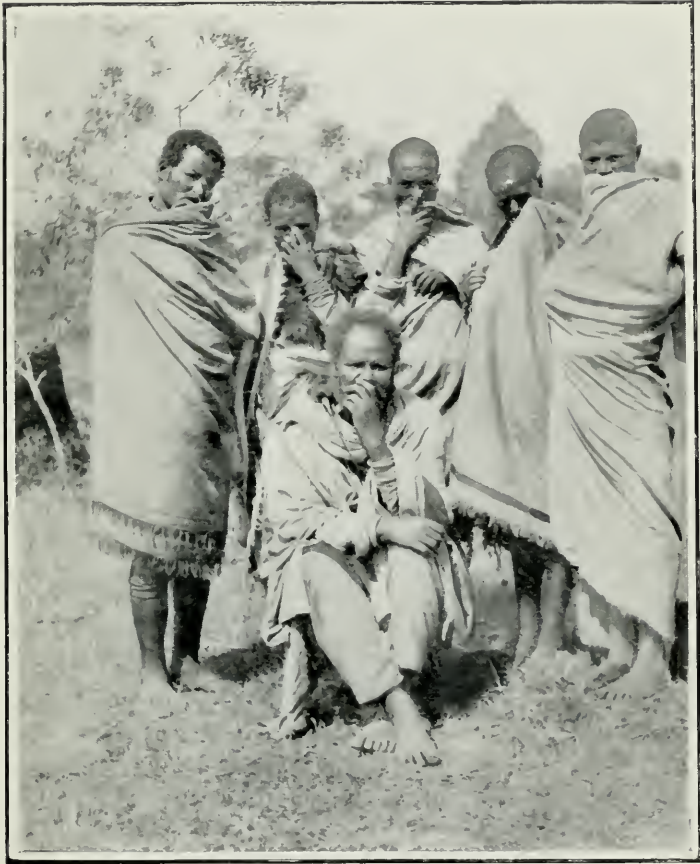
Both Gallas and Abyssinians, in common with all Orientals, have the utmost confidence in the white man as a physician, and many sick were brought daily to our camp for treatment. Fortunately we were well supplied with medicines and bandages. So great was our success in these lines that Bright and I established quite a reputation, though our nearest connection with medical education is that a brother of mine is an army doctor!

## CHAPTER IV

### A TROPICAL TORRENT

DURING our three weeks' stay at Goré we heard several times from Dejj Tasamma, then at Addis Abbeba, and from Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. Harrington, the British Agent at the court of King Menelek, who very kindly sent us a supply of papers, and told us of the stirring events in the Transvaal.

We were now in serious difficulty for lack of transport, for numbers of Gallas had been despatched to the Baro to bring up Marchand's vessel, the *Faidherbe*, and by March 12 our donkeys were reduced to eighty-two, half of them in wretched condition and of very little service. Four camels and seven mules were still available, and as it was expedient that we should clear out of these parts before the rains, already overdue, broke, I decided to send all the original Omdurman donkeys and camels down to the plains, with forty saddle-loads of stores and equipments, retaining only seventeen Abyssinian donkeys and two mules which we had purchased from the Gallas, and hoping to procure more from the same source, to remove the bulk of the equipment left behind with us. The column therefore was divided, and the advance party, under Shaweesh Fadlalla, senior non-commissioned officer of the escort, began its return march to Gambela on March 12. On



*Grazmach Aichek and a group of Abyssinians.*

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## A TROPICAL TORRENT

the 15th, as there seemed little prospect of purchasing sufficient animals, I sent on another convoy of ten mules and eighteen donkeys to carry and leave stores at Azaj Cheronet's for safe custody, whilst the empty animals were to return to us as soon as possible with their attendants.

They came back on the 20th, and the men reported that Gabriel had stopped the advance column at Azaj Cheronet's, fearing that the lack of any European officer in command might give offence to the Abyssinians down at the French boat. They also brought word that there was no grazing there, as the whole region was parched for want of rain. In this dilemma I sent for Walda Gabriel, and persuaded him to allow my advance party to go forward to the camp at the edge of the plateau, where grazing was still plentiful. Bright and I took the road again with those who remained at Goré on March 21, when we were able to remove the stores with us on animals recently purchased.

We reached our old camping-ground at Amuma next day, and Grazmach Aichek, an Abyssinian official, turned up about tea time with five fowls, eighteen eggs, two pots of honey, and three bundles of bread, as personal presents to Bright and myself, and the promise of a further supply for the men. On the 25th we were back at our old camp at Azaj Cheronet's, and were met by the corporal and three men who had been left in charge of the convoy stores, and whose account of our transport prospects were far from reassuring.

The advanced party had moved on to the edge of the plateau camp, and the stores with us had to be conveyed in two relays by us to join it at that place,

## A TROPICAL TORRENT

so another convoy was despatched. Whilst we were delayed therefore in quest of donkeys and food supplies, we did some more doctoring. Walda Hanna himself asked us to do something for his baby, brought into camp by his wife. The poor child was in a sad state: the whole head was covered with a huge scab from ear to ear, and from forehead to nape of neck. The young mother was a really beautiful girl, with creamy complexion, perfect features, and lovely eyes—quite a Madonna type of face—and was in deep distress. The best that we could do was to powder the little head thickly with dermatol and bandage it. The youngster meanwhile kicked up such a din and wriggled so persistently that we had to prevail on the mother to suckle it throughout our efforts for its relief.

On March 29 the smaller convoy returned, and we were able on the 30th to move forward again. On the road we met Cheronet, who had been to see about Marchand's boat, and took leave of him and of our old friend Aichek, who also suddenly turned up as we were pitching camp close to the stockade where I had been so ill. Here, at our last halt in the populous Buré district, we indulged in some very brisk trade just before sundown, acquiring eleven much-needed goats and sheep, and another donkey.

Our whole column was once more concentrated on March 31 at the summit camp, which was most refreshingly green, and where good grazing was abundant. Owing to the serious losses amongst our animals our carrying power had been on the whole reduced by about half its strength since we left Dom Palm camp three months before, and the problem that



## A TROPICAL TORRENT

faced us was how to get all the loads down to the foot of the bluff, on the rocky nullah 1800 feet below, without the aid of Galla porters. The men were in high spirits at the prospect of regaining the plains after the cold and discomforts of the plateau. To celebrate our reunion we killed a fat sheep, and issued tobacco, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. a-head to all who smoked, and tea to the non-smokers. To the Askaris, whose kit was the worse for wear, we gave four yards of cloth a-piece. Aichek again greeted us here, and asked for quinine before venturing into the plains, which Abyssinians seem to regard as quite a death-trap for fever. Walda Hanna, too, arrived from Cheronet's, bringing a budget of papers and letters from Addis Abbeba, forwarded to us by Harrington, with news of the relief of Lady-smith and Cronje's surrender. This was the more welcome as one of my brothers was shut in with White and his gallant garrison.

I decided that the first stage of our descent should be undertaken entirely with the Abyssinian mules and donkeys, as they are so active and sure-footed. At midday, April 1, the first detachment started, returning empty in the afternoon for further work. This plan was repeated until on the morning of April 4 the final move was made down to the Baro. Here all the loads were transported to the opposite bank in the Berthon boat. A terrific thunderstorm crashed upon us that evening: the peals were absolutely continuous, and the flashes nearly so, while the rain fell in a deluge; such a storm I had never experienced. While Bright and I had gone up stream to shoot hippos, our tents had been pitched on the centre of a sandy stretch;

## A TROPICAL TORRENT

and now, in an incredibly short time, little nullahs came down, and a tiny trickle through our tents was changed almost instantly to a full stream. We snatched wildly at some of the aluminium mess-ware on the ground, which was sailing off upon the flood, but nothing could resist the torrent, which in a few moments was eighteen inches deep, and careering with tremendous velocity right through our three tents, which were pitched as usual end on to each other. Away went boots, socks, boxes, tables, chairs, and down came the tents with a run. Everything was swept away, leaving us knee-deep in water, which surrounded us like a sea.

Fearing that the Baro river itself had come down in flood, and that all our belongings would be lost, I dashed over to where the donkey loads had been stacked. The men were already working like Trojans, and though a strong stream was dashing against the stack, stark naked they were lifting and hauling the things to higher ground clear of the channel. Thus all the saddles and their loads were saved, though much damage was done. Many of the men who had camped on the lower ground lost belts and ammunition, but happily their rifles and kits were saved. The downpour ceased as suddenly as it had come upon us on the wings of the storm, leaving a scene of utter desolation in its track.

Then by the fitful light of our camp-lanterns, to which we had resolutely clung, we began to search among the debris of mud, grass, and twigs that had been deposited by this violent onset of water. One of my tin boxes containing all my notes, diaries, maps,

## A TROPICAL TORRENT

and chronometers, had been carried twenty or thirty yards, and washed against a log just short of the Baro: a marvellous escape from the loss of all the results of our work. Pathetic were the inquiries that arose. "Are the theodolites all right?" "Have you found my gun and rifle yet?" "I can't find my camp bed and bedding anywhere!" It was indeed a night of misery, and never on this trip was dawn so anxiously awaited.

Then the day broke, gloriously fine and hot, and our camp assumed the appearance of a back yard on washing day, as we hung everything on bushes or spread them on the ground to dry. It was a long morning's work to clean and clear up boxes which had suffered, to restore the loads of food to proper condition, to burnish our surveying instruments and guns and rifles, and to hunt in the debris for lost goods. Notwithstanding all this sudden discomfort, very little serious mischief had been done, and we were still prepared to carry on our survey work before returning to Nasser, if only we could procure supplies of food, and our transport held out. This was, however, so reduced in numbers that we were not able to carry all our stores and equipment with us. To meet the difficulty, besides burning and destroying many loads, we were compelled for more than a fortnight to proceed by double stages, our animals carrying forward half and then returning for the rest, until we reached Itang. Here we deposited the surplus loads we could not take with us direct when we marched south, and which we subsequently recovered by steamer on our return to Nasser.

## A TROPICAL TORRENT

It was less than half a mile from the bank of the Baro to the top of the ridge we must next pass over, but the rise of several hundred feet was so abrupt and stony, that it took us most of the morning on April 7 to transfer our loads to that point. In the afternoon a large gang of Gallas passed over the kotal (col) and through our camp, carrying one of Marchand's barges to the river below. They treated us to an outburst of song, but it struck us that their work, poor devils, had only just begun, and that they would take another tone when the burden of their unwieldy load had to be borne uphill.

On the 8th we made for Marchand's old camp across the bend of the Baro, and halted over the 9th—a big festival of the Sudanese, who slaughtered the largest sheep of our flock to grace the occasion. The heat was very trying—the one advantage of it was that little friends who were too attentive to us on the plateau cleared out of our beds and blankets, so that, as they ceased to trouble, we could be at rest.

Leaving the Baro gorge on the 11th we camped on a small plain enclosed by hills, and hearing hippos grunting, I went down with my rifle to the river. On reaching its bank an extraordinary sight met my eyes. Out on a large spit of sand on the far side was a school of some thirty hippos, monsters, middle-sized, and youngsters, huddled together, and standing like rocks half out of the water. It was not easy to single any out; but eventually, with the only shot I fired, I killed one that was between the school and our bank. My bullet penetrated his brain, and he sank at once. When, later, his body floated it was towed





## A TROPICAL TORRENT

ashore, and provided meat for the men for two or three days.

We found guinea-fowl on the plain, and Bright shot a small antelope. Next day we reached our old camp at Gambela, where we could not help contrasting our position with what it had been about two months before. Our donkeys had dwindled from 124 to only 30 that were sound, our camels from 7 to a single one, and the 10 mules to 3. As we crossed the Bonga we were overtaken by Abyssinians with letters from the Emperor Menelek and Harrington, and another welcome budget of papers. The *facsimile* of Menelek's letter, which I am able to produce with its translation, will be of interest to my readers. A richly caparisoned mule was also sent to me by Dejjaj Tasamma, the trappings of which I have brought home.

On the 15th we camped a mile and a half short of the site of the *Faidherbe*. Half of the steamer still awaited transportation. Two days later we came upon some really good grazing ground, but the natives, formerly so friendly and confiding, seemed afraid of us; and their land, which had been rich in crops, was desolate. This was due to the recent incursion of Gallas and Abyssinians who were employed to fetch the *Faidherbe*, and who had plundered them. There they sat, crouching on the opposite bank, and evidently longing to see the last of us. With difficulty we reassured them, gave them presents, and offered to purchase flour with beads. Fortunately it is their habit to bury their harvested crops, and the dark ladies at once began to pound grain into flour, using

## A TROPICAL TORRENT

for the purpose wooden vessels sunk into the ground. Into this the grain is dropped, to be pulverised by the vigorous use of a pole or club. Trade soon became brisk, and we restocked our larder thoroughly. I shot a hippo, and handed all the meat over to the natives, in return for which the sheikh promised to supply men to carry our new supplies of flour.

Another letter now came from Harrington, covering a second from Menelek giving us permission to travel where we pleased. We now moved on from Penkio to Pokum, and to the twenty Anuak carriers who assisted us we gave lengths of cloth, with which they were delighted, and returned home with one end fastened round their necks, and the remainder trailing on the breeze.

At this time terrific wind-gusts wrestled with our tents, so that we had in the small hours of night to hang on grimly to the poles, and yell for help. When presently the rain came up it was a pleasant relief, as it laid the penetrating distressing dust. The rainy season had set in, which might seriously impede our march and involve us in bogs and swamps, from which it would be almost impossible to extricate ourselves. On arriving therefore at Itang on April 24, we sent for Sheikh Fagoi, a young man with a game leg and sleepy eyes, who would not look us in the face. Possibly his bashfulness was due to the fact that he had fourteen wives, some of them mere children. He promised to protect the stores we were compelled to abandon in consideration of immediate and future presents, and to find two guides to go south with us to the Gelo river.



## A TROPICAL TORRENT

A further purchase of flour was productive of much fun. The young ladies, who had ground it with such energy in their primitive mills, were not less eager at a bargain than their fairer sisters nearer home. They seemed thoroughly to appreciate the joys of shopping, and judging by the frequent peals of laughter in the market, they must have been much tickled by the merry jests of Ombasha Jardin, our handsome (?) Sudanese salesman, who apportioned the beads and did the haggling.

We were now well found in provisions, and though transport was so much reduced we were able by April 28 to contemplate a fresh start, feeling that with our smaller and more wieldy column we might hope to make fairly rapid progress, if the conditions of the country were favourable.

## CHAPTER V

### CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

EARLY on April 29 we started, with donkeys in fine fettle after their good grazing and recent rest. So frisky were they that some of them bolted with their loads towards their pasturage as though mere saddle-cloths were on their backs, and it was no easy matter to round them up again. Passing rapidly across park-like tracts, after some twelve miles we were confronted with a khor in which the water was waist deep, and a merry time we had as the animals floundered in the swamp. Brought up at 1 P.M. by a deeper stream, we had to remove all the loads except the Berthon boat which the camel carried, and reload on the far bank. These hindrances recurred, until at 5 P.M. we found refuge on a dismal mound surrounded on all sides by swamps, a fever-trap of the worst type.

Next morning, after similar discomforts, we reached the rapid Aluro, which was about twenty yards wide, and breast deep. It took us some hours to cross this in the Berthon boat, when we camped. I now realised that the Aluro of the Anuaks must be the same stream as the Nigol of the Nuers, which we had crossed some months earlier in the dry season near the village of Methok. A downpour of rain turned our camping-ground into a bog, and we moved on next morning,

## CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

May 1, with the greatest difficulty. By good luck some native fishermen were at hand, and able to lend a hand. Even our solitary camel became exhausted from slipping down so often in the mud. When at length we were settled on an oasis of higher ground, we found ourselves in such close quarters with the Anuaks that there was no dodging the pervading odour of their fish, which they were curing on this mound.

It was a relief next day to find ourselves at last on firmer ground. After marching with varied fortune about eleven miles, we reached a swampy khor—the Bela—which, I fancy, joins the Mokwai, and thus with augmented stream enters the Pibor south of its junction with the Sobat. If so, it is the stream up which Major Capper was able to take a gunboat for some twenty miles at full flood.

This evening, after astronomical observations had been taken, Bakhir and Ahmed Effendi rushed up to say that one of the Jehadia had been bitten in the foot by a snake while collecting firewood in the dark. Seizing a lancet and some nitrate of silver we ran to where he lay, and found the mark of a fang on his little toe. Weird charms, in which he evidently trusted, were fastened round his leg. We applied a ligature instead, opened the place, and thoroughly cauterised the wound. Then, as he complained of heart weakness, we gave him enough whisky to intoxicate three men, and bade him go to sleep. The cure was complete.

After another long exhausting day we reached the Gelo, at the village of Patok, having been much

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delayed by a quagmire not more than thirty yards square which we could not avoid. Into this twenty-five donkeys went down with their loads, and had to be unsaddled and lifted bodily out of the bog. As we went on the track we wished to follow proved to be flooded and impossible. Heavy rains had set in, and since we left Itang 25 per cent. of the men were down with fever, and the donkeys, lately so frisky and rollicking, became listless and in many instances incapable of bearing their loads.

Such heavy rains were now falling, and the country was so rapidly being converted into a swamp, that it became a serious question how best we should make our way to the Nasser post. On May 5, as our best practical resource, we turned from the river and were taken by our guides by an inland route.

In a belt of wood we came across a big colony of Anuaks under three sheikhs, Otwol, Chiro, and Oran. After troublesome monotonous marches, and the loss of several donkeys, we reached Ungela, a large village hidden among trees, but as there was no sufficient water supply we pushed on. To lighten the loads we had recently burnt many saddles and their loads, and all the trade goods except two loads of beads and a little brass wire.

It was now that our solitary camel laid himself down and died in harness. Pluckily he had carried the Berthon boat day after day, and to the last he stuck to his duties nobly. The boat, which was our most essential property and very heavy, was in two sections, which were transferred to the only two Omdurman mules, who alone were strong enough to

## CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

take them. At 5 P.M. on May 7 we camped at Perbong, a small village on the bank of a dried-up shallow khor, where a limited supply of water was to be had from wells.

Taking on two fresh guides we started southward on the afternoon of the 8th to regain the Gelo, which we struck without much difficulty over ground pitted with elephants' spoor. We had left behind us the belt of swamp, and found a camping ground on the brink of the river, which was eighty yards wide, and flowing to within a foot or so of the top of its banks.

As we were to see no more Anuaks during our journey along the Gelo, it may be well to give some account here of them and of their land. They seem to be far less prosperous than their compatriots on the Upeno or the Baro, and in appearance are decidedly anæmic, which may be due to the swampy nature of the soil. Though shy and suspicious they are not unfriendly, and we found them willing guides. Neither men nor women take any pride in their personal appearance; few of the men wear skins, and the women are not subject to any bashfulness. The single women wear beads round the neck, but otherwise are as nude as the Nuer maidens.

On its right bank the Gelo is well wooded to about as far west as  $33^{\circ} 30' E.$ ; but its left bank, west of  $33^{\circ} 50' E.$ , can hardly boast a shrub. An open grass plain seems to stretch to the Akobo river, and beyond. Most of their villages are hidden in belts of wood, and stockaded on ground at some distance from the river. At the height of the rainy season all the land to the north between the Gelo and the Baro is probably one

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huge swamp; and to the south as far as the Akobo similar conditions prevail.

Though fish is their staple food, the natives grow some grain, but we did not see many signs of this. Perhaps their fields are concealed in clearings of the woods, as are their villages. Dug-out canoes serve them on the water for navigation or for fishing. Elephants are plentiful on these plains, and find food and shelter among the forest growths on the north bank of the Gelo. To these parts the Abyssinians descend in large numbers from the western edge of their plateau on annual ivory-hunting expeditions, returning to their highland homes before the rains break.

The country round the Gelo was barren and inhospitable, with no animal life but the loathsome crocodiles which infest the rivers of these regions. On May 10 we resumed our westward march. As we moved along the river I had a shot at an enormous crocodile as he lay fast asleep on the far bank with wide open jaws. The effect was astonishing, for he was killed stone dead, and never budged, except to close his jaws with a loud snap. Presently Ahmed Effendi came up to report that a huge snake was in the grass outside the camp which Bright was pitching. Off we went to slay him with sticks and spears and gun, and saw one of the Jehadia darting forward, jumping back, and brandishing his spear. Near him a large python was hiding in the grass; a charge of No. 5 shot pulverised its head. Dragged into camp in triumph and measured it proved to be 12 feet 6 inches long. The skin was saved for me, and the Jehadia eat the body. They have a fancy also for crocodiles

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and giant lizards, and speak highly of monkeys as toothsome food.

Beset by flies during the day, and by mosquitoes at night, our tempers were sorely tried. On sunny days we sometimes saw fine mirages away to the south, when the vast plain seemed to be changed into a lake, with clumps of trees dotted about. We must have now crossed the late Captain Wellby's route from the south, on his splendid expedition to Nasser from the south of Lake Rudolf. Our course was hindered from time to time by swampy khors, until all further progress along the Gelo was barred. Hearing from the guides of another river some hours to the south, we retraced our steps to a Nuer encampment which we had passed, and crossed the river there.

On the following day, after a long fifteen miles, we reached the Akobo River, and traversed an open treeless plain covered with small ant-hills, a sure indication that the soil is not swampy. At some distance we saw a fine herd of buffalo, and some giraffes. After helping us heartily for another day or two, our Anuak guides decamped, evidently afraid to enter Nuer territory. I felt pretty certain that if we went forward along the stream we had crossed we should soon reach the Pibor, as in his sketch of that river Major Capper had shown a large khor entering its right bank about latitude N.  $7^{\circ} 50'$ , and the position of our camp was N.  $7^{\circ} 46' 32''$ ; so on May 16 we started without guides and followed the winding stream which flows generally due west. Its banks were hard and firm, and wooded with thick mimosa thorn bush, so that fuel was plentiful. Next day we reached its junction with the Pibor, and

## CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

were almost due south of Nasser post, and less than a degree distant from it.

Crossing the Pibor we camped on its left bank. The river was not in flood, and hardly any current was perceptible. On the 19th we struck north, and crossing a khor found a fine hard track which led us by a short cut and avoided some big bends of the stream. We were visited by several Nuers from Koratong, among whom was a son of Sheikh Yowe, the paramount Nuer chief of this section of the nation. They were friendly, and offered to guide us to the capital, but their anxiety to cut into small pieces any natives who had conducted us to this spot spoke volumes for the wisdom of our Anuaks in giving us the slip, and proved that they understood, and we did not, what was in store for them if they fell into Nuer hands.

These Nuers met us on May 21, and others joined us on our march. Sheikh Yowe is decrepit, old, and blind, and seldom leaves his hut. His people, we found, did not differ from their compatriots whom we had previously seen. The men, young women, and girls are naked, while the elderly ladies have fringes or leathern aprons round the waist. Most of them dye their hair a reddish hue by a liberal application of cow's dung, and it stands on end all over their heads. Their bodies and faces were generally smeared with wood ashes, as a protection against cold or mosquitoes. We obtained two guides to conduct us to Nasser, one of whom, Jaber by name, had in early youth been taken prisoner and retained under the Mahdi's and Khalifa's rule at Omdurman. He had recently been returned to his own tribe, and was pleased to meet





*A group of Nilers near Nasser. In the centre is the Sheikh who tried to feed our donkey on fish.*

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## CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

some of his old dervish friends amongst our Jehadia. We were much worried at this place by a plague of moths—dark brown with yellow bars across their wings—which swarmed round our food, sampled our soup, climbed into the pickle bottle, or sipped our whisky and soda.

On May 22 we found ourselves at the junction of the Gelo and the Pibor. Next day we encountered a heavy thunderstorm, which churned up so much mud that we carried solid slabs of the soil on the soles of our boots. Frequently hindered by swamps, we were in a few days within a short distance of the Sobat, but when we had loaded up the donkeys to make for it a terrific thunderstorm burst over us, and turned the ground, through which we floundered at last to the Sobat, into a soft expanse of mud. Following our old track of January, we rested once more on familiar ground, under a single tree on the river-bank.

Sunday, May 27, broke bright and fine, so we traversed the remaining fourteen or fifteen miles, and reached the fort at about 3 P.M., where we were greeted by Talat Effendi after an absence of nearly five months. Compared with our dismal experiences and surroundings in the Sobat regions, and the rains, Nasser, though certainly no health resort, seemed the very hub of the universe. No steamer had yet come up from the Nile, so we still waited for home letters, and as our food ran short, urgent messages were sent overland to Fashoda for supplies. Our active work in the field was ended, and we had time to review its course. No life had been lost but that of the Jehadia Hamadan, and the general health of the men had been satis-

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factory, for all sickness had yielded to careful and prompt treatment. We were less fortunate in our transport animals, as all seven camels had died, one solitary mule remained of the ten we started from Omdurman with, whilst over 100 of our original 130 donkeys had died since we marched from the Dom Palm camp.

Huts were allotted to our men at Nasser by Talat Effendi, and they found the rest enjoyable. A steamer's whistle roused us all on May 31, and presently the gunboat *Amkeh* hove in sight, and was moored alongside the fort. She brought rations for us and for the garrison, and six months' mails from home.

On June 1 Bright and I went up the river, hoping to reach Itang by steamer, and recover the stores abandoned there, but at the point where the Adura branches off from the Baro we were stopped by sandbanks, and there was nothing for it but to return to Nasser, which we regained on the 7th. No means of transport arrived for us from the Nile, as we had hoped might happen, so we started in the steamer, and at last, at midnight, June 14, came upon a barge at Ed Dueim. Lieutenant Drury, R.N., had accompanied us from Taufikia, and we learned from him most interesting details of the difficulties which attended the opening of water communication between the Sudan and Uganda Protectorate. From Ed Dueim we were able to telegraph to Colonel Talbot at Omdurman, and, with the sandal (barge) we had come in search of in tow, we returned to Nasser.

Meantime the Sobat had risen some twelve feet, so, feeling assured that we could now reach Itang, we again steamed up stream, leaving the sandal at her

## CAUGHT AMONG SWAMPS

moorings. As we made our way with some difficulty against wind and a strong current, we saw large areas of swamp on the banks which we had traversed on foot at the beginning of the year, and a rank growth of grass. Game had returned in considerable numbers—antelopes, and herds of elephants which trotted in amusing fashion along the riverside, splashing through the swamps, and spraying themselves with water from their trunks, sometimes so near to us that we had every chance of admiring the grand beasts and their white gleaming tusks, that showed up in fine contrast against their black forms, and the vividly green grass.

We reached Itang on June 26, and sent Ombasha Jardin to inform Sheikh Fagoi of our arrival. He would not come within thirty yards of the boat, seeming to fear that we should kidnap him, so I went ashore to his village to check the goods, which were all quite correct, and in excellent order. These were transported to the steamer, but still he would not trust himself away from his fourteen little wives, so he sent a deputy to receive the promised present.

All fishing villages near the river were now deserted, and the natives had moved to their winter quarters inland. At full speed, on a full flood and favourable current, we left Itang for Nasser on June 27. Down the Baro we went at a great rate, often bumping against the banks as we swung round sudden curves. Even when we had eased up a bit, with just enough steam on to obtain steerage way, the current fairly raced us along. On June 28 we came upon our men cutting wood on the bank a few miles above Nasser,

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and taking all that was ready on board we again moored near the fort before 4 P.M.

Loading steamer and barge with all the surviving animals and the equipment that remained, we prepared to start at daybreak, finally bound for Omdurman. Talat Effendi, the police garrison, and their wives and children were on the wharf to give us a good send-off, and their cheers as we steamed away were answered by counter-cheers from our men, who were delighted to see the last of Nasser. Cloth was distributed to the Jehadia, who were in rags, and a yard of white cloth to each of the askaris, to be used as far as it would go, and a supplement of dark blue and green. With this some of the wags made variegated pyjamas, and were in ecstasies when we roared at their grotesque appearance. We admitted it was a capital idea for board ship, but told them that they could not rejoin their regiment in such garb, or the Sirdar would be wanting to know where we had picked up this troupe of mountebanks.

Early on the morning of July 7, 1900, we were welcomed by Colonel Talbot at Omdurman, and Bright and I lunched with Colonel Jackson, C.B., who was acting as Sirdar during the absence on leave of Sir Reginald Wingate, who had succeeded Lord Kitchener on his appointment to South Africa.

The survey party was now broken up. We said good-bye to our loyal escort and Jehadia, who had all worked so splendidly, and on July 11 started for home on leave, with Colonel Talbot and a party of ten officers. We were delayed considerably by the flooded state of the railway, but on the 21st steamed into Cairo, and leaving Port Said on the 23rd, we caught the *Arabia*, and were back in London on Monday, July 30, 1900.



LAND JOURNEY FROM NASSER TO THE UGANDA RAILWAY AT LAKE NAKURO.

By  
BREVET MAJOR H H AUSTIN, C.M.G., D.S.O.R.E.  
1890 1901

C ARTHUR PEARSON LIMITED, LONDON W.C.



A Journey from  
NASSER TO MOMBASA VIA LAKE RUDOLF  
By Brevet Major H H Austin, C.M.G., D.S.O.R.E.  
1890 1901  
Scale 1:200,000 or 1 inch = 12 1/2 miles

Adapted from a map of the Nile Basin, topographical, by Austin  
Scale 1:200,000 or 1 inch = 12 1/2 miles  
Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40 50  
Map: Austro-Hungarian  
Rectangular Dispersal Projection



PART II

OMDURMAN TO MOMBASA

*via*

LAKE RUDOLF

NOVEMBER 1900—OCTOBER 1901



## CHAPTER I

### WHERE GORDON DIED

AFTER our return to England, Major Bright and I worked at results, and rested until the end of October 1900, when we began the equipment of a second expedition through the Sudan, with the object of working at new surveys on to Lake Rudolf, where it was hoped we should obtain further supplies for our explorations in those parts.

We spent a busy month making ready for the fresh venture, and on November 29 we steamed out of Victoria, reached Marseilles the next day, and at once boarded the *Caledonia*, on which we arrived at Port Said on the night of December 4.

We were met by Mr. Percy Ebsworth, of the Egyptian Customs service, and through his helpful courtesy we were saved much vexatious examination, and the following morning all our effects were placed in a goods train ready for transit to Cairo. We dined that evening with Mr. and Mrs. Ebsworth at Port Said, and left by the morning train on December 6, reaching Cairo the same afternoon, and taking up our quarters at the Grand Continental Hotel. Here we met several old friends of the Egyptian Army, and almost felt as though we had never left the country—in truth we had been absent but little over four months.

## WHERE GORDON DIED

Here we received letters from Colonel Talbot, who was at Omdurman, and learned how much he had already done for us with regard to the purchase of transport animals and the enlistment of drivers. An escort of the 10th Sudanese was to join us at Assuan, on our way through to Omdurman, and Hunter Bey, their commanding officer, was already fully equipping them for the expedition, to avoid delay. Through the kindness of Lord Cromer the services of Dr. John Garner, who at that time was attached for military duty with the British troops stationed at Cairo, were secured as medical officer to the expedition, and to this I undoubtedly owe my life, as will be seen.

In my original requisition I had informed Colonel Talbot that for transport purposes we should need seven camels, 10 mules, 120 donkeys, and 24 Jehadia. A slight recast of personnel and transport would now be necessary, owing to the addition of another officer, so 15 camels, 12 mules, and 125 donkeys were asked for, whilst the 24 Jehadia were to be increased to 30, and two Arabs also were specially enlisted to look after the camels. As to servants, I was able to obtain the services again of Hanna, whilst another Petros, curiously enough, accompanied us as Abyssinian interpreter, and Bakhir Ahmed resumed his post as Arabic-English interpreter. Abu Talib, our former cook, passed this trip, so we obtained the services of one Mahomed, who had previously accompanied Major Gwynn in that capacity. Bright's former personal servant Salim, an excellent youth, withdrew at the last moment, and his place was taken by an Abyssinian



*Major R. G. T. Bright, C.M.G., Second in command of the two Expeditions.*

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## WHERE GORDON DIED

boy, Georgius, who had been tent-boy to Harrington. Garner was accompanied by another Mahomed, an Egyptian servant. Not one of our personal servants ever lived to see Cairo again, and the sole survivor of these whom I have named who returned with us was little Bakhir Ahmed.

The next few days were a whirl of preparation for poor Garner, who could scarcely find time to obtain his kit, and make the necessary additions to the medical stores we had brought out from England. Fortunately Bright and I had framed complete lists of his requirements, and whilst I dashed about with Garner, Bright made all the requisite purchases of additional European stores and provisions. On December 10, when lunching with Lord Cromer, Bright and I met Garner for the first time; it was then definitely decided that he should accompany us, and on the 15th he was off with us by train, bound for Omdurman, fully equipped with stores, kit, gun, rifle, ammunition, &c., for a year's exploration in the heart of Africa! I think few people can beat that record.

On Saturday, December 15, we steamed out of Cairo, reaching Assuan the following day, where we were met by Hunter Bey and Bimbashi Sutherland of the 10th Sudanese. They very kindly insisted on our stopping at the mess for the night, and next morning the escort of twenty-two non-commissioned officers and men, under command of their native officer, Mulazim Awal Mabruk Effendi Faki, were handed over to us completely fitted out for the expedition. These were afterwards reduced by sickness to twenty. We took train to Shellal the same afternoon, and there boarded

## WHERE GORDON DIED

our old friend the *Toski* which was to convey us up the Nile to Wadi Halfa, where we arrived on the morning of December 20. Shortly before noon we were able to continue our journey by train on the Sudan Military Railway.

Lord Cromer was now making an official visit to the Sudan, and had gone on to Dongola, returning to Halfa before journeying to Berber and Khartoum. Whilst crossing the desert to Abu Hamed our engine broke down about midnight, and on awaking in the morning we found ourselves still at No. VI. desert station, and only 127 miles from Halfa. The driver said it could not be repaired until after midday; but fortunately shortly before eight another train arrived, and Coles Pasha, who was on board the stranded train, obtained permission for the newly arrived engine to take us all on to Abu Hamed, which we reached just before sunset.

Next morning we arrived at Berber, and found it gaily decorated for Lord Cromer's visit. In the afternoon we were once more at Shendy, where we obtained an American engine, and so travelled at a greater pace and reached Khartoum shortly before 10 P.M. the same evening, to remain on a siding all night. Early next day Lord Cromer, the Sirdar, and their respective staffs arrived from Berber, and at once crossed by steamer to the palace on the opposite bank of the Blue Nile. Subsequently we too crossed with all our equipment, and remained there until midday, when Colonel Talbot and several other officers boarded the post-boat, which conveyed us to Omdurman.

All the arrangements he had kindly made were



## WHERE GORDON DIED

explained to us by Colonel Talbot, and he told us, too, that several of the Jehadia who had previously accompanied us had re-enlisted for service on this expedition under our old headman Bilal, who welcomed us as we stepped ashore at the Omdurman landing-place. The escort of the 10th and Bakhir Ahmed were provisionally billeted on the 13th Sudanese during our stay, whilst the Jehadia occupied buildings in the transport lines near our animals. Garner went to the Medical Officers' Mess, whilst quarters were found for Bright and myself near Colonel Talbot's hut.

That afternoon Lord Cromer, accompanied by the Sirdar and a large number of Egyptian army officers and other officials, made a state entry into Omdurman, riding through the main streets of the city, whilst no less than seven English ladies mounted the summit of the Khalifa's house to obtain a bird's-eye view of the cavalcade, and of the town generally. The following day Lord Cromer held a levée and investiture at the Sirdar's palace at Khartoum, when Colonel Jackson was presented with the C.B., Major Peake with the C.M.G., and an influential loyal native chieftain with a similar decoration. In addition to all the British officers of the army, a large number of native officers and great sheikhs of the Sudan were present, adding in their flowing robes a picturesque touch to the gathering. All were then entertained at a garden party by Sir Reginald and Lady Wingate, while massed bands discoursed music in the gardens of the palace. Khartoum surely never before had seen such a gay, festive scene, which must indeed

## WHERE GORDON DIED

have impressed the many natives—representatives of various tribes and districts—who were congregated there with the power and beneficence of the new order of things, after the tyrannical sway of the Mahdi and Khalifa.

Old Zobeir Pasha, one of Gordon's lieutenants, was there, and memory perhaps recalled to him those former days when the great and well-loved Governor-General of the Sudan occupied a palace on the site of the present one, where it was his delight to walk and hold converse in the garden. Yes, on this very spot the noble Gordon had met his death at the hands of the Mahdi's fanatical hordes, when help was so near at hand; yet fate decreed that fourteen years should pass before the conquering and avenging hosts should dispel that sway of terror, and re-establish on a firmer footing than ever before a reign of Peace, Justice, and Prosperity. Little more than a year had passed since the Khalifa was alive and active, marching north in the hope that numbers would flock to his standard, and that he might yet be able to strike a blow to regain his lost power. How he failed my readers know, and Sir Reginald Wingate, who had finally crushed him, was now Governor-General; and whereas then no English lady had visited Khartoum for many years, Lady Wingate was herself now dispensing the hospitalities of the palace, which was graced also by the presence of six other ladies.

The following day was Christmas Day, and a large dinner-party had been arranged by the Sirdar at the palace. In the afternoon Lord Cromer, accompanied by a staff of officers and some ladies, went up the

## WHERE GORDON DIED

Nile for a picnic in the *Zafir*. She unfortunately stuck on a rock in the river, and it was past midnight before the distinguished party were able to regain the palace and sit down to their Christmas dinner! On the 26th a grand review of troops was held at Khartoum, followed in the evening by a fine firework display. This closed the festivities, and on the 27th Lord Cromer and his staff left for Cairo in the morning, and Khartoum and Omdurman resumed their normal aspect.

We were now able to proceed with our arrangements for a forward move up the White Nile, and put in a long day's work, collecting all the requisite rations, stores, &c., separating them as required, and loading them on to the sandals and gyassas (sailing-boats), which were to be towed, as before, by a gunboat. Next day final adjustments were made, and we all, men and animals, had taken up our quarters ready for an early start on the morrow, cheered by a most kindly telegram from the Sirdar at Khartoum, wishing us every success in the undertaking on which we were about to embark.

We dined together that evening for the last time at the Headquarters' Mess with Colonel Talbot, Colonel Ferguson, Pedley, Stack, a Clifton contemporary of mine, and others, returning to the *Fateh*, our gunboat, for the night. Early on December 29 we cast off from our moorings and commenced the long river journey up to Nasser. Colonel Talbot had gone to great trouble in selecting really good donkeys for the expedition, and the test he put them to was indeed severe. If the donkey could not travel for a short

## WHERE GORDON DIED

distance at a trot carrying 90 lbs. on each side of the saddle, and a man on the top of all, it was rejected. The result was that these donkeys were the very best set of animals I have ever used, and were invaluable in our later days of dire distress, when they helped us to struggle into safety.

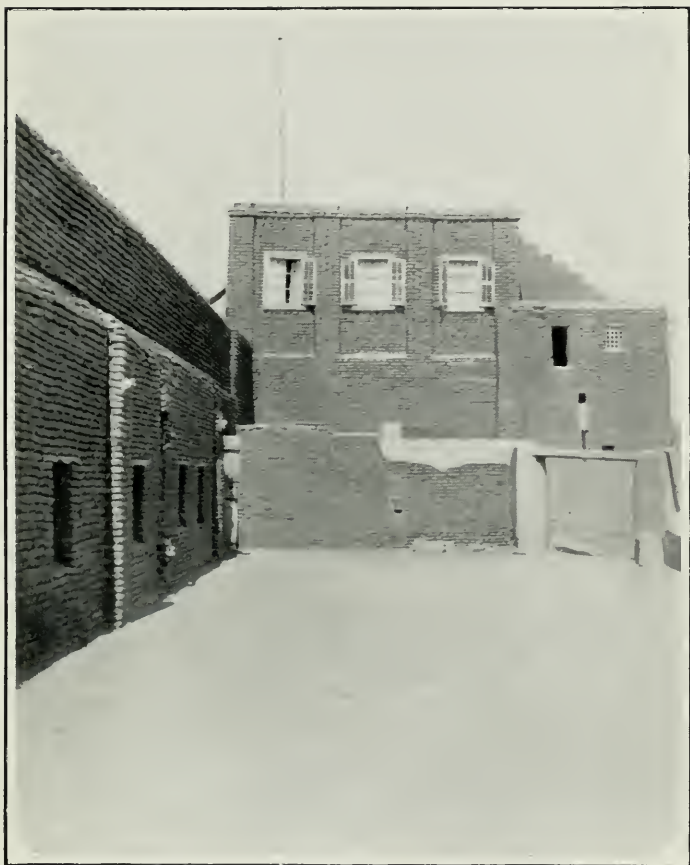
Let me here enumerate the personnel of the expedition:—

Europeans (Bright, Garner, and myself) . . . . .	3
Interpreters and native officer . . . . .	3
Escort of 10th Sudanese . . . . .	20
Jehadia and two Arab transport drivers . . . . .	32
Personal servants . . . . .	4
	<hr/>
Total . . . . .	62

We left Omdurman with fifty-one donkeys, four mules, and fifteen camels, but Colonel Talbot had arranged that at Ed Dueim we were to pick up six more donkeys; whilst at El Kawa we were to find eight Abyssinian mules and twenty-two donkeys, and at Goz abu Guma forty-six donkeys, as these animals could not be procured in sufficient numbers locally at Omdurman, and were to be purchased at Wad Medani and Gedaref, and thence marched across to the White Nile to meet us.

The *Fateh* was towing two sandals (double-decked barges) and two sailing-boats, for the accommodation of men, animals, rations, equipment, stores, &c. As before, we were taking two months' supply for the land journey, and one month's rations for the steamer voyage.

The men were all vaccinated on board by Garner,



*Women's quarters attached to the Khalifa's house at Omdurman.*

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## WHERE GORDON DIED

Bright and I having been done just before we left Omdurman, as I feared we might come across small-pox in the villages on the river Omo to the north of Lake Rudolf. Shortly before reaching Ed Dueim on the 30th December we met a funny little ramshackle paddle steamer, the *Vankerckhoven*, on her way to Omdurman from Rejaf with Captain Bertram of the Belgian service on board. She was towing a small steel boat on one side, in which her fuel supply was carried, and as this was nearly exhausted Captain Bertram was anxious to proceed without delay, so he only boarded us for a few moments, and kindly agreed to take some letters back for us to Omdurman.

We arrived at Ed Dueim the same afternoon, and were there met by Flint and Scott-Barbour, the officers in charge of the transport and commissariat at that place, who handed over to us the six donkeys that were held in readiness for the expedition. At 10.30 P.M. we had reached El Kawa, and immediately landed to take some astronomical observations. The Marmur met us, and informed us that the twenty-two donkeys and eight Abyssinian mules were awaiting our arrival, so these were taken on board the following morning, in addition to a large supply of grass for our animals, and we continued to Goz abu Guma soon after 8 A.M. At midday we reached the wood station of Abbah Island, and took on as much fuel as we could possibly carry, starting off again under a bright moon, and reaching Goz abu Guma about 11 P.M. We could obtain no information regarding the donkeys that should have arrived from Gedaref, and wired to all quarters; but on the 2nd January they came in, a fine herd of forty-six

## WHERE GORDON DIED

in first-rate condition, and were taken on board the same evening.

Our transport animals were now complete, so we started off at daylight on January 3, and, thanks to a full moon, were able to travel at night. By 10.30 P.M. on the 4th we reached the wood-cutting station, some ten hours north of Fashoda, where we spent the next day and a half cutting wood and getting it on board. We enjoyed a little shooting here, and I bagged eight guinea-fowl on the 5th, and a white-eared kob and an ariel the following morning before we left, whilst the men were at work. About 6 A.M. my orderly and I started off from the ship inland, and after about half-an-hour's tramp spotted some gazelle in the bush not unlike the Thomsoni in East Africa as regards marking, although the horns are somewhat different. I crept up to within about 120 yards, concealed by bush, of a fine little buck standing by himself in a small opening. Letting drive with my .303 he dropped where he stood, so we quickly despatched him and left his body, marking the spot with a handkerchief up in a tree near by, and went on to try for a white-eared kob, of which species I had only shot one on our last trip.

We had no luck for a long time, and had turned for home, when my orderly suddenly saw some kob moving about amongst the bushes. We went in pursuit, and they galloped off some distance, but eventually I succeeded in getting up to about 200 yards from a splendid black fellow. I fired and heard the bullet tell; my quarry dashed off into some bushes, and just as he disappeared from sight I saw his white rump go up in the



## WHERE GORDON DIED

air. "You are down," I thought, and said so to my orderly, who replied, "La, effendi" (No, your honour). However, when we reached the spot there was my lovely victim, already almost dead from a bullet which had caught him a bit far back, and reached a vital spot. Quite satisfied with the morning's work—two animals with only two shots—I returned to the ship and sent men out to bring in the meat.

We were off again shortly before eleven, but it was nearly 10 P.M. before we arrived in sight of Fashoda, and wasted much time in an abortive attempt to get the steamer up a branch channel near the fort, in order to land a number of Sudanese men and women whom we had conveyed up to this point from Omdurman. We had to cut wood again some four hours' run beyond Fashoda, and left on the evening of the 7th for Taufikia, where we arrived at 2 A.M. and were immediately boarded by our old friend Drury, who was once again back in connection with "sudd" operations. We took observations of stars to fix the position of this new station until about 3 A.M., and then retired to bed. The new Mudir of Fashoda, Blewitt Bey, was also at Taufikia, and he had plenty of wood ready for us, so we were able to start again for Sobat in the afternoon, after leaving behind two of our escort of the 10th, who were unfit to proceed with the expedition on account of sickness of a bad type. An hour later we reached Sobat, and our old Dom Palm camp was passed about 10.30 A.M. on the 9th.

Some two hours further up stream we landed on the right bank to obtain more fuel. We cut wood for the remainder of that day, and during the whole of the next

## WHERE GORDON DIED

until evening, Blewitt passing us in the *Abu Klea* from Taufikia, and proceeding to Nasser after a short stop alongside. The sportsmen amongst our servants always took advantage of these occasions to indulge in the gentle art of fishing, and our cook, Mahomed, was about the most persistent and successful angler on board. He would sit all night, when we were tied up, fishing over the stern-wheel of the *Fateh*, and invariably caught some fine big fish with a large hook at the end of a piece of string. Bright's efforts seldom proved satisfactory, so he asked old Mahomed what bait he used, and was answered in broken English, "Master, me always using turkey's insides." We had never seen a turkey, to our knowledge, since we had entered the Sudan, so we were not a little puzzled; and still more so when we were informed that they were the turkeys we had recently shot. It finally dawned on us that the old fisherman and cook was referring to the guinea-fowl, and the mystery was solved!

Under way again shortly before 7 P.M. on January 10, we soon after passed Yakwoik; the inhabitants were much scared when the gunboat commenced blowing off steam as we arrived opposite the village, for we could hear them yelling and shouting with alarm in the darkness, whilst dogs yelped and barked, and most of the natives bolted for the bush. Some little time later we passed Father Ohrwalder, who had been a prisoner with the Mahdi and Khalifa for so many years, on his way down the Sobat in the little missionary steamer to Omdurman. We again had to tie up to cut wood during the 11th, as the *Fateh* burnt about a ton and a half of wood per hour with her two fur-

## WHERE GORDON DIED

naces, which was nearly four times as much as our former boats, the *Tamai* and *Amkeh*, used, and in consequence we were for ever cutting. However, we were off again soon after 1 P.M. and reached Nasser post just after dark, and there found Blewitt awaiting our arrival, as well as a sailing-boat which had been despatched by Colonel Talbot from Omdurman on November 21 with a month's rations for the expedition, in case the steamer should be unable to reach Nasser owing to the low state of the Sobat.

Next morning we steamed some nine miles up the river, and then began to disembark at a suitable spot before starting off on our long land journey. Blewitt secured the services of a Nuer guide to conduct us to Sheikh Yowe's settlements on the Pibor, and on January 14 he left for Taufikia in the *Abu Klea*, followed by Mr. Warner, the engineer of the *Fateh*, who returned to Omdurman towing back the empty barges and sailing-boats which had been our home for the last fortnight. We were now cut off from all communication with the outer world, of which we heard nothing more until we reached Baringo Post in East Africa in August 1901, after undergoing most horrible and distressing experiences.

## CHAPTER II

### BY DOUBLE STAGES

WE had each a small tent, in addition to the mess tent in which we fed, and where all work was done. Bakhir and Mabruk Effendi shared a fifth tent, whilst the men were provided with blanket shelters as before. These are excellent for protection against the hot sun, from which our Sudanese suffered a good deal, in spite of the askaris being provided with tarbooshes covered with khaki sunshades, which hung down behind over their necks. The Jehadia wore no such shade, and seemed to feel the sun less than our askaris; we found, too, they showed less distressing symptoms from want of water than their comrades of the regular forces.

We had only eaten about a fortnight's rations of the amount we had brought for the steamer journey, and when all stores were packed and the final apportioning of loads had been completed, we found that some twenty sacks of flour (weighing about 100 lbs. each) remained over and above what we could actually carry; so I decided to proceed at first by easy double stages until we had consumed this amount, after which we could press on without interruption. We hoped in this way to make the food we had with us last for three months with careful control, by which time we should certainly be able to reach the river Omo, where

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

we expected to find fresh supplies sent to meet us by the Abyssinians.

Our course at first was up the Pibor River as far as its junction with the Akobo, which we were then to follow until I decided to strike south with the object of working round the mountain ranges we might encounter thereabouts. Early on the morning of January 17, 1901, the "rouse" going at 4.30, we made a most unsatisfactory start. The men were not yet familiar with the mode of life, except a few of the Jehadia who had previously accompanied us, and in consequence it was eight before Garner and I left camp with the rear-guard. The line of march, as before, was headed by a small advance-guard, followed immediately by the string of camels, who regulated the pace of the column. In rear of the camels came a party of three men under a non-commissioned officer, who were detailed to reload any camels whose burdens should become disarranged. Behind them came the twelve mules, after which followed the loaded donkeys in batches of from ten to a dozen, driven along by the Jehadia; whilst in the rear were the spare donkeys, which were carefully kept from mixing with the loaded ones, and were handy in case of breakdowns on ahead. Finally came the rear-guard, whose duty was to see that every load was carried on and that no straggler remained behind. As the column had to move in single file, it may be imagined that the small number of men were but very thinly sprinkled along the line of animals, and their work on the march was arduous, especially when traversing difficult country.

We soon had a foretaste of the pleasures in store

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

for us, as when, after following the river for a short distance, we struck across country to avoid a big bend of the stream, we at once became involved in long grass which concealed great cracks in the ground, due to the drying up of this swamp land. Into these crevices the wretched little donkeys were constantly putting their feet, which became so firmly wedged that they were unable to withdraw them, and gracefully collapsed in consequence. Why many broken limbs did not result it is difficult to imagine, as they were frequently wedged in above their knees or hocks, and we on rear guard had literally, in some cases, to dig out their legs with sword bayonets; and then two or three men heaving together, after violent exertions, would extricate the imprisoned limb, and the donkey would proceed dot-and-go-one for a bit, but after warming to the work the stiffness seemed to wear off.

We only marched four or five miles that day, which occupied us until past 2 P.M., and the following some camels and mules were sent back to bring on the twenty loads which had been left at our disembarkation camp under a guard of eight men. Our previous passage had cleared a fairly good track, so they rejoined us shortly after midday at our camp on the bank of a swampy khor, where we shot some excellent duck of a whistling species—brown with black and white markings. On January 19 we moved forward again at 7 A.M.—later we used to get off by 6—and reached the camp from which we had marched straight into Nasser the previous May. The track was better now, and along some of the swamps we skirted we saw many ducks and other birds; with one shot I

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

actually bagged eleven ducks, losing another which got away into some weeds. Two fine donkeys poisoned themselves that day, reducing our number to 122, as one had already died on board, so only eleven spare ones were left, which was a very small proportion.

Next day we sent off two parties, one to fetch what we had left behind, and another with camels to take on food, &c., to our previous Three-Tree camp on the Pibor, and to return. To that place we removed the remainder of the expedition stores, &c., next day, but instead of taking the direct route of May, we were compelled to make a long detour to the east, first striking the Pibor near two solitary trees. In endeavouring then to make for Three-Tree camp on the high ground, we were confronted by a deep broad khor full of water, which joined the Pibor a short distance up stream. We were obliged to follow this in a westerly direction for some miles, as it made a big bow from Three-Tree camp to the two trees on the Pibor; the march, therefore, instead of being seven miles as we anticipated from our previous short cut, was lengthened out to nearly half as much again.

On reaching our former camping-ground we found that one camel was missing—load and all. It certainly had not marched with us, so the only conclusion we could come to was that our precious Arabs, after loading it up in the dark, had allowed it to stray off. The load consisted of rations and half of our tools, such as axes, picks, shovels, reapers, bill-hooks, and so on—most essential articles; so the whole of the camel-men, including the two Arabs and four Jehadia, were promptly sent back to hunt about for it

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

at our former camp. They eventually came upon it, and spent two days trying to catch the brute, which was as wild as a giraffe and would not let the men approach. At length, on January 23, I became anxious owing to the long-continued absence of the party, and sent off a mounted contingent on camels, who returned the same evening with the missing camel and its load, which allowed itself to be approached by its brethren, and was easily secured again.

In order to save time some ten mule-loads of stuff had been dumped the same day by Bright and Garner near the site of Kur village, which was now deserted; and leaving these things under a guard they returned with the empty mules and their attendants. During their absence the Jehadia in camp had, much to their delight, killed two huge lizards, one of which on being cut open contained fifty-three eggs as large as fowls' eggs, in addition to a large number unformed. These eggs were connected with each other on two long shreds of stringy tissue, twenty-eight on one length and twenty-five on the other; so our transport drivers revelled on eggs and lizard with their supper that night! I had previously shot my old friend Bilal a pelican, which he asked me to provide for his supper, and the bird, when he seized it, disgorged an excellent fish, which came in handy for our dinner.

On January 24 we finally left Three-Tree camp, and some six miles further came across the small advance party. Garner had just shot a waterbuck, so we loaded up with its meat, and continued another two and a half miles to the site of the former Kur village,



## BY DOUBLE STAGES

and camped on the edge of a muddy khor flat teeming with whistling duck. I had bagged a goose after expending three charges of shot on this extraordinarily tough bird. The first shot brought him down into a pool with a broken wing, and whilst he was swimming about I gave him a charge at thirty yards' range, all over his head and neck. He merely smiled, so I gave him another charge; he almost guffawed at me this time, and continued swimming about merrily, until suddenly his head sank on his breast, and he collapsed, to be retrieved in triumph. We all had some pleasant small-game shooting here next day, whilst animals were sent back to bring on the food, &c., left with the party two and a half miles distant; and on January 26 we again made a forward move up the river, leaving twelve sacks of flour under a small guard at Kur.

We only marched five and a half miles in a southerly direction, and experienced considerable difficulty at first in getting round the khor near camp, as the grass was very long, and covered great elephant spours. No semblance of a track existed anywhere, and our progress was very slow, as we had to plunge laboriously through tall grass, ten to twelve feet in height. We saw nothing of the river until we had marched about five miles, when we found ourselves once more on its bank, and following it for about half a mile came upon an open space where it was possible to pick a camping-ground; but wood was very scarce. Whilst camp was being pitched I hit a hippo in the head, and he disappeared, leaving the surface of the water covered with blood. The current was very

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

strong, and as he had not come up during the afternoon, we put our boat together—a ten-foot James' boat—and Mabruk Effendi and I pulled over to where he had sunk and jabbed about with a spear, in the hope of being able to locate the carcass. The water was so deep, however, and the stream so rapid that we were unable to touch bottom anywhere, and finally had to give up the fruitless search. Whilst the camp halted on January 27 a party was sent back to bring on the food, &c., left behind at Kur, and on the 28th we continued our southerly march, and camped under a solitary tree a short distance above the junction of the Gelo and Pibor rivers. We had followed the river for the first mile or so, but were then compelled to leave it in order to skirt a broad expanse of swamp, after which we proceeded through long, coarse grass and over burnt areas. We were unfortunate at this time with the milch goats we had brought from Omdurman; four of them had already died, whilst the goats and sheep travelled wretchedly through the long grass, fearing apparently to plunge into it, though a track had been beaten down by the transport animals in front. We left Omdurman with 39 and purchased another 20 at Fashoda, and we only had 36 left now—at least a dozen of the 23 expended having died on the road.

We were now not far from the village of Bil, to which Sheikh Yowe and all his people had moved from the Koratong group for the dry season, and soon after we had camped were visited by Nuers, amongst whom was our old friend Jaber. The guide we brought from Nasser now wished to return to his

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

home, so we sought another from Sheikh Yowe to take his place. Jaber was informed, but regretted he could not accompany us himself as an addition to his family was shortly expected, and he considered that he should remain at home, for his wife was not a Nuer—he had married her at Omdurman—and unable to speak the language. One of our askaris, Farag El Gak by name, was a Nuer, and knew the language, so I sent him over with Jaber to interview Sheikh Yowe on the subject. Towards sunset the two returned, accompanied by three of Sheikh Yowe's sons and a daughter, who was dressed as a Sudanese woman in cloth, and had been captured years ago and removed to Omdurman with Jaber. She spoke Arabic fluently, and acted as interpreter, telling us that one of these three sons had been deputed to act as guide for us by the old Sheikh. After considerable palavering they returned to their home, as we were to remain halted next day until the things left behind by us had been brought on by the camels that were sent back for them. During the day we tried to purchase some goats and sheep from the natives, but were only able to obtain one, as the quantities of brass wire asked for in exchange were absurd. A party of police from Nasser arrived unexpectedly, bearing presents from Blewitt for Sheikh Yowe, and those crossing the river stopped at Bil. The guide provided us by Sheikh Yowe gave us the slip the first thing when we marched next morning, and never shed the light of his countenance on our journey. On leaving this Single-Tree camp we followed a good track for the first four and a half miles leading towards the Kora-

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

tong group, which had recently been abandoned by the Nuers when emigrating to Bil. Most of the time we were some little distance from the river, but followed it closely during the last mile and a half as far as a deserted village. From here we could see the single tree under which we had camped on May 21, where we first met Jaber near Koratong, so we marched straight on that for two miles or so and camped, as we still had to send back next day for some food left near our Bil camp.

During this halt Garner shot two waterbuck and Bright a crocodile, in addition to some duck and crane ; so we had plenty of meat for everybody. The crocodile was towed to near camp, hauled up on to the bank, and cut up. The Jehadia preferred it, I think, almost to the waterbuck, and certainly its meat was wondrous clean-looking, a sort of glorified white meat off a bird's breast. On opening it out we did not find the legs and arms of a child or woman, which most travellers' books tell us are the usual contents of a crocodile's belly. Our illusions are often shattered by experience, and my hopes of coming across some such relics were never to be realised. The fact is that the vast majority of the crocodiles which infest the rivers of these regions are almost entirely fish-eaters, and rarely attack man, of whom they entertain considerable dread. Succulent young kids or sheep drinking water at the river-brink undoubtedly are occasionally carried off, and I have myself seen crocodiles smacking their lips, as I may say, at the sight of our small herds feeding near the river-bank almost within reach of those fearful jaws ; but with a man anywhere about I doubt



*Gunboat towing barge and sailing boats attached to her sides.*

*[To face page 78.]*



## BY DOUBLE STAGES

if they would ever attempt to make a dash for these timid, defenceless creatures. How they live it is difficult to tell, as one would imagine that any sane fish that swims could dodge the mouth of a crocodile, favoured as he is by speed and having the best part of a river wherein to escape from his mortal enemy. Catch these fish, however, they do; and perhaps there are few more uncanny, creepy experiences than to hear in the silent darkness of night a fearful commotion on the surface of the river, on the banks of which one is camped, followed by a splash of satisfaction on the part of the crocodile's tail when he has pounced his victim, swallowed it, and disappeared under the surface again. It makes one appreciate the snug camp-bed and little tent on dry land so much more.

We had now arranged to carry all our loads along with us, as one of the camels which hitherto had been incapable of work was sufficiently recovered to be able to transport a little, and I ordered an extra 100-lb. sack of flour to be placed on the other stronger camels for the next few days until they had been consumed. We commenced the month of February, therefore, by a direct move forward, and camped near the site of Wunadeng village. It had disappeared now, and all along the Pibor we found that deserted villages we had passed in May had been swept away by the rains.

Our march along the Pibor on February 2 was much more difficult than on the previous day, owing to the long coarse grass and an entire absence of a track. We camped near small thorn-scrub, and I decided to cross the Pibor at this point, for we were

## BY DOUBLE STAGES

only a few miles north of Khor Geni, which would have to be crossed as well as the main stream when we reached the Akobo-Pibor junction, so I hoped to save time by making one crossing here and continuing along the right bank of the Pibor. We met some Anuaks, who reported the "going" to be better on the right bank, that a colony of Anuaks was now settled at the junction of the two rivers, and that we should probably be able to obtain guides to conduct us along the Akobo. The greater part of the 3rd was therefore employed in transferring the column from the left bank, the river being about sixty yards broad and eight feet deep. The right bank was very steep, so a track had to be made diagonally up its face. Our small ten-foot James' boat in two sections proved a great success and transported easily half a ton of stores and equipment at a time, so we had all our large number of loads across by 1 P.M. and the camp pitched amidst trees, where a plentiful supply of fuel was obtainable. The camels and mules were then towed over and landed by 2.30 P.M., so the men were given rest until 4 before tackling the donkeys, which were towed across in batches of five at a time. By 6 P.M. everything was on the right bank, and the men able to enjoy the luxury of large fires after their cold work on the river when the sun began to sink.

Next day we made a very satisfactory march to the junction of the Akobo and Pibor rivers. On leaving camp we struck a well-defined track, which we followed throughout the march, keeping close to the river for the first two miles, and then leaving it



## BY DOUBLE STAGES

to avoid a large bend. We saw nothing more of it for the next six or seven miles, during which we traversed grass land wooded in parts with lalob and thorn trees. We came upon the river again some two miles below its junction with the Akobo, and then continued along the bank until we reached that point and camped, some 600 yards almost due east of our former May camp, on the opposite side of the river. We found that this stream, which then had been sluggish to a degree, was now flowing very rapidly, the water being of a muddy colour; whereas the Pibor, above the junction, appeared quite clear and green, evidently having its origin in swamp. We found some Anuaks settled in a small village near our former camp, who waded and swam across to us, and two of them agreed to act as guides in return for beads and cloth. One of the men was a leper, pronounced by Garner to be a well-marked case. Although fish enters largely into the diet of both Nuers and Anuaks this was the only man we saw so affected, though the natives told Garner that many others of the tribe were suffering from this disease.

## CHAPTER III

### AMONG MOSQUITOES

ACCOMPANIED by our two Anuak guides we moved eastward along the Akobo on February 5. This river takes the most extraordinary winding course of any I have ever seen, which compelled us at times to travel by all points of the compass; and yet our general direction was almost due east for the first two days. We traversed difficult grass country, at times thickly wooded with thorn trees along the banks of the river, and passed through several small settlements of Anuaks in the bush; but all the timid natives had decamped into the jungle, and we only occasionally saw a few of them, who were reassured by the presence of two of their number acting as our guides. Their existence must have been at this time precarious, for the river was still 20 to 30 yards wide and flowing very swiftly, while its depth offered little opportunity for procuring fish by spearing them in pools for some weeks yet to come. The frugal products of the woods could ill supply their wants, and we saw family parties bound for the Pibor in small dug-out canoes, all bent, seemingly, on reaching the fish spearsers' happy hunting grounds. They were a poor miserable-looking lot, and a square foot of skin or hide afforded clothing for an entire family. This would be worn by the old

## AMONG MOSQUITOES

lady, whilst the men, children, and unmarried girls and women would be content with the garb of Eve before the Fall.

On February 6, after a tiring march through waste grass land, we reached a point on the river near where Bright and I had camped the previous year, when we had marched across from the Gelo to the Akobo. Travelling had then been easy, but the long coarse grass which had sprung up in the interval impeded our progress now, and it was not easy on account of the change in the aspect of the country to recognise the sites of our former camps. We met no natives this day, but the guides advised us to cross the river, as travelling would be easier on that side—it certainly was not likely to be much more difficult—as the grass had recently been burnt. I decided, therefore, to do so in the morning.

That afternoon a herd of giraffe appeared about half a mile from camp, and Bilal, always keen at the prospects of a gorge, prevailed on me to go after them. It was not long before I regretted having left the precincts of camp, as my orderly and I were soon into 10 feet grass, where we could see nothing, and where all air was shut out from us; so we plugged along, sweating, and falling about, the hot rays of the sun beating mercilessly down on us. Now and again we came across a small mound, and clambering on to this I would carefully locate the herd and push on through the grass in that direction. By the time we reached another mound and again took a look round, the herd had grazed off in another direction. Those lofty creatures, with long outstretched necks and eyes

## AMONG MOSQUITOES

18 to 20 feet above the ground, were probably keenly alive to the unusual disturbance in the grass, and based their plans accordingly. We were compelled to abandon the pursuit eventually, as the giraffes went off striding through that grass as you or I would through a field of clover.

Next morning we transferred the column to the left bank of the river, which was only 20 to 30 yards wide, and we found some old remains of fire wood and a kerosene oil tin some 200 yards outside camp, relics of our halt on the day we crossed the Akobo in May, when our Anuak guides deserted us. We were now favoured by a good moon in the early mornings, which assisted us greatly in loading up our animals, and on the morning of February 8 we were off before dawn. On the left bank progress was much easier, as the grass had all been burnt, and we travelled along at a fine pace, covering some 10 miles by 10.30 A.M. in a south-easterly direction. For the first  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles we passed through thorn bush; but after that entered an open grass plain, finally camping, some 500 or 600 yards to the north of four solitary trees, on the bank of the river. It was very difficult to obtain wood, but fortunately a small spinney near at hand furnished sufficient thorn to construct a zeriba for our donkeys. The right bank was absolutely a treeless grass plain, so we had crossed the river none too soon. Shortly before camping we had met parties of Anuak men and women on their way to the Pibor, carrying all their household belongings with them. They avoided us at first; but when our guides shouted out to them, some of the men came up to us, and we learnt that they

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were from Yekān village; but we never came across that place subsequently.

Our general direction next day was slightly to the north of east, and throughout the entire march we traversed an open grass plain devoid of trees and shrubs, except for three or four clumps of lalob trees out on the plain, which indicated the sight of a former village. Camped by the river side away from a tree of any sort, we had to requisition every pack-saddle and all loads to construct a zeriba for our donkeys. After camping we went after an elephant, without success, but I picked up five whistling ducks just before lunch. In the afternoon an old solitary bull buffalo appeared on the river, and Bright and I treated him to several shots, which caused him to lie down. We then sent for the boat to cross the river, and had a long search for the brute, but never came across him, so he had probably trotted away through the long grass. The borders of the river were becoming very swampy, and during the march we had been compelled to make wide detours in crossing several khors containing water-overflows from the Akobo. This camp in fact proved to be our last for some days on the river bank, which we were unable to approach again until we reached the Tedo district.

On February 10 the guides took us away from the river in a southerly direction until we came upon a khor, Galu by name, which we followed almost throughout the march, as owing to its swampy nature we could not cross it. The actual waterway where we first struck it was not more than 20 feet wide, but the approaches were swampy and we were compelled to

## AMONG MOSQUITOES

skirt it, until after some miles we were able to cross dry shod. As the river then was reported a long distance off and unapproachable, we had to make use of this stagnant water for the day. No fuel was obtainable beyond a species of dry swamp thistle, for we had not passed a single tree, though there were two small clumps of lalob a mile or two to the east of us. Senegal hartebeeste and ostriches were fairly numerous on the burnt grass plain, and apparently drank from the khor on which we were camped. I shot one of the former after camp had been pitched, and in the afternoon a fine roan antelope confidently approached our transport animals out grazing, so Garner went off in pursuit, and had no difficulty in securing this fine trophy; we thus had a plentiful supply of meat in camp for the men and ourselves. Next day we made an effort to reach the river by marching some nine miles in an easterly direction, but towards the end, where we must have probably been close to its banks, were blocked by swamp. To the south was a village, Bor by name, situated at the foot of a solitary tree right in the centre of swamp, several natives from which visited us wet nearly up to the waist in wading through to us. Progress was barred in all directions except the one we had come by, so it was decided to camp, and try and work round next day.

I have had some experience of mosquitoes; but that camp and one or two subsequent ones beat anything we had ever tumbled on before in that line. At sundown they appeared in myriads, and drove not only us, but all our wretched transport animals, nearly frantic. We had a grass fire built near us as we made

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painful efforts to get through dinner, preferring a choking cloud of smoke to the tormenting insects; but it was of no use, and we were compelled to beat an ignominious retreat to bed, and take shelter inside the curtains. The hum of these thousands attempting to get at us filled us with joy, and we began to wax defiant at their fruitless efforts, and to offer facetious remarks, provoking them to further endeavours. Then turning over we sought that delightful repose which follows on a hard day's work on the march, feeling secure behind our muslin. Just as a sense of oblivion is beginning to spread over one, a closer hum than usual is heard near the exposed ear. "That beggar's inside the curtain!" You smack wildly at him—miss him of course, but not your ear, which tingles smartly. Another hum—this time you feel a light touch on the forehead. You draw your hand ever so cunningly forward, slowly, quietly, above the blood-sucking monster, and it descends like a flash with a crash on your own unoffending brow. You are nearly stunned; but at all events you congratulate yourself you have pulverised your tormentor. By this time you are wide awake—your ears keenly on the alert for every sound, and if twenty or a hundred mosquitoes do not discover the hole in the curtain by which the original explorer entered, and begin to lead you such a dance as precludes all idea of sleep, you are more lucky than I was that night. At length I could stand it no longer, so jumped out of bed, lit my lantern, hunted for the hole in the curtain, a prey to hundreds all the time, tied it up in a bunch with a piece of string, gave a

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general swing all round with a towel to keep the torments at bay for three seconds, whilst I darted again behind my curtain, and tucked it carefully in all round me. The few that still remained inside were systematically hunted down by the light of the lantern, and ruthlessly slaughtered in detail, and having covered the whole place with gore, but freed it of all disturbing elements, I secured a fitful snatch of sleep, before that awful bugle at 4 A.M. warned all that it was time again to be up and doing. After such aging experience, how one greets the first signs of early dawn! One realises that as soon as the sun begins to mount the heavens those infernal mosquitoes will retire to their lairs, and leave the worn traveller alone until the coming eve, when all will have to be undergone afresh.

On February 12 we retraced our footsteps some two miles in the direction of the former site of Abothi village, and then zigzagged about in every conceivable direction, skirting the large expanse of swamp on which we had been camped. At the end of three hours we had barely marched five miles, and were not far from the village of Bor. Fortunately some Anuaks from that place now joined us, and indicating the direction we should proceed to avoid the swamp, accompanied us for the remainder of the march. Through tall unburnt grass we plunged, staggering along now south, now east, and now west, until, just as we were ready to drop with fatigue, we came across a small burnt area, and camped in it on the edge of the swamp. The two guides who had accompanied us to this point from the Pibor now wished to return, so we paid them



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off, and enlisted the services of two of the Bor men, who agreed to take as far as Tedo. Again mosquitoes made the night hideous, but at the break of day we did much better with our new guides, who led us a capital route in a south-easterly direction, skirting the swamp by a very straight course. The going was good too, over short green grass which had recently sprung up on burnt areas, and we travelled well in consequence, camping near the village of Mila, and finding water in a large pool near the edge of the swamp. Early in the day's march we crossed a well-defined track, which the guides reported to run south to Bonjak—distant thirty or forty miles as far as I could gather, with no water on the road. Native information hereabouts is generally very unreliable, and from what they said the people of Bonjak are dependent on swamps and pools for their water supply. The Kung Kung, they told me, lie farther to the south-west, on the west bank of the upper waters of the Pibor.

Another village, Odiek, was reported to exist in the belt of trees some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the south-west of our camp, the inhabitants of which draw their water either from a pool or small lake. Three words fraught with meaning are entered against our camp near Mila in my diary, "Mosquitoes perfectly appalling." Our guides were evidently a success, for the following day we made another capital march of about twelve miles, the first eight of which we were led by an extraordinary straight course. Subsequently they took us through swampy ground and long grass down to one of the regular river crossings, but our animals became

## AMONG MOSQUITOES

badly bogged, and much delay ensued before we could extract ourselves again. This was the first view we had obtained of the river for four days, and where we struck it now the stream was about twenty-five yards broad and waist deep, flowing about three miles an hour between well-defined banks over a sandy bottom. Disentangling ourselves from the swamp we struck south, away from the river, along a village track for a little over a mile, towards high ground and clusters of lalob trees. A village was reported a little farther inland concealed by a belt of wood; but we turned off east before it came in sight, and continuing parallel to the river again camped on the edge of the swamp. We had now reached the Tedo district, which extends on both banks of the river, and only made a short march of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles next day in a south-easterly direction to a grove of lalob trees, as the guides informed us we must cross the Akobo at this point. During the march we had traversed the most pleasing tract of country since we had followed this river, keeping on high ground overlooking the stream, and some two to three miles distant from it.

About a mile after leaving camp, and plunging through a tall growth of grass, we entered fine open country, with huts dotted about amidst scattered trees and patches of old cultivation. Following an excellent track through these for some two miles, we entered another area of waste grass land, and came upon a further group of huts, and then struck east towards the river, until we reached the grove of lalob. The guides wished us to dive through a broad belt of long coarse grass to the river; but it was

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considered advisable to halt the animals outside until the track had first been reconnoitred, as we feared a repetition of the previous day's experience. It was fortunate this had been done, as the track to the river led through at least a mile of tall rank grass and vegetation, which had entirely overgrown it, whilst four or five boggy tracts and swampy khors had to be crossed, which would inevitably have brought our animals to grief, before they could ever have reached the river. For another mile on the opposite bank the going appeared to be almost equally bad, so I decided to camp outside in the grove of trees and rest the animals for a day, whilst the men were put on to improve the approaches to the river and beyond. Accordingly on February 16 Bright and Garner went out with all available men in the early morning, cleared the track, bridged the swampy portions with papyrus grass, and improved the road generally, until they assured themselves the passage would now be quite feasible for our animals.

The work had been so thoroughly carried out that we experienced little difficulty in crossing on the 17th. The early mornings down on this low ground were very raw and cold amidst this tall rank vegetation, so the "rouse" was ordered for 5.30, instead of 4 as usual. An hour later the mules and camels went off with their loads, and crossed the river quite easily, as it was only 25 yards broad and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep. Then the donkeys were started off, and on their reaching the river, men were in readiness to lift up the saddle flaps containing the flour, &c., when the deep channel was being crossed. This was the first

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time our donkeys had been called upon to wade across a river carrying their loads, and we had a lively time trying to get the little beggars to enter the stream at all. They apparently had a vivid recollection of being towed across on two previous occasions with ropes under their jaws in the wake of the James' boat. They argued that then they had proceeded empty, whilst now seemingly they were expected to swim with their loads on their backs! One may imagine this caused some consternation amongst the less stout-hearted of our humble carriers, and resulted in a very considerable amount of controversy on the bank of that desolate stream in the raw cold of dawn. The amount of shoving, shouting, basting, hauling, and vituperation to which they were treated defeated them in the end, and they were all got safely across with their burdens—without having to swim for it, as they appeared to fear. Subsequently they gave us credit for a certain amount of judgment, and after a time, during our further progress along the Akobo, they readily crossed the river on the five or six occasions when we were compelled to do so, without all this stubborn resistance.

After the river had been crossed we traversed another three-quarters of a mile through rank vegetation before reaching a second khor about five yards wide and eighteen inches to two feet deep, over which the donkeys were man-handled in a similar way, and by ten o'clock we were clear of obstructions, and moving eastward along a native track towards the high ground some miles from the river on which the huts and old plots of cultivation of the Tedo people were situated. The natives were extraordinary shy and



*Anuak men of the Baro or Upeno river. Notice their ivory bracelets.*

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## AMONG MOSQUITOES

suspicious, in spite of our having been for some days amongst them, and we found the occupants of the numerous huts had all cleared off before we arrived. We camped near the first cluster of huts on an open plot of ground, three or four hundred yards south of a large khor—the Owag by name—which was about twenty yards broad, with high steep banks, whilst pools of water were collected in depressions in the dry bed. It is probable that this water-course has its origin in the Abyssinian hills away to the east, of which unfortunately we had hitherto been able to see nothing, owing to the great heat haze at this period of the year. The guides, who had accompanied us, seized the opportunity offered by the absence of their brethren, and proceeded to clear the huts of all useful household goods or articles they could lay their hands on, until we heard of it and ordered all the things to be immediately replaced. This puzzled them, and was altogether foreign to their idea of the fitness of things, and no doubt they pitied our scruples and simplicity.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN PLEASANT PATHS

WE had now reached the most prosperous district we were to traverse along the Akobo river, and could not but regret that the Anuaks were so timid that it was impossible to get in touch with the natives, as we naturally wished to learn something from them and to study their idiosyncrasies. We marched south again on February 18, some  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the village of Neum, which nestles on the river bank at a charming spot shaded by fine spreading sycamore trees, where we camped, as the natives had cleared off on our approach. During the first three miles of the march we traversed rough country, for, although the track itself was good, it crossed numbers of deep, dry khors, apparently overflow channels of the Owag, which find their way down to the Akobo by courses of their own. Huts and cultivation were dotted about on their banks, and cotton and castor oil plants were growing wild.

Three miles and a quarter from the start we came across a large khor—the Abol, a loop from the Akobo—with almost perpendicular banks some 20 yards apart, with pools of water in its bed and tall rank vegetation on its banks, which delayed us for more than an hour. For the next five miles we moved on without hindrance



## IN PLEASANT PATHS

at some distance from the Akobo, which throughout was fringed with swamp, over open coarse grass land, and through a belt of bush and trees between that river and the Abol loop, until we eventually reached the point where this takes off from the main stream. The dry sandy bed was easily crossed, and we immediately came on a small village on the opposite bank. The Akobo here was quite free from swamp, as the river ran between perpendicular banks 15 to 20 feet above the then level of its waters. Fine groves of sycamore trees flourished on both banks, whilst the pretty cotton plant flowers, and many beautiful little birds and butterflies, added colour and variety to the scene, which seemed very pleasant to us after the monotony of grass wastes and swamps, with which we had become familiar. The big trees were alive with the handsome colobus monkeys, who afforded much amusement to us by their antics, swinging, leaping, and dropping from branch to branch. Our Askaris talked of catching some, but we saw no serious efforts made to do so.

Beyond the seven or eight Anuaks by whom we were accompanied we saw no natives. Our followers were apparently more keen on beads than any other form of trade goods, and several of them had large numbers of strings of different colours round the waist—blue, white, green, “punda malia” (Swahili—“zebra”—a variegated form either white and blue, or white, blue, and pink). The rims of their ears were pierced in half-a-dozen places or more to receive small rings of beads. Otherwise they were quite naked, and did not affect the skins round the loins,

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like their compatriots of the Upeno or Baro river. Henceforward the country became for the most part well wooded, and on February 19 we marched eleven miles nearly due south. For the first mile and a half we passed huts and small patches of cultivation along the riverside, to a point where a large dry khor, about twenty yards wide with a deep bed, entered the Akobo on the left bank. Whether this was a loop of the main river or an overflow channel from another stream we were unable to ascertain. For the remainder of the march we saw little of the river though quite close to it, as we plunged through tracts of long coarse grass which subsequently brought us to an open burnt plain separated from the river by a belt of thorn trees, whilst to the east it was bordered by a well wooded area. Some seven miles from Neum the river forms a big bend to the west near the village of Kwaralak, but continuing south as before we struck it again some miles on where it was flowing from the east, and camped shortly after.

There was little indication of swamp here, as is shown by Bottego, the river banks being well defined and from fifteen to twenty feet above the level of the water, whilst the ground was hard and firm, and quite free of cracks; as they were also thickly wooded with thorn and other trees, we were able once more to obtain plenty of fuel, and construct zeribas for our donkeys. I had by this time formed an opinion that Wellby's Ruzi II. river never joined the Akobo (or his Ruzi I., hereabouts), and that it probably flowed west instead into the Pibor. The Anuaks were very positive in their assertions to me that no river joined

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the Akobo from the south, and we certainly did not see one.

Next day it was decided to cross the river and push along the left bank, for Garner, whilst out shooting the previous afternoon, had discovered a good crossing about a mile from camp. Marching east for about a mile we reached a regular elephant watering-place, the steep slopes on both banks being worn down by these mighty beasts almost into ramps, to and from the water. Little preparation was therefore necessary to enable the animals to cross, as the river was shallow, only fifty to sixty yards wide, and flowing over a lava bed, and the whole operation was completed in thirty-five minutes. We subsequently became rather involved in long grass as the river indulges in a most extraordinary bend about here, forming a horse-shoe, and when we came across it again in the most unexpected quarter we had to retrace our steps to the crossing. We then tried a second time, and kept close to the river in a south-easterly direction until about a mile farther on we came upon a small village—Pero by name—in a clearing. Our arrival was evidently not anticipated, as we surprised about half-a-dozen men, two of whom were prevailed upon to accompany us as guides, for the one Anuak who had remained with us ever since Mila was now in country unknown to him. Three miles farther on we reached Pachalla village, deserted of course, from whence a track ran in a southerly direction to what our guides said was the Oboth river (Wellby's Ruzi II. ?), which they reported to be about as far distant as Neum. Still continuing in a south-easterly direction, we traversed waste grass

## IN PLEASANT PATHS

and patches of thorn trees along the river, some of the reaches of which were exceedingly pretty, fringed with fine gemaiza trees in places, and studded with small grassy islands in others. The width of the river appeared to increase as we proceeded up it, and averaged now certainly double what it was near the Pibor junction.

We paid off the Mila guide, who wished to return to his home, with plenty of brass wire and beads with which he was delighted, feeling himself now to be a man of independent means for the rest of his natural life. Our new guides conducted us by a good route next day, leaving the river almost at once, and striking across country until we came upon a well-defined track. This we followed almost throughout the entire march—away from the river—passing through thickly wooded country, and making our first halt in an open patch of cultivation some seven and a half miles from the start—the few huts constituting the village of Kenna, near the bank of the river. Subsequently after crossing a grassy plain in a southerly direction we came upon a swampy khor, full of water, known to the Anuaks as the Oboth, which I think must be Wellby's Ruzi II., as I identified a long low ridge some three or four miles to the west, at the foot of which he had marched. To avoid the swampy banks of the stream, which the Anuaks averred branched off from the Akobo some miles distant, they took us by an exceedingly roundabout route back to the river, and it was some time before we could find a suitable camp on a filthy burnt-up patch of ground under trees. During the after-

## IN PLEASANT PATHS

noon the men with the camels out grazing came in to report that some waterbuck were feeding with these animals, possibly under the impression that they were merely a new form of giraffe, so I went off with my rifle. After a long chase I eventually put a bullet into one that was facing me at a distance of about 150 yards, and he dropped, shot through the base of the neck, which with his head and horns was visible in the long grass. On my approach he made most frantic efforts to recover his feet, and whirled about in the wildest manner, now up, now down, and gradually floundered into grass eight or ten feet high. I feared I had lost him, but fortunately a convenient ant-heap was at hand, from which I spotted him lying on his side, apparently at his last gasp; but I gave him another bullet to finish him, as an African antelope possesses wonderful recuperative powers. On our return to camp men were sent out to bring in the meat, but they preferred to drag the carcass in whole as it was getting dark, and to cut it up at leisure.

On February 23 we were led by a circular route along the river to a point where the guides wished us to cross. It was an impossible place, as both banks were absolutely sheer and some fifteen feet in height. The natives crossed here by taking advantage of roots of trees for their foot and hand holds. They and monkeys were about the only animals that could possibly succeed, so our guides had evidently not gauged the capabilities of our transport animals. We were compelled, therefore, to dodge about in villainously

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long grass on the banks until we at length discovered a possible crossing. It was necessary, however, to prepare the banks, and although the river was not more than thirty yards broad with sandy bottom, over which a stream eighteen inches deep was flowing, it was ten o'clock before the column was on the right bank, and we had only marched three miles.

We obtained here our first view of a hill since we had passed Ahmed Agha on the Nile; it lay a little to the south of due east of us; but owing to the close nature of the country we saw nothing more of it for some time. Diving through thick woods we soon found ourselves on the bank of a large dry khor, thirty yards wide with steep banks twenty feet in height, which was probably the Chiarini of Bottego. Following this for a short distance we entered undulating wooded country, and came across stones and gravel for the first time since our start. We camped on a burnt area on the river bank, the channel of which was in places blocked by large dead tree trunks, which had evidently been carried down in flood time. We could fortunately just discern the two main peaks or crags of Ungwala Hill, from a short distance out of camp, and I was able in consequence to obtain azimuths on them. Plenty of dead wood was available, and roaring fires could be built with little difficulty; but extreme caution had to be observed in handling these logs, which afforded shelter to vicious black scorpions—the largest ones I think I have ever seen. Some of them were truly gigantic, and not unlike baby lobsters for size. I wonder if any of my

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readers recently perused an account of how a heroic Mr. Bryant of the merchant service navigated a seemingly doomed ship, manned by a German crew suffering from scurvy, safely to port, after undergoing dreadful experiences. He mentions in his diary that the holds of the vessel, which was conveying timber, were infested with what one of the sailors described in broken English as "schmall schnakes mit feet," meaning thereby, scorpions—the description is so quaint and apt that I may perhaps be pardoned for introducing it.

During our halt on February 23 we had all our saddles, &c., thoroughly overhauled, and the following day made a long march of sixteen miles to the south-east of the highest peak of Ungwala Hill, near the foot of which we camped, between it and the river. For the first three or four miles we kept fairly close to the Akobo, after which it ran south some miles back from our route, and we saw nothing more of it until the end of the march. For the greater part of the distance we were able to follow a well-defined track which took us by a very straight course to Ungwala Hill, between which and some low knuckles to the west we passed through most pleasant tracts, before descending to the swampy river banks. The highest peak of Ungwala attains an altitude of about 3550 feet above sea-level, and in this flat country forms a very conspicuous landmark, whilst to the south of it, and part of the same hill, is another prominent crag of rock. Vanutelli in his map to illustrate Bottego's expedition shows this mountain, called by him Ischeno, on the left bank of the Akobo; but

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it should in reality be on the right bank. We had picked up two more Anuaks on the road to act as guides, so the Pero men were given presents of brass wire and beads and sent off to their homes.

The following day we continued in a south-easterly direction through woods, skirting the belt of swamp bordering the river until we reached a point some six and a half miles on, where our guides wished us to cross the river by a native track. We had passed two picturesque sheets of water, each perhaps a square mile in area, which I named Lakes Garner and Bright, after my two companions—the native names as far as I could gather from our guides were respectively Ulut and Achua; but names don't go for much in that country, and it is scarcely likely that any two travellers will receive the same name for any physical features of the country. We obtained our first glimpse in the early morning of lofty hills away to the east—the great Abyssinian escarpment—several of the more prominent peaks of which in the next few days I was able approximately to fix and ascertain their altitudes. The highest point visible I calculated to be over 8000 feet, whilst others ranged from 7000 to 8000 feet above sea-level.

The track took us next day across the river, after we had proceeded some seven and a half miles, just beyond the small village of Gwait, which was the last Anuak settlement we saw. These crossings naturally caused considerable delay, and although the water was not deep, and the bottom generally firm, the banks had always to be specially prepared for the



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passage of the animals, so it was usually time to camp as soon as all were safely across. On this day, February 26, we had followed for some distance the side of a low wooded ridge overlooking the swampy ground through which the river flowed, and when we descended into this to reach the crossing, Garner was compelled to halt the head of the column to allow five huge elephants to stroll casually across our line of march, which they did not seventy yards in front of the camels. They had stepped along parallel with us in the low ground for at least two miles before we began to descend. I was thankful that nobody in front had ventured to fire at them, as this would probably have resulted in our camels and mules being stampeded if the elephants had retaliated. As it was the mules were becoming extremely restive since they had winded these lordly beasts, and we were not sorry when they disappeared and relieved us from the risk of losses that we could not have replaced.

On February 27 we marched almost due south along the river until we reached a point where it flowed from the east before turning north. We had previously ascertained from our guides that a small stream from the south, the Ajibur they call it, enters the Akobo at this bend, and wished subsequently to follow it, in order to avoid the hilly regions from which the Akobo takes its source. When we arrived at this point the guides led us down to the river to show me the junction, but we could see nothing of it from the bank we were on, owing to a tall rank growth of grass and a dense forest of trees on the opposite

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side. The animals were halted therefore whilst I went on to investigate, first crossing the Akobo, which took me and the men accompanying me well over the waist in fording it. Then we forced our way through grass fifteen feet high, and came eventually on a deep dry khor some five yards wide and ten feet deep, with perpendicular banks—the Ajibur. We followed this until we could clamber across, and working through more grass came upon open country on higher ground, whence we obtained sight of a small lake some distance farther up. It was hopeless to attempt to get the animals over where we had passed, and as I was now joined by Bright we decided to return to the right bank of the Akobo and follow that for some distance above the junction, until a suitable ford could be found. We continued therefore along the river for two miles in an easterly direction, until we reached a patch of burnt grass and camped. During the afternoon the banks of the river were prepared for crossing the first thing in the morning by constructing ramps on both sides. The guides assured us that although the Ajibur stream contained no running water now, we should find pools in the bed at intervals. Away to the east, they said, was a district called Bula, perhaps ten miles distant as far as we could gather, inhabited by a fair race of people, who, we surmised, might possibly be of Galla extraction. On inquiring after Melile, which should have been on the opposite bank according to Vanutelli's map, in which a large village is shown here, they replied that they had never heard of such a place. We asked if there had formerly been a large village of any description hereabouts, and



*An Anuak homestead on the bank of the Baro or Upeno river.*

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were solemnly assured there had not, and that Gwait was the last Anuak village, their territory terminating here. Names here signify little, and I don't suppose for a moment that any subsequent traveller over our route is likely to find villages called by the names that were given to us. It is more than likely that they may have disappeared and others sprung up elsewhere. Melile should have been a town, but we could find no traces of it; nor was the name even remembered by the Anuaks with us. That Bottego found some large settlement here I think is unquestionable, yet in the space of three or four years it was gone completely, not a trace left behind, nor even the memory of a name.

This was our last camp on the Akobo, with which stream we had been associated for the best part of a month. For many reasons we had been disappointed during our journey along it. The timidity of the natives, who studiously avoided us on all possible occasions, detracted much from the usual interest one obtains on coming in contact with little known races. Natives about camp, I always think, add much variety to the often humdrum mechanical camp life, where everything after a short time proceeds like clockwork in a well-regulated column. Change and excitement is the great charm of African travel, and we had scarcely experienced either since we left Nasser. The country was devoid of interesting features—there were no fine views, and the monotony of those grassy plains can only be adequately imagined by those who have traversed them. There was not even the redeeming feature of plenty of

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shooting, which covers a multitude of wants in otherwise desolate tracts. What more exhilarating than stalking a much-coveted head, your wits against that of the antelope you long to see lying at your feet? When at length after a weary pursuit you fire, and see him drop, the thrill of delight that courses through your veins! It's just "lovely," and there is no other word for it; and even this to a great extent had been denied us.

## CHAPTER V

### DRY WELLS AND DROUGHT

LEAVING camp on February 28 we passed the Akobo by the ford prepared, and marched for some miles across country in a south-westerly direction until we struck the bed of the Ajibur. We came on a large pool, and had to go some distance up stream before we could make for the opposite bank. We then continued almost due south over undulating grass land thinly wooded, until we reached a belt of tall, coarse reeds, trampled into devious tracks by the feet of many elephants. When we made the usual halt we found that seven of our donkeys with their loads were missing. Men were sent back to hunt them up whilst we pitched camp on a pool in the bed of the stream about one and a half miles farther on. They were eventually recovered and brought on to camp by our donkey corporal Sarur, who was second in command of the Jehadia, and had been with Bright and me on the previous expedition.

Some hartebeeste approached our camp, and one was shot by me, quite different to any species we had ever seen. Unfortunately, when later we had to throw away so many of our belongings, all our heads were among the first to go, so that I cannot substantiate my statements; but Bright, Garner, and I could find

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nothing at the Natural History Museum at South Kensington precisely like it, and the only record I have in my diary is to this effect: "The horns are quite different to any I remember to have seen; they are not unlike the Jacksoni, but instead of the bend at the top going back it goes out sideways, whilst the fluting, too, is quite unlike that of a Jacksoni." The skin was a lighter colour than the Jacksoni—a yellow brown, so far as I can now recall, and it was a doe. The section of the terminals of the horn, I do remember, was not circular, but flatter, and somewhat splayed out. Memory, however, is such a treacherous rogue, that I could not now pretend to be able accurately to describe this uncommon beast, though I should recognise a similar head at once if I saw it in any natural history collection.

On the afternoon of the last day of February we were visited by a thunderstorm and a heavy downpour of rain, which fell again during the night. Rain in camp is always cheerless, but we welcomed it, as we anticipated water difficulties since we had left the Akobo. We halted on March 1, and had more heavy rain in the small hours of the 2nd, which lasted until the "rouse" went. Considerable delay ensued, as rain always paralyses blacks in the early morning, so it was 6.30 before we got under weigh. The going at first was heavy, but it improved, and we were able to march some twelve miles nearly due south, and camped on a pool in a branch of the Ajibur. We had passed two isolated hills a few miles to the west of us, known as Aguma and Dim, the summits



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of which were both over 3000 feet above sea-level. The country was prettily wooded, undulating, with gravel soil, and free from the long coarse grass which had made marching so laborious. Still the rain fell, and as it was pouring on the morning of the 3rd when the bugle went, the order was given not to load up until the storm had passed, which it fortunately did in a short time, and we were off about 6.30. As we had camped on a tributary of the Ajibur, we at once struck south-west towards the foot of a third prominent hill, until we reached the main stream, which held several large pools of water. Southward again we steered some little distance from the river over undulating grass land, charmingly wooded, and the scenery was really very pretty, for the trees were covered with fresh green foliage, whilst to the west of us was a series of curious cocked-hat shaped peaks rising from the ridge which formed the water-parting between the Ajibur and a stream known as the Neubari, which our guides told us flowed north some fifteen to twenty miles to the west of our route, and joined the Oboth. They had, however, only heard of this stream, and never visited it; but if it is there, as I am inclined to believe, it is probably the stream that Wellby camped on some miles to the north of  $5^{\circ} 30' N.$  lat., which he imagined to be the stream he had struck at that latitude.

We were ascending very appreciably now as we approached the outlying spurs of the Boma range, and after we had marched about twelve miles we looked out again for the Ajibur with a view to camp-

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ing, but became involved once more in long coarse grass, through which we pushed on with great difficulty, unable to see anything; and at length, after floundering in all directions, came upon a deep dry khor with rocky bed thickly fringed with bamboo, whilst tall groves of deleb palms grew near the banks. This was evidently not the Ajibur, but a tributary of it, as there was not a drop of water visible. It was already well past midday, so we struggled on through this wretched grass for another mile or so, and eventually lighted on a filthy pool of green water in the nullah. If we could obtain water for ourselves by digging in the now sandy bed, I considered the pool would do for our beasts of burden. Halting the animals, we continued up the bed for a few hundred yards until we reached a likely looking place, and commenced digging. Water was met with some two feet below the surface, so Garner was asked to pitch the camp and call up the animals; he was fortunately able to find a suitable spot where the grass was short and the bush fairly open. We were now close to the hills, and our guides were all at sea, as they had never visited this region before; so next day we proceeded by the light of nature, and a dismal effort it was in this much intersected hilly country. There were no signs of tracks, and the few natives we came across the previous day gathering fruit from the palms had all bolted, and we saw no more. Leaving camp we started by crossing the khor, and marched in a southerly direction between two low hills. Progress was slow, as it had rained heavily in the early morning and the ground was sodden. We ascended steadily

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to the col between the two hills, and were now at an altitude of about 2500 feet above sea-level. Looking back north we were struck by the glorious view across the plains we had lately traversed, the various peaks and isolated hills standing out in bold relief against the dead level of the surrounding country. Descending on the far side, we at once became tied up in wretched broken country, intersected with numbers of small steep-banked water-courses along the slopes of a ridge facing us, which barred progress to the south. Compelled to abandon the attempt to pass this obstruction, we decided to strike west, and almost at once came upon a big khor, the banks of which were fringed with bamboo. The bed was rocky, and no water was obtainable till we discovered an extensive pool near the junction of two other large khors with this, and camped.

We now found a native track, so Mabruk Effendi went off with a party to reconnoitre, whilst the sergeant with a few men set out in another direction to see if he could find any natives, and returned later with a small boy. We were only able to converse by signs, as our Anuak guides could not speak the Boma dialect. Having paid them off they returned to their homes, and we took on the boy instead. Mabruk Effendi reported a good track for some miles, and as the boy knew the road through the hills, we felt relieved, for our animals had been much distressed after their exertions along the hillsides, and several of the mules had broken down. We were unable to march until the afternoon of the next day, as a heavy downpour of rain in the early morning brought

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the khors down in flood, and parties had to be sent out with Mabruk Effendi to bridge them near camp. We made a start about 1 P.M., and crossing the khors by the excellent bridges prepared by our native officer, followed the native track beyond through charming tracts, up a deep valley enclosed to the east and west by hills. We had to ford several other mountain torrents, which had been formed by the heavy rain of the morning, and during the earlier part of the march traversed a small flat plain, after which the track led us across the main stream of the valley and along the side of the western ridge. Steadily we ascended, marching towards a magnificent sugar-loaf peak of solid rock, about a mile to the north-east of which we camped on the bank of a small running stream on the hill slopes of the main valley. Travelling had been laboured and difficult, several boggy tracks having to be dealt with; so, although we had only marched five and a half miles, it was 6.30 P.M. before we were settled down in camp for the night.

Next morning we only marched some three and a half miles, encountering numbers of small streams, and clambering over hill and dale in beautiful scenery; but encumbered as we were by transport animals unaccustomed to this sort of thing, we perhaps did not fully appreciate it, for our progress was distressingly slow, the recent heavy rains having paralysed our animals. Ascending steadily, we reached a col a short distance to the east of the magnificent bluff, and descended into a hollow the other side, clambering out again after crossing a stream at the bottom

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which flowed through a gorge a little farther on, at the southern base of the bluff. Here we came across natives and cultivation for the first time in this district, on an undulating ridge along which a few wretched grass apologies for huts were dotted. We were viewed with suspicion, of course—we always were—and the natives could with difficulty be prevailed upon to approach. Eventually some few more courageous than others drew near, and as they were not struck dead for their temerity, others seemed to spring up from the ground on all sides of us, where they had remained concealed behind rocks and in patches of cultivation. Soon we had quite a large gathering of young men and old about us, and we got along famously whilst we delayed the march to encourage them to trust us. Neither of us understood one single word the other said, so conversation was somewhat halting; but we made signs and jabbered, and smiled, and laughed, and got two guides out of them, which is what we were chiefly driving at. Accompanied by them we made a deep descent into a small valley, crossed another stream at the base, and clambering with much difficulty up the opposite slope, camped near a newly cultivated plot, our animals being quite worn out.

We were at an altitude of 3175 feet, whilst the rocky bluff, now to the north, towered another 650 feet above us. A tremendous storm broke over us shortly after 2 P.M., which blew the mess tent down on Bright and myself, whilst I was at work on the map. The ground round camp was in a few moments converted into a quagmire, and, however much we might

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have delighted in the grand scenery and fertile valleys, we heartily wished ourselves out of these stormy regions, for our animals were losing condition most palpably, and caused no little anxiety. We saw no more Boma natives after this, and the following day made a late start in order to give the ground some chance of drying. Bright shot one of the Omdurman mules before we left, as it was dying and unable to stand up. At once we continued climbing, crossing several streams; the ascent in one place proving too severe for one of our camels. At length we reached a small flat plateau, a mile and a half from our camp, at an altitude of about 3700 feet, the highest point we reached in these hills. The view was glorious to the west and south-west over an undulating wooded plain which stretched to the horizon, whilst isolated hills and distant peaks stood up in the distance. Once the summit was reached all the camel and other loads were readjusted, before making the descent into the plain, down a valley with spurs to right and left. The track was villainous, excessively steep, very rocky, and overgrown with grass which concealed loose stones and depressions, over which our camels skated about most helplessly. At length after much labour, and crossing two rocky nullahs, we reached the bottom, and came out on a small enclosed sloping plain or glacis, where we found pools of water in the bed of an adjacent nullah. Our camp was pitched on a pleasant spot. The little plain was 1100 feet below the level of the summit of the pass from which we had descended so abruptly, and enclosed by long spurs from that range; whilst perpendicular preci-



*Shilluks near Fashoda. Notice curious forms of head dress.*

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pices, rocky bluffs, and crags, were visible in every direction except to the south-west. One grand rocky precipice immediately to the south of us attained an altitude of 5600 feet, and towered some 3000 feet above us.

We had now traversed a corner of the hilly Boma country, and were out on the plains again, but could not easily forget the many streams and fine scenery of this mountainous district. The soil appeared very fertile and capable of producing all kinds of cereals, so we were perhaps surprised not to see more cultivation. We understood, however, from the natives that they had recently been raided by a more powerful tribe, known as the Magois, to the south, whom they hated and feared, and who had captured all their goats and sheep. We certainly neither saw nor heard any of these animals; but at the same time the men looked so sturdy and well filled that they probably had plenty of grain food, whilst the wild fig also grows abundantly along the banks of some of the streams. The loftier heights of the country are well wooded, and so far as we could judge from afar, the trees would probably provide excellent timber. The climate was very bracing, and must be healthy, for the average altitude of this region is from 3000 to 4000 feet above sea-level, whilst other ridges and heights attain an altitude of close on 6000 feet. The rainfall seemed to be very great, from our short experience. The natives were quite friendly, but exceedingly shy. Physically the men—we saw no women at close quarters—are finely built and muscular, and are a higher type than either the Anuaks

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or Nuers. Many of them wore ostrich feathers in their head-dress, and several had large circular knives round the wrist—like those of the Turkana, but with a broader blade. Beads were very generally worn, and many of the young bloods had broad bands of red beads, picked out with patches of blue and white, fastened across the forehead. Small skin aprons, not unlike those of the Turkana, were also worn by some of the men. Most of their spears were carried sheathed, and not in the manner usual amongst the Nuers and Anuaks, who provide no such protection of hide for the cutting edges of their weapons. They had pleasant, manly countenances, their faces in some cases being fringed with beards or whiskers, which is extremely unusual in natives of these regions, where hair, except on the top of the head, is seldom if ever seen amongst the blacks.

We halted on March 8 in order to give our exhausted animals a chance of picking up a bit in the warmer climate, as grass was fairly plentiful. The following day we were again delayed by heavy rain in the early morning, and were unable to make a start until 8.30, as we were treated to a first-class thunderstorm when we should have been loading up. The track was very boggy and slippery, and progress very slow in consequence, and several khors had to be crossed. Striking away in a south-westerly direction from the hills which ran north and south, the ground at their base being very broken and thickly wooded, we descended gradually over gentle undulating grass land, set with trees. Subsequently we were confronted by a densely wooded nullah, and

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spent a long time in getting our animals across. Continuing as before, we eventually reached a series of large rain-water pools, and camped close to another wooded nullah. We could now obtain an uninterrupted view of the western edge of the escarpment we had worked away from, which hereabouts consists of magnificent precipices of solid rock. Next morning we almost at once crossed the khor near camp, cutting away the undergrowth and preparing ramps before we were able to proceed in a south-westerly direction. We marched over undulating grass land covered with thorn bush, and again reached the Chilimun khor we had previously crossed. Its character had now changed, and it was here a running stream, after it had been joined by others from the escarpment, flowing over an open grassy plain with nothing to indicate its course. The crossing was tedious, although the banks were low and the stream only twelve to fifteen feet wide, as the approaches were boggy. Mabruk Effendi shot a Jacksoni hartebeeste here, and Garner a gazelle, so we waited to load up the meat, and then pushed on south over a grassy plain towards a low wooded ridge where we hoped to find water. Disappointed we swung round the ridge, and proceeded some miles south-east, until we came across a khor in the open plain, which contained some pools, and there camped almost due east of an isolated hill known as Ugerat. We were now out of the rain zone, and the following day experienced our first real trial from scarcity of water.

We made an early start, and for the first six and a half miles travelled excellently over the grassy plain,

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crossing one small khor with water two and a half miles from the start, and reaching another large one at the foot of a low rocky ridge, near which was a small village. The occupants however fled, and as it was too early to camp it was decided to push on in the hope of coming upon another khor farther south. We passed a small knoll, and made for a grove of palms a mile and a half on, expecting to find water there, as large numbers of zebra, hartebeeste, and gazelle were congregated near it. Not a drop was found anywhere in the grove. We pushed on again towards another rocky knoll, thickly wooded, some miles ahead. Again we were disappointed. The grassy plain was alive with game, so it seemed probable there must be water somewhere if we could only find it. We now made south-west for another grove of palms, and although zebra, hartebeeste, guinea-fowl, and bush-fowl were there in numbers, it proved as dry as a bone. Things began to look uncomfortable and, to make a long story short, we wandered about that pitiless plain until 2 P.M., when we had marched some seventeen miles. The heat was tremendous, and the animals were utterly exhausted by this time, for the going latterly had become difficult, owing to the knotted clumps of swamp grass into which we had landed, which kept tripping us up, and were responsible for an unseemly flow of language. Not a drop of water could we find, and it seemed useless to push on hopelessly and aimlessly any farther. I gave the order to unload the animals therefore and camp, whilst a search party under Mabruk Effendi, with five camels and fifteen donkeys, carrying saddles and water skins, went in a westerly

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direction towards an isolated hill, in the hope that they might come across Wellby's Ruzi II. stream, which I thought was possibly only seven or eight miles distant in that direction. For some time past we had tried to impress on our men the necessity of husbanding their water supply whilst on the march, for, frequently along the Akobo when water was plentiful, they would empty their water-bottles two or three times on an ordinary tramp of ten miles. It had been pointed out to them when we left the river that we should experience difficulties regarding water, and that the whole matter was merely one of training. I personally seldom ever drank anything on the march at all, as I had quite easily accustomed myself to doing without, until we obtained our usual brew of cocoa after camp had been pitched for the day—unless of course we were all day on the road, when we would make cocoa about 1 or 2 P.M. The result was that my water-bottle was still full, and Bright's and Garner's nearly so, whilst the improvident men had not a drop between them. The afternoon was wretched, and while a fierce sun beat down on them from above, the men were unable to obtain any shelter on this inhospitable plain, and felt so much the want of water, the last of which they had consumed early in the morning, that by nightfall the eyes of several of the more youthful and tender literally appeared to be starting from their sockets. In my diary I find: "The men are utterly cooked, and some five or six of them collapsed, whilst the wretched donkeys during the remainder of the afternoon came sniffing about camp, shoving their noses into the empty buckets

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in the hope of finding water in them. At one time we were threatened by a storm of rain; but unfortunately it passed us—a few days ago we were grumbling at the rain, and now we would have given anything for a good pool of rain-water. I am shocking thirsty as I write, and we are all anxiously waiting Mabruk Effendi's return, as there is no water beyond about a cupful each that we three have in our bottles." That was written the same evening. Mabruk Effendi had not turned up.

Shortly before retiring to rest a horrible idea seized me that we must be in the centre of the desert where Dr. Donaldson Smith's expedition for three days had experienced such dreadful torture for want of water. The Ruzi II. then did not exist, and I firmly believed that I had sent off the unfortunate search party to their utter destruction, and could get no sleep in consequence. I had not felt previously disposed to return eleven miles along our track to the pool we had passed in the early morning, as we should still have the difficulty as to water ahead to face, but if anything had occurred to Mabruk Effendi's party there would now be no alternative. Meanwhile we must get some water to enable the men to make this march, and also in case Mabruk Effendi's exhausted men returned to us after a fruitless search, for they would sadly need refreshment. All night I sat up in a chair outside my tent, and as soon as the moon rose, shortly after midnight, I aroused a corporal and five men and ordered them to collect the water-bottles from each man in camp. Carrying these, they were to ride back on six donkeys to the pool, fill up and return

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to our camp as quickly as possible. Feeling easier in mind, but very anxious about the search party, I snatched a fitful sleep.

Morning dawned, with not a cloud in sight. Anxious eyes scanned the western horizon, but no trace of Mabruk Effendi's cavalcade could be seen, and a sense of bitter disappointment was experienced. About seven, however, distant figures were seen by the men, and looking through our glasses we discerned camels, and later donkeys, and men. Their progress was very slow, and it was some time before we could make out sufficiently clearly that the animals were heavily laden. Then indeed our hopes were raised, for we felt sure that water must have been found. Slowly, so slowly, the cavalcade approached, men and animals evidently dog-tired, and when at length they reached the camp, we found to our joy that Mabruk Effendi was carrying gallons and gallons of water in the skins. A distribution was at once made all round, every man receiving a cupful as a start, after which more was issued for cooking purposes, the men not having fed for over thirty-six hours. They were ordered to make a good hearty meal and fill their stomachs, as I intended later to march to the water, which our splendid native officer had found after a long weary search out on the plains, where he came across a large swamp, on the shore of which some natives were settled, who had helped him the previous evening.

"How far off is it, Mabruk Effendi?" we anxiously inquired. He thought twelve miles—poor, weary, faithful old friend. Soon the other party returned

## DRY WELLS AND DROUGHT

with the full water-bottles, and our supply was now abundant. The donkeys and mules smelt it and swarmed into camp, and happily we were able to spare each a taste before we started for the swamp shortly after noon, freed from much anxiety now, as we were going to what was almost a lake. Moving nearly due west, after seven miles we reached a large swamp, so the direction I had indicated was a happy inspiration after all, and yet what a fluke! for, beyond this wet belt, perhaps a square mile or two in extent, there is probably no other water on that fearful plain. Our animals simply sailed in; but eight or ten of the men gave Bright much trouble on rear-guard, and they were with difficulty got into camp before dark. We camped under a small clump of lalob trees on the edge of the swamp, about half a mile distant from a small village, and saw a few goats, sheep, and donkeys. Our donkeys enjoyed a real hearty wallow and drink, some half-dozen of them being missing when they were counted over for the night. These were eventually recovered after dark, helplessly bogged in mud amidst the tall rank growth of grass and reeds, from which they had been unable to extricate themselves, until hauled out forcibly by our men. We slept peacefully that night, and decided to halt for a day or two, as the natives made signs that the next water was twelve hours distant to the south, and men and animals must be strong to cross this hateful desert. Two of them consented to act as guides in return for presents of beads. Thenceforward we always took the precaution to carry one day's supply of water in skins for the



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men, which we were well able to do, as we had plenty of spare saddles, having consumed about two-thirds of our supply of food.

We gathered that the name of this swamp and the little village was Nagir. Sufficiently recovered after our rest on March 13 and 14, we set out again across the desert on the 15th. Twenty miles we tramped in a southerly direction across this ghastly plain, the soil of which was of a black-cotton nature, which would be converted into hideous bog by heavy rain, and is almost without a tree. The guides, on starting, pointed out a hill which I calculated to be about six miles distant, just beyond which they said we should descend to the water. We made our first halt after marching that distance, but the hill did not appear appreciably closer. We next reeled off another eight and a half miles, but still had by no means reached that deceptive landmark. It was now past 1 P.M., so the animals were rested, and water issued to the men. At 3.15 P.M. we started off again in a direction to leave the original hill on our right, and between two others somewhat to the east and south-east of it. We were now treated to a refreshing downpour of rain, but had already reached better soil of a gravelly nature, so we rather enjoyed the ducking, which cooled us all admirably.

Eventually reaching the shoulder of the more southerly hill, we saw water glimmering before us in low ground to which we gently descended, and a mile or so brought us to the bank of a khor some twenty yards in width and seemingly recently filled with rain-water from the hills, which had

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formed a large pool, but there was no current. Shortly before reaching the bank a Senegal hartebeeste was standing out on the plain about a quarter of a mile from us, and the men remarked how pleasant it would be to have meat for supper after their long march. I was fairly tired, but thought I would try my luck. There was no cover for even a rabbit, so I walked casually towards the beast. He let me approach within about 200 yards, but took fright, and galloped off for another 100 yards or so and stood again. I was not in the humour for dancing after him over this plain at the end of a twenty-mile tramp, so put my sight up to 300 yards and, taking a kneeling shot, fired. I heard the bullet tell, and saw him give to the blow; but he galloped off like the wind for about another 100 yards and then suddenly collapsed, and was stone dead when my orderly and I reached him. We only got camp pitched just before darkness set in.

A few athletic men visited us with grand limbs on them, and hair on their faces. We had seen cattle driven away as we were descending to the stream, and these somewhat ferocious-looking individuals had apparently come up to see who we were, and entered into conversation with our guides. We could not prevail upon these to accompany us any further; but we gathered that we were now in Karuno country which extended to the hills on the east, whence this stream issued, and that this tribe occupied the banks and cultivated grain, in addition to possessing herds of cattle and donkeys. When we inquired of the Magois tribe, whom Donaldson Smith met

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for the first time, they pointed away out to the west over the plains; but we subsequently learned that they had recently been driven over there by the Turkana, who had come north in force and raided much of their cattle and live stock. We were obviously near where Donaldson Smith showed the Magois on his map, so this is only another case in point, showing how tribes and villages of those regions are constantly moving and being moved. One traveller may find a certain district teeming with food and most prosperous one year, whilst a subsequent traveller the following year may find the same place almost deserted and not a particle of food obtainable. It is quite impossible to predict anything in Africa. We hoped to be able to obtain donkeys and grain here as Donaldson Smith had done, and we were able to purchase absolutely nothing from these natives, who viewed us with the greatest suspicion, and studiously avoided us as much as possible, though they were by no means hostile.

## CHAPTER VI

### ELEPHANTS AND LOCUSTS

THE animals had practically no grazing at all the previous day, so they were turned out to feed at 5.30 A.M. on March 16, and brought back to camp at 8.30, which enabled us to march about 9. We had no guides, as the natives would not accompany us, and so we became involved in several swampy overflow channels of the main stream, in our search for a ford. The khor contained numerous pools, but we eventually found a place where it was about twenty yards broad, with ten to twelve feet banks, and a sandy bed, and managed to clamber over with our animals.

We then turned east again, and avoiding some more swampy channels camped, hoping to purchase some goats and sheep from the natives, but only securing a few guinea-fowl with our guns. Next day we marched on a bearing towards a prominent table-topped peak on the range of hills to the east. It was a success. For the first five and a half miles we traversed an open grass plain with the river fringed away to the north by a thick growth of trees. Then we again struck the river at a point where it makes a bend like a great bow, and following it north for a short time halted under a fine growth of trees. The bed here was sandy and dry, and a few natives were



*Palauering with natives outside camp.*

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settled in small huts on low terraces below the level of the bank, slightly raised above the normal level of the actual bed, and we were accompanied by one of the Karuno for the remainder of the march, who took us a short cut across the bend over open grass until we again reached the river in a thick growth of thorn.

Cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys were on the plains; but we saw few natives until after we had camped, which we did on the site of an old camp of Donaldson Smith's, where we found his zeribas still intact, and picked up pieces of sacking about the place. The banks of the river here were clothed in tall trees, and we obtained water by digging in the sandy bed, which was fifteen to twenty feet below the level of our camp. Most of the Karuno people were evidently settled along the river amongst trees on the bank, where we had cut off the bend. Whilst camp was being pitched some fifty or sixty warriors turned up, and we tried to explain our desire to purchase goats and sheep; but they went off with the man we had been accompanied by as soon as we paid him with beads, and never returned. Next day, March 17, we left the river and struck south-east in order to work round the escarpment which barred progress to the east. Exactly what extent of land the Karuno occupy it is hard to say, but possibly not further east than the foot of the escarpment, where the country becomes thickly wooded with thorn. In a westerly direction they probably do not extend more than a few miles beyond where we first struck the river, leaving a tract uninhabited between themselves and the Magois further west.

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The Karuno, a somewhat powerful tribe, were certainly the most elaborately bedecked and prosperous looking race of men we saw during our journey. They possessed large herds of cattle, and numerous flocks of goats and sheep, in addition to donkeys, and grow grain along the river-bank. Like all the natives of those regions they are extremely suspicious of strangers, and, though not unfriendly, are by no means anxious to have anything to do with Europeans. Although we tried to obtain guides we failed, as they evidently entertain considerable dread of entering their neighbours' country, which perhaps is not much to be wondered at, seeing that raids and counter-raids are frequent. In some respects the Karuno natives are not unlike the Turkana, except that their head-dress is not long, pendant, and bag-shaped, but more like a squat chignon, stuck full of fine many-coloured ostrich feathers. Beads are worn by them in great quantities, chiefly red, white, and *punda malia*. Many of the young warriors had numerous strings round the neck, and solid bands of beads, similar to those we saw in Boma, fastened across the forehead. The elders had handsome head-dresses made of cowrie-shells, whilst others wore skull-caps made of small white and red beads, worked into a neat design of many circles. Physically the men are well set up and sturdy, though they do not probably exceed an average height of about five feet nine inches. They are all quite naked. The women are not unlike the Turkana females, and weave their hair into straight ringlets, which fall round the head. They also wear beads in great numbers about the



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neck, whilst the lower part of their body is covered with a skin apron, cut away at the side with a flap in front, and a trailing tail arrangement behind. In addition to long-handled spears, the men carry short stabbing ones, and oblong hide shields.

From the time we left Anuak country until we reached the post on Lake Baringo in East Africa, we were unable to communicate with the natives except by signs. Henceforward, too, we had to find our way as best we could without guides through an unknown country, ignorant of what obstacles we should encounter, and where we should obtain that most precious water, on which our very lives so much depended. It may be imagined, therefore, that the responsibility which rested on my shoulders caused me no little anxiety, for the life of every member of the expedition was dependent on my judgment and decision as to how the column should proceed, to reach our goal, Murle on the river Omo.

It was obviously out of the question to try and work directly east, for the barrier of mountains by which we were confronted precluded all idea of our being able to surmount them with our transport animals. Consequently on March 18 we marched from the Karuno river in a south-easterly direction towards a detached hill—an advanced spur of the main escarpment—on which we had seen rain falling the previous afternoon. For the first mile and a half we struck through the belt of thorn bordering the river, and then continued almost due south over a grassy plain, on which zebra, hartebeeste, and gazelle were feeding, towards the highest peak of an isolated

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hill in the plains. Five miles from the start we crossed a dry water-course, the banks of which were fringed with thorn, and then turned off south-east to another belt of thorn some two miles farther on. After halting here a short time we made straight for the outlying hill across the open plain, entering a belt of thorn about a mile from its base. We now began to mount steadily towards a semi-circular basin formed by the hill, and soon struck a rocky khor amidst very stony ground, in which we fortunately found small pools of fresh rain-water. A splendid panorama of hill and plain lay before us to the north, east, and west.

The bay of the hill shut out the view to the south, so next morning we worked round its base in a southerly direction for the first three or four miles, until we reached the mouth of a broad valley thickly wooded with thorn, and enclosed to the south by irregular ranges of hills, when we turned nearly due east at the foot of a rocky escarpment. We made our first halt some five and a half miles from the start at the mouth of a small bay running north into the hills, separating the one we had camped on the previous day from the main escarpment. We found pools of water on the little plain, and then continued east as before through thorn-bush at the foot of the escarpment. Towards the end of the march we continued along the lower slopes of the escarpment, and rose to some height above the level of the valley, until we eventually reached a large nullah, after crossing many smaller ones that coursed down the hill. As its banks were thickly wooded we hoped to obtain water by digging, but were unsuccess-

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ful; so after camp was pitched search parties were sent out. We had enough water carried in skins to last the men for one day, but none for the morrow, or for the animals. Two of the donkeys were in consequence lost whilst out grazing in the thick thorn, having possibly gone off in search of a pool.

One of our former Jehadia, Abdalla, returned to camp after dark with the good tidings that he had discovered a large pool in the valley, so it was decided that Bright should take all the animals down early in the morning, and bring back all our skins filled to camp. We were now involved in hills, so Garner went off with a few men to look for a pass, and he happily hit upon one on the northern shoulder of a prominent peak almost due east of our camp, to which we moved next day, encountering very rough broken ground before we arrived at the ascent to it. Once over the summit we found we had entered another narrow valley, bounded to the north still by rocky escarpment. We crossed the depression, and making for the foot of the scarp, continued in an easterly direction to a point where it swung back north. We camped without water; but search parties came across a full khor later in the day on an open plain some miles to the east, to which we marched next day. We were now in the centre of a long narrow plain enclosed on all sides by hills; but fortunately to the east there appeared to be a gradual ascent to an easy pass through which we hoped to work our way. In a northerly direction the hills ran back for ten to fifteen miles, and here we saw quantities of game, zebra and gazelle chiefly, whilst

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bush-fowl and guinea-fowl were also plentiful, so we all had a certain amount of shooting. We were able to enjoy the luxury of a tub for the first time since leaving the Karuno, and one wanted it badly too, as about a thimbleful a head had been our limit of late.

Next day we covered some eleven and a half miles in an easterly direction. We found the ascent to the pass very gradual, and at the summit the grass and foliage were delightfully fresh after recent rains. To the south of us was a fine rocky bluff, and other hills beyond, whilst away to the north-east an old familiar landmark of our former visit to Lake Rudolf from the south burst upon our view, and we again admired Mount Naita, whose rocky pinnacle attains a height of over 7000 feet above sea-level. Descending in an easterly direction towards another plain we saw elephants, giraffe, zebra, eland, and gazelle, so we hoped to find water. After we crossed the summit of the low pass, a herd of seven or eight elephants suddenly dashed out of the bush on our left and nearly stampeded the animals. Garner halted at once to let the brutes cross our path, which they did in a great hurry. Then another huge tusker, apparently missing his companions, darted out of the bush from the same direction—right athwart where I was standing with the mules. He was not fifty yards off, and made as though he intended to break his way through us, with trunk uplifted and ears spread out. We got ready to fire, but he rapidly changed his mind, and plunged back again into the bush, trampling down saplings like so much corn. It was a magnificent sight, but I was relieved

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when he disappeared, as the safety of our transport was all-important. If he had knocked our mules about as he did those trees, we should have found little to read the burial-service over when he had finished.

Reaching a dry khor we were lucky enough to find water on digging, so camped almost due north of another conical hill. There was a most extended view from here, with fine mountain ranges on all sides, which in due course were fixed on the map as we journeyed along. Mabruk Effendi shot two zebra during the afternoon, so the men had plenty to eat, and we carried several saddle loads of meat with us. On March 24 we followed the khor for some three and a half miles to the east, after which it decreased considerably in size, owing to numerous spills from it which spread over the plain. It then trended off south-east and became almost lost, so we continued east, and after a mile struck a broad, well-defined khor, the bed of which contained large pools of water, whilst the banks were overgrown with long, coarse grass. Crossing it with difficulty we camped. We found the plain was covered with locusts and grasshoppers; there was no avoiding these pests, and they adopted the unpleasant practice of jumping into our tea. They took deliberate shots at one's face from sheer devilment, and the force with which they struck one almost made one imagine their onset to be that of a swallow in full flight. However, the locusts are excellent eating, which was some slight consolation for wrongs suffered.

Next day we marched south-east along this khor, and after about four miles unexpectedly came upon

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another khor with pools which we had to cross, whilst a mile or so farther there was a third khor, and a small village on a low ridge overlooking it, which had run practically parallel to our line of march up to this point. We saw nothing of the first two khors, but had to cross a branch of the third about seven miles from the start. As it was bad travelling, and we were getting too far south, I decided to cross the third khor and camp. We had seen several fine mountain ranges to the south-east of our camp, which I imagined must be the Lorusia Mountains to the west of Lake Rudolf, whose position I had previously fixed in 1898. An open undulating plain, covered with bush-thorn, extended to the base of that range, and small isolated hills intervened between us and it at some considerable distance. In a southerly and south-westerly direction a huge plain stretched as far as the eye could see, whilst almost due east hills threatened to oppose us.

We were almost due south of a fine mountain mass to the north-west of the more striking Naita peak. The two seem to be connected by a ridge, which continued beyond in a south-westerly direction to the pass we had crossed before entering the plain. The drainage over this undulating thorn-bush plain runs south; but the ultimate destination of these water-courses is uncertain. I am inclined to think that, if not gradually absorbed by the inhospitable plain over which they run and probably spill, they possibly all join and form the Aguan stream which enters Lake Rudolf many miles farther south. The original Ruzi I. of Wellby, the course of which he had

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followed for so many miles from the south in a northerly direction, geographers may remember, he last saw turning away east, somewhat to the south of the 5th degree of north latitude. My theory is that that stream, if not actually absorbed during its course over the plains, ultimately joins the drainage from the Naita highlands and enters Lake Rudolf also by the Aguan. That it again swings north and is the same stream that Wellby came across at 6° 40' N. lat. approximately, was of course merely a supposition of that gallant explorer—one that we now knew to be a physical impossibility from the further examination of the country away to the east of his route, which we were traversing.

I trust that Herr Brix Forster will be reconciled to my arguments, should he ever be pleased to peruse the maps prepared by me on these two late expeditions of mine; for the original Ruzi I. that Wellby saw the last of to the south of the 5th degree of north latitude *cannot* be the stream that he came upon at about 6° 40' N. lat., which was the Akobo beyond all doubt. I must be pardoned for this digression; but when little-known regions of Africa are becoming surveyed, and great blanks almost yearly filled in on the map, it is essential that successive travellers, who may find themselves in those parts, should have the benefit of the latest and most reliable information regarding the country. Unhappy and difficult situations may easily result from too much reliance on erroneous surmises made by their predecessors.

Fearing we were too far south, we decided to strike east again with a view to finding our way through the

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hills in that quarter; and on March 26 we made a bee-line for a rocky knoll, a trifle to the north of due east of our position, crossing a barren plain covered with dead wood which lay in all directions on the ground, whilst many gazelle and not a few hartebeeste were seen. After some four miles we dipped into a hollow and crossed a dry khor with gravel bed, and then continued to the rock, seven miles from our camp, at the foot of which we made our first halt on the bank of a dry water-course. Although several kraals were seen on the low ridges concealed in the bush, and numerous tracks of goats, sheep, cattle, and donkeys, the natives had all cleared off with their live stock and deserted their zeribas. Rounding the bluff we kept the same direction towards another peak some five or six miles distant, with better prospects of water. We came across more kraals, and the district became better wooded and more undulating. Soon we descended into a green valley, at the bottom of which we struck a fine big dry khor with sandy bed. We had marched ten miles and to our delight obtained water on digging, so we camped. Three natives were seen the previous day at a distance, and men had been sent to try and get them to come to camp; but they fled before our party arrived even within shouting distance of them. There were some fine trees a short distance on, so whilst camp was being pitched men were despatched to see if there was a pool under them at which our animals might be watered. They came across a zeriba full of goats and sheep and some donkeys under guard of two natives, who fled on their approach, leaving the animals behind. Strict orders



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were issued that these should remain untouched, as it was hoped that when the natives understood we were not a marauding party they would summon up sufficient confidence to visit us, for anxiety as to water was felt, and the men were performing their duties in an apathetic manner, as though they anticipated disaster. If we could secure the services of guides confidence might be restored, since none of us knew what lay between us and the river Sacchi, for which I was steering. The animals were left alone all that day and night, but the natives evidently feared to return; and when we marched off next morning the donkeys gave us a parting bray, which was the nearest approach to friendly intercourse which we experienced in this neighbourhood.

A second Omdurman mule had to be destroyed before we left camp, and a camel a few days previously, so the wear and tear was beginning to tell. As regards distance and direction we did well on the 27th, but at last we became stranded without water. During the early part of the march we skirted the south end of the conical peak towards which we had marched after passing the rock in the plains. From its shoulder I detected a distant hill to the south-west, fifty or sixty miles away, which we never saw again. Over undulating stony ground covered with thorn-bush we still moved east to the north of a prominent rocky ridge. Several large, well-wooded khors, on the banks of which deserted kraals and zeribas were seen, had been crossed before we made our first halt, and our route was traversed in addition by numerous small, dry-water courses, which impeded progress:

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the country was thickly wooded with thorn-bush, which also caused considerable delay and inconvenience. Finding now that low hills barred progress to the east, it was decided to turn north-east to discover if a pass existed. Our good luck was in the ascendant, and one was found which took us across the ridge; but on the other side we descended into another valley, shut in by low hills beyond. A large sandy khor ran down this in a southerly direction, but the whole place was parched and not a drop of water was available. It was getting late, so the animals were unloaded and camp pitched, whilst two parties went in search of water to another valley to the north, between us and Mount Naita. One party returned about 8 P.M. saying they had found a little; but the second, which returned later, reported they could discover none. Next day we entered the valley at the base of Naita, which proved to run in an easterly direction into the Sacchi, and which we followed for the next few days. We only marched three and a half miles to the place the first party had found, climbing up out of the valley in which we had been camped by an easy pass, in a northerly direction, and then trending off north-east over a gently falling open plain, camped on the bed of a khor at the foot of a conical peak. The reported water supply proved an absolute fraud, for although some was found on digging, the quantity was infinitesimal, and it ran dry almost at once. There was nothing for it but to send out fresh search parties, for our animals had had no water for two days. Mabruk Effendi went with one lot, and the

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Jehadia, Abdalla Tahir, with another. By 3 P.M. neither had returned, and I had gone out of my tent to send a party with the animals back to the last water we had seen—some sixteen miles distant—with orders to fill up our skins there, after watering the animals, and to return at once. I was actually giving the orders when Abdalla suddenly arrived and reported he had discovered water in a large pool some two hours off. The animals were sent off with him, and all the available men in camp.

Shortly after four Mabruk Effendi also returned from a long search and reported another pool fouled by game, so we were relieved of anxiety. This water business, however, was unnerving, as, had their efforts proved unsuccessful, we should probably have lost the bulk of our transport next day in struggling back to the last watering-place, and there would still be the same difficulties to be faced. I felt we could not be more than twenty-five to thirty miles now from the Sacchi, so it would have been a bitter blow to have been compelled to retrace our footsteps, losing the majority of our animals in doing so. To stimulate the search parties to real efforts, money rewards were always offered to the fortunate discoverer of water, and Abdalla had evidently cultivated the art of smelling it out, for he had now twice rescued us from an unenviable position, and was always prepared to volunteer. A thirty-piastre award (about six shillings) was ten days' pay to him, and having obtained it twice he was much to be congratulated.

The party who had taken the animals to water did not get back to camp until 9 P.M., and just had time

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to get the animals into their zeribas before a heavy thunderstorm, which had for some time been playing on the hills to the east, had worked its way west and broke heavily over us. The rain was most welcome, for it relieved us of much anxiety, and we now hoped to reach the Sacchi without any further drought. We started off again next morning, the ground being very sodden in parts, and shortly after leaving camp crossed the main water - course of the valley, which had just been joined by another flowing south from the highest peak of Mount Naita. We marched generally north of due east on the left bank of the khor, which flowed at the foot of a rocky escarpment enclosing this wooded valley to the south, the ground falling from the base of the Naita mass in a southerly direction to this point. We had only made about five miles when Abdalla turned off and took us down to the pool that had been found. Its dimensions exceeded our expectations, for it was from thirty to forty yards in length and from five to ten in breadth, and the supply of water was ample for two or three days at least, whilst a second pool had been discovered at which the animals could water after the heavy rain of the night before. We seldom found water in the actual beds of nullahs, as, owing to their stony nature, the water runs off at once. This pool, like others we had come across before, was in a depression some little distance from the bank of the khor, where the clay had prevented percolation and retained the water until it should be consumed by game or evaporated by the hot suns.

Whilst camp was being pitched I went after a herd

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of zebra, which were grazing at the foot of the hills on a long grassy slope to the south of us on the opposite side of the main water-course of the valley. Getting within 150 yards of one concealed by a fold in the ground, I placed a bullet in his lungs. He galloped off, however, with the rest of the herd; but I saw him coughing blood as he disappeared down into another nullah. When my orderly and I reached the bank we saw him lying on his side in the grass, and stalking carefully up to him, ready to fire again in case he dashed off, found that he was dead. He was a fine big stallion—perhaps the biggest I had ever shot—and provided plenty of meat for the next two days to the column. We rested next day on this water-pool, so I went off in the early morning with my orderly, taking gun and rifle to pick up something for the mess if possible. We saw tracks of rhino, elephant, giraffe, zebra, and either eland or oryx, as well as gazelle; but no living animal beyond partridges and hares, so we started for camp again with the intention of using a gun, as there seemed no antelope to disturb. On the return journey the bag, though small, was mixed—a hare, bush-fowl, and a partridge, in addition to a gazelle; so we had hare-soup and venison for dinner!

On the last day of March we continued our journey towards the Sacchi down the valley slightly to the north of east, through thick thorn-bush with open patches here and there. In many places the scenery was charming, and we camped for the day at the foot of a small isolated hill terminating to the south in a precipitous bluff of rock. By great good

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fortune we found a splendid pool at the base of the hill, and between it and the bank of the main khor, so were now confident of reaching the Sacchi next day. We were probably, as I thought, ten or twelve miles distant, so I was pleasantly surprised, on April 1, to reach that river after we had followed the khor east for only five or six miles. We were delighted to find it a running stream, and my reputation as a pathfinder was established, for, the previous evening, I had told Mabruk Effendi and the men that their anxieties regarding water would soon be at an end, adding, "to-morrow we shall reach a flowing river again." Here, then, we were at last, and for water there were now tons of it, as a fine stream six to ten yards in width was flowing down a sandy bed twenty to thirty yards wide, with high perpendicular banks clothed in luxuriant vegetation. A fervent "Hamdo illilah" (Thanks be to God) broke from the lips of Mabruk Effendi and the men when they saw the delightful vision—a remark which we most cordially endorsed in our own language, for indeed we had much to be thankful for after the trials of that desert land.

So far we had been favoured by fortune, but for a large party to cross this tract of country from Boma to the Sacchi by the route followed by us would probably be a most risky undertaking during nine months of the year, owing to the extreme scarcity of water. The many water-courses shown on the map were found to be almost without exception merely dry stony beds in which no water was procurable by digging. Fortunately rain had fallen

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about March 20 to the east of where we then were, and we subsequently were able to find water in pools after long-continued search and by extraordinary good luck. When Bright and I visited Lake Rudolf from the south in 1898, our old Suk guide Nyanga had on several occasions pointed out to me the striking Naita peak away to the north-west, and told me that the country thereabouts was the most dreadful he knew for drought. I believed him, as he was the most intelligent native of his class regarding the geography of the country that I have ever met. His information had now been verified by us, and it was with a sigh of relief that we had found the Sacchi a running stream. To the Swahilis the tract of country we had traversed was always known as Don-yiro; but as we were unable to communicate with any natives, I have followed Dr. Donaldson Smith's nomenclature in assigning that of Musha to it on the map.

## CHAPTER VII

### FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

FROM very imperfect data I am inclined to think that between our southerly route from Boma, and then east through Musha to the valley of the Sacchi, the escarpment we skirted is the edge of a fine hilly plateau, varying in height probably from 3000 to 5000 feet above sea-level. The two hills I have referred to already—one to the north-west of Naita, and Naita itself—attain a height of about 6000 and over 7000 feet respectively; whilst a third lofty hill, almost due north of Naita, and part of the same range, also rises to over 6000 feet. I imagine all that tract of country to be a fertile, and probably healthy, well-watered region, very much like Boma itself. Whether it is thickly populated it is difficult to say, as the country is absolutely unknown to Europeans; but to traverse that high-lying plateau land from north to south, and east to west, with man transport, would probably result in most interesting experiences. It might be too difficult for pack animals except, perhaps, mules and Abyssinian donkeys. The much-talked-of gold, which was discussed by our Swahilis, might also be found, although we never saw any gold ornaments worn by natives in the plains bordering that region. It may be a country of great possibilities,





*One of my victims—a hippo shot near Nasser.*

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and there is no reason why grain of all sorts, coffee, timber, and other products of marketable value should not be discovered.

The stream we had now reached received its name, Sacchi, from the Bottego expedition, and its actual course had been mapped by them for the first time. It has its source in the mountain ranges to the north, which form the southern escarpment of the great Abyssinian highlands, long spurs of which run out in a southerly direction, until they die away, sometimes gradually, at other times abruptly, on the plains to the north of Lake Rudolf. The river where we had struck it commenced to change its course from north to east, and, before turning south again to spill out on to a large expanse of swamp—immediately to the north of the extensive gulf of Lake Rudolf, known as Sanderson Gulf—it probably approaches within seven or eight miles of that mightier river, by which it is so much overshadowed, and which is known as the Omo.

We had halted on reaching the Sacchi, and then proceeded some distance along it, and away from its banks in order to avoid the thick bush. We had only marched about two and a half miles between hills to the east and west of the river, when we unexpectedly became involved in most awful swamp and bog. We had the greatest difficulty in getting our transport animals through, and the vision we had entertained the previous day of camping once more on the bank of a running stream was soon dispelled. Eventually we extricated ourselves, and were compelled to camp some considerable distance from the river on the

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edge of this swampy area, by the side of a large rain-pool, amidst thick thorn-growth, where a site was only obtained after much labour. The march, therefore, which we began so auspiciously by reaching the river some five miles before I anticipated, ended less pleasantly, and it was still the 1st of April.

Soon after starting from the halt one of the Askaris in front of me went off on one side to gather some chewed aloe fibre. I don't know what animals chew it if they are not elephants, who may have a partiality for bitter-sweets. The men make of this capital rope and string. At the same time I saw him remove a small piece of cloth, as it seemed, from an adjacent bush. I asked to see this, and found that it was a dirty pocket-handkerchief of a silky substance, stained with carmine, in one corner of which a large unmistakable B was embroidered. I pondered deeply for some time, until at last it struck me—"B for Bottego." He and his officers were the only Europeans who had trodden the ground we now were on, and I decided, therefore, to bring it home with me for despatch to his relatives. Unfortunately, later in our journey, when we had to throw away so many of our personal belongings and stores, by some grievous mistake I must have thrown away this most interesting piece of cambric, as I could never find it after we left Lake Rudolf amongst the few things still in my possession.

The following day we struck due south for some three and a half miles, until we reached an isolated conical peak away from the river which swung east at the base of a large hill, and followed up to this point



*Natives cutting up the hippo.*

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footprints of either zebras or mules, which had only passed two days before, judging by their recent traces. As we were getting too far from the Sacchi, and the trail continued south over a most uninviting plain, we turned off east again over open ground covered with low thorn bushes, where we made our first halt with an extensive view all round. Many old familiar landmarks were visible—the Ngalibong Hills on the Omo, the Lorusia Mountains to the west of Lake Rudolf, and in the far south we espied Mount Lubur, the extinct volcano on the western shores of the lake, and nearer, Mount Nakua, to the north of Sanderson Gulf. Hills on all sides of us were looming up that we had previously seen and fixed in 1898. The bearing we were now going on—one of the prominent peaks of Ngalibong—brought us, after we had travelled some six or seven miles from the knoll, into the broad belt of luxuriant vegetation and table-topped acacias which bordered the banks of the Sacchi, and progress became difficult and uncertain. As we appeared to be moving parallel to the river, which we wished to reach in order to camp, I shouted out to Bright to push north now, and I also set off slightly to the east of north with the object of discovering the wandering river. The country was very thick, and it was only after I had plugged along for more than a mile that I eventually came upon it, and fired two signal shots to announce my arrival at the bank. Meanwhile Bright had come across a herd of elephants, of which there must at this time have been hundreds along the Sacchi, judging by the numerous traces and spoors on the

## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

plain beyond the belt of vegetation. As, however, we generally kept to open ground during the march until about to camp, this was the first and only time any of us saw them hereabouts, for during the heat of the day they seek shelter, and feed within the forest growth, which it was our desire to avoid.

We marched slightly to the south of east next day along the Sacchi, traversing open plain thickly sprinkled with thorn trees. We struck the river about three and a half miles after starting, and again after tramping about seven miles, where we came upon a large plot of cultivation. There appeared to be no huts, and the place was deserted except for one native, who rapidly disappeared into the corn when he sighted us. Subsequently, when making again for the river to camp, we passed through most luxuriant vegetation and dense woods, until eventually brought up sharp by a deep ravine, through which the stream flowed, some thirty to forty feet at least below the level of its banks. The quantity of water had decreased materially, and we almost expected to find a dry sandy bed at our next halt, but a very heavy thunderstorm just after dark from south and east, gave the valley a good drenching. When, therefore, we marched in a bee-line for the highest peak of Mount Nakua, we entered a boggy tract soon after leaving camp, through which we floundered for some three and a half miles before reaching sandy soil beyond. The animals were much exhausted by the time they had struggled through with their loads, so we had to content ourselves with a short march of nine and a half miles, crossing the river at the end near a solitary grove of trees. We had traversed an open plain



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swarming with hundreds of hartebeeste, who unfortunately were very wild, and gave Bright very little opportunity for approaching them.

The Sacchi from our camp of the previous day had made a big sweep for several miles to the east before cutting into our line of march again. Its character had meanwhile entirely changed; the dense vegetation and forest growth had ceased, and there was nothing now to indicate its course over the open plain. The banks were only eight to ten feet high, and grassy, whilst the sandy bed had decreased to about twenty yards in width, and the stream was only a few inches deep. We halted on the 5th of April at this camp, some miles to the north of Mount Nakua, as I intended from here to strike straight across country in an easterly direction to the Omo, to one of our old camps of 1898, a march, as I calculated, of quite twenty miles. I gave a distant peak for Garner to march on throughout the day, and a slight change of course in the afternoon landed us on our old track of 1898 leading to Murle—after rounding the bend the Omo makes when flowing from east to west, before turning south to enter Lake Rudolf. We had been threatened by heavy rain the previous night, but happily it did not fall, or we should have been again beset by bogs. Passing over this plain through alternate tracts of open and thorn, we had covered eight and a half miles by 9 A.M. Another five miles brought us to a rolling plain, and gave the animals a rest and graze. Shortly before arriving at this point we had been overpowered by a most sickening odour; we hastened on, and it still hung heavy on the air, though we should have been out of range of it. It

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might well have been caused by the ghastly relics of some battle that had been fought, where piles of dead were left to lie uncared for. Mabruk Effendi was called up, to make a searching inquiry into its whereabouts and origin. He soon ascertained that three or four of the Jehadia had concealed something tasty in the skin bags, slung over their shoulders, which proved to be green, rotten, elephant meat, ten days old at least. This length of time means little in England, a good deal in Africa. They had obtained this treasure when they came on the carcass in the bush, had annexed chunks of the foul stuff, and then rejoined the donkeys and drove them gaily along. A traction-engine would have shied if that awful smell had been attached to it; but these jackals enjoyed it apparently, and were looking forward to a hearty meal on arrival in camp. They were much perturbed when sternly ordered to throw away their skin bags, meat and all, but nothing short of this would have removed traces of what these had contained. I remember as a boy being much struck by what an old soldier, who had been in the Crimea, and whom I once met in the train, told me of the hard life he and his mates experienced in the trenches before Sebastopol. I had gathered that the fare at times was poor from officers I had talked with; but this old man went one better, and solemnly assured me he had "lived for six weeks on the smell of an oiled rag." I rather doubted his word, but was too young and respectful to say so. I believe it now.

Having got rid of this pest we loaded up, and continued the march shortly before three, and soon

## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

detected water on our right in a swampy hollow near the bend of the Omo, and turning south-east three-quarters of a mile farther on, we struck the well-defined native track we had followed in 1898. We had hit off this point most successfully, and now travelled east towards Murle. We caught sight of two or three natives, and shouted out the old salutation of "Na." Replying "faya," they promptly dived into the bush before they had completed the sentence, and were lost to sight. The river was nearly a mile south of us. We gradually worked towards it, but could not find a suitable point at which to approach the bank, though the forest-growth had temporarily ceased, until, hearing voices, I wormed my way through the bush along an overgrown track, and suddenly came on a village perched on a ledge between the high bank and the river below. The natives yelled and bolted, though we tried to reassure them; but the ladies were off in no time, leaving behind one or two men who were cornered. It was somewhat alarming, perhaps, our unexpected arrival. The sun had set, and the villagers whilst preparing their evening meal dreamily look up and see an ugly white face, with two or three black ones behind, quietly gazing at them—come from heaven knows where! Of course they were frightened, and yelled, and were off like rabbits. The ladies might, however, have trusted their charms to my safe keeping, for such a revoltingly ugly crowd I have not often set eyes upon. Their lower lips were pierced and distended to an amazing extent, in order to insert a cylindrical piece of bone—probably the shin-bone of

## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

an ox—into the orifice. The bulk of their teeth appeared to be extracted to admit of this distortion. Under most favourable circumstances they could not have been any too lovely; but this gruesome decoration gave them a truly repulsive appearance. We tried to explain to the men that we wanted to purchase food; but they cleared off to the opposite bank during the night, and the village was absolutely deserted next morning.

It was growing dusk, so camp was pitched at once on the bank above the village, and we were only just settled in before darkness fell over the land. This was the 6th of April, and we had reached our goal, Murle on the river Omo, that mighty stream which flows majestically between lofty steep banks on its course towards that great reservoir into which it pours its waters, Lake Rudolf. A sense of happiness and satisfaction stole over us that night, as we discussed our pipes in our chairs outside the mess-tent after dinner. I can't remember if it was our "tot" of whisky and sparklet night—it ought to have been any way. We could now afford to smile at our former trials and anxieties regarding water, seated on the bank of the Omo. They were already becoming a dim memory; but worse by far was in store for us that we little dreamt of then.

Next day was Easter Sunday, so Garner told us—he was always our authority, for he possessed a Letts' diary, and I only had a nautical almanac to contradict him with—and we remained halted to give the men and animals a rest, for the latter had little grazing the previous day, and were without water



*Dr. J. Garner, Medical Officer to the Expedition.*

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from the day before that. They had become used to going forty-eight hours without water, as they had been compelled to do it so often, poor humble old friends; but it is not a course that I can conscientiously recommend for fattening donkeys on. We had hoped, too, that the natives would gain confidence and bring in food for sale, as now that the water difficulty for a time was at an end, we were confronted with the fact that our supply of food, which had been very carefully husbanded to make it last, was running very short, and we could obtain no information of the food supplies that were to have met us at this point. There was a good deal of shouting on the opposite bank of the river throughout the day, which we imagined must be to keep the birds from ripening corn, though the cultivation was concealed from view by a thick forest-growth of trees. None of the Murle people, however, put in an appearance, and our side of the river had been absolutely deserted during the night.

The country generally looked more prosperous than in 1898, when the natives were in a starving condition, due to a recent raid, and were suffering from the ravages of small-pox. We had been here in September when the country was dreadfully parched for want of rain, whereas now, after recent downpours, the foliage and thorn was so refreshingly green and healthy that it was difficult to recognise it as the same locality, and later Bright and I could scarcely reconcile what now bordered Lake Rudolf with the same infernal, burnt-up, desert plain with its great heat and enervating climate that we remembered so well.

## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

Shortly before lunch on this day three well-groomed natives unexpectedly arrived in camp, and we gathered from them that on hearing of our arrival they had come from the Kerre district (of which they were inhabitants) to pay their respects to us. They appeared quite unafraid, which was a very pleasant change from what we had become accustomed to, and by signs we understood there was plenty of food at Kerre, which they would bring to us if we would only wait where we were. I tried to explain in Ki-Swahili—a smattering of which one of them thought he knew, though he used as many Masai words as Swahili, and really only understood about half-a-dozen words of both languages put together—that to-morrow we proposed marching east to our old camp of September 15, 1898, and after a rest there we should go quietly north along the Omo and visit them at Kerre, which would save them all the trouble of bringing food to us; we could buy on the spot. For some reason this did not seem to meet with their approval when they had thoroughly grasped our meaning after about an hour's patient explanation, chiefly of the nature of signs. It is difficult to fathom the workings of the native mind, and I often wonder if there ever has been a white man who has succeeded in doing so. I doubt it. They went off eventually with presents of cloth and beads that we hoped might have a good effect in further dealings with them. A heavy downpour of rain fell on the morning of the 8th April, and as it was still raining hard when the bugle went, the men were ordered to hold fast for a while. It ceased at 5.30, and camp was struck;



## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

but just as we were ready to start it came down solid, and in a few moments streams of water coursed through the camping-ground, drenching us all to the skin. Happily it only lasted for about a quarter of an hour, and we then proceeded in an easterly direction for four and a half miles until we came on our old camping-ground, which was the farthest point reached from Mombasa. Here I closed my survey from the north, and the closing error proved more successful than I could possibly have hoped for—the error being less than half a mile—although the respective starting-points, Mombasa and Omdurman, were over 2000 miles apart by the routes followed.

The Sudan and East Africa had now been connected by a through survey, and one could not but be pleased at the satisfactory manner in which the two positions, obtained in 1898 and 1901, for the same camp, agreed. We saw no Murle people on our side of the river; but several Kerre natives arrived after we had pitched camp, and we tried to explain by signs that the following day we should march into their country with the object of purchasing food. They did not seem overjoyed at the prospect; but the commissariat question was affording considerable anxiety, and required settlement. We were most anxious to give men and animals a good long rest, to which they had been looking forward; but this was impossible until we reached a food district, in which we could at least maintain ourselves whilst awaiting the much-longed-for supplies. We had cut the ration down considerably, and in my diary of the 8th April I read: “For some days past the men appear to have

## FAMILIAR LANDMARKS

been feeling the small rations to which I am necessarily obliged to restrict them, and that alone has a depressing effect on the camp, work being carried out in a listless manner. Witness the elephant-meat episode. We must search for food."

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN QUEST OF FOOD

ON April 9 we made a short march in a north-easterly direction up the Omo, when we espied large tracts of cultivation and villages near the river-bank, to which we at once descended. We could see no natives, but as we approached one of the villages we were met by a deputation of old men, who explained we were in Kerre, and it was decided to camp on a lower terrace of old cultivation right on the edge of the river, near this village. We gave the natives to understand that we wanted food badly, for which we would pay in beads, and though most of them had cleared off to the other bank, they began to return shortly in dug-out canoes, and re-occupied the village. We only purchased four pounds of flour and a few small fishes throughout the day, for the natives, though apparently friendly and unafraid, did not seem inclined to trade. Unfortunately the crops were green, and would not be ripe for another two months. We halted next day in the hope that matters would improve, as little trade can be expected on the first day of entering a new district, but we only obtained six pounds more of flour, as during the night the villagers had all crossed over to the opposite bank with their household goods, and remained perched there amongst the trees like so many crows.

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They were sleek and well fed, and must have had grain concealed somewhere; but they evidently mistrusted the white man.

Fortunately Garner secured a couple of gazelle in the morning on the open plain, beyond the rank vegetation we were now camped in, so the men had a ration of meat. The scenery of the reach we were camped on was charming, and only man was vile. We were at the northern angle of a bend in the river which, flowing from the south-east, swung abruptly off south-west again. Fine trees bordered both banks, and the vegetation was so luxuriant that the spot was damp and unhealthy at this time of the year. The village was strongly stockaded with only two or three low entrances, and would require some tackling without guns. The people were a more manly-looking race than the Murle, whom they appeared to regard with great contempt. They were well built and muscular, and were the first circumcised race we had seen since leaving Omdurman. As a rule they were stark naked; but a few wore the diminutive apron in vogue amongst the Turkana. Their form of head-dress was varied, and often took the shape of a small chignon. Later we came across some elders who were clothed in Galla cloth, whilst a few others made some show of knives and swords they had evidently received from the same quarter. Beads, iron-wire collars, and bracelets were plentiful, and iron wire was the object of their chief desire. The women wear long aprons of hide, and many shave their heads, but do not disfigure their faces in the atrocious manner of the Murle women. In addition to growing dura and beans, the Kerre

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people cultivate tobacco, and possess some cattle, and large flocks of goats and sheep, as well as donkeys. All the live stock had, however, been ferried over to the opposite bank, where we had the poor satisfaction of hearing them bleat. It seemed useless to waste any further time, so we moved on the following day some four miles in a northerly direction up the river, which we turned towards at the close on seeing more cultivation, camping near a village on the bank. Our short march had been laborious, as the ground outside the belt of vegetation was much broken and boggy in places after heavy showers. The rank vegetation and heavy soil impeded us also in cultivated parts. We found the village deserted except for one man, and rather a pleasant-looking damsel; but presently some more Kerre people turned up, including one of those who had visited us at Murle—the fascinating youth who spoke Ki-Swahili and was going to bring us plenty of food! We tried to make him understand that he was a young scamp for the way in which he had misled us; but he would not believe it, although we assured him of the fact.

The crops here were plentiful, but less advanced. Our day's marketing produced one pound of flour exactly—sufficient ration for half a man on the reduced scale. The river had decreased in width to about eighty yards—about half its measure at our previous camp—and the banks had lost their cliffy appearance, and shelved down to the river. Bright shot a crocodile on the opposite bank, which was retrieved in triumph by the boat sent across with men to cut up the meat and bring it over. Every little helped, and

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our pride was fast being set aside. One of our camels was found missing in the evening, and not a trace of the brute could be seen anywhere. He was clean gone. At length his head was discovered just above ground by one of the men hunting in the long grass by the light of a torch. The unfortunate animal had fallen into a pit, and had never so much as uttered a single complaint at its unhappy fix! The whole camp was sent out with ropes to extract him. Apparently he had been quite comfortable where he was, and much resented the rough handling to which he was subjected whilst being hauled out. His groans were perfectly heart-rending, and it was feared he could not possibly have a sound limb left. Fortunately our anxieties on his behalf were groundless, and he carried his loads next day. Kind Providence watches over these ungainly but useful beasts.

We pushed on again on April 12, and working out of the cultivation travelled along the higher and more open ground overlooking the depression through which the Omo flowed. Soon the river made a substantial bend from west to east through open country—on the bank we were following—and continuing along it we were stopped by a rapid stream, which drained a large area of swamp on our left. A big storm was brewing, so we decided to camp as soon as we had crossed, on a more healthy spot than usual, free from the dense rank vegetation by which our two previous camps had been surrounded. There was good grazing for the mules and donkeys, and plenty of fresh green thorn for the camels, so we decided to rest here before making another effort

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to obtain food in Mursu to the north. Kerre and Murle had proved useless, and one chance only remained. Donaldson Smith the previous year had obtained quantities of food in the Mursu district, so why should not we?

While we halted on the 13th and 14th we were visited by very heavy rains, which not only converted the surrounding country into bog, but had a most serious effect on our transport animals. Scarce a gleam of sunshine favoured us after these depressing downpours, and the condition of our carriers was becoming most miserable, for they were quite unaccustomed to this wet. We had no rain on the night of the 14th, so started next morning across country in a north-westerly direction to meet the Omo again in the Mursu district. In traversing the swampy area near camp we soon had a foretaste of the pleasures in store. Into mud over our boots we floundered with our animals, making for some rising ground beyond, and after contending with the hateful sludge for a long time, eventually reached its edge, and were pleased to strike sandy soil. On then we went over undulating, broken ground, through thorn for five miles without any hitch, until we became involved in swamp again. Great indentations of elephants' feet pitted the whole area, and were full of rain-water. Struggle through for a long time we could not, nor even find a way round. Going ahead I at length came on a dry patch of ground amongst thorn, which we must reach at all costs. Shouting out the information we got hold of each animal in turn, and by 1 P.M. had transported everything over—taking seven

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hours to reach this point, barely five miles from our starting-point. Things looked cheerful and lively. Water there was no difficulty about—the place was full of it. No rain fell during the night, for which we were more than grateful, and started off again, dodging through thorn, and avoiding many pools with which the plain was covered.

After marching about three miles we came upon extraordinarily broken ground, and from the summit of one of the clay cliffs saw the Omo below us, and about half a mile distant. The banks were thickly fringed with thorn and luxuriant vegetation, through which we wormed our way to the river, which here was about 150 yards wide again, and in heavy flood. There was a small village concealed amongst trees on the opposite bank, and we saw one or two natives down at the water-side. When they caught sight of me and Mabruk Effendi standing on our side of the river, after one terrified glance, they answered our hail by a wild bolt into the grass, and raised the alarm, which resulted in much commotion and shouting in the hidden village. So far we had not been welcomed with open arms, and as we were in a regular cul-de-sac, we retraced our footsteps through the thorn to the more open ground at the base of the broken cliffs which enclose the valley of the Omo. We then proceeded west in the hope of finding villages on our side of the stream. Shortly after re-starting we came upon a small lake at the base of a deep, thickly wooded ravine, and we had to make a long détour to the south to work round this depression. The ground was extraordinarily broken by low clay cliffs



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and water-courses, rendering our progress very slow. Ultimately we camped on a small clay plateau near some pools of water, just outside a dense forest-growth which bordered the river. I wanted to find the river, and whilst camp was being pitched made an effort to reach it. This resulted in my having to creep in a stooping position along a hippo track, through mud and slush over my boots, whilst overhead dense undergrowth formed a species of tunnel, throwing a solemn gloom over my path. I was perfectly satisfied after a short time and returned to camp. In the afternoon two natives—a man and a boy—arrived, holding out a branch in token of peace, so we gave them presents of cloth and beads, and tried to make them understand we wished to purchase flour with beads. They returned to convey the information. Bright and I had to discuss the food problem with Mabruk Effendi now, as our supply had been reduced to five bags of flour, seven of lentils, and seven of rice—averaging about fifty-five pounds weight each. It was decided that the men should receive half a bag of flour, a quarter-bag of rice, and a quarter-bag of lentils a day—not a very generous allowance for sixty men, but still sufficient to keep body and soul together.

We remained halted during the 17th, hoping the natives would visit us with food for sale; but not a single one was seen. The villages on the opposite bank were on the summit of the high ground which borders the river on both banks hereabouts; the glacis at the foot of the Ngalibong range terminating near the river in an abrupt scarp of clay cliffs. The few villages we were able to discern bore every appear-

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ance of having been for some time deserted, and we seldom saw any signs of human life, even when scrutinising them closely through powerful glasses. We had intended to continue the march west next day along the river in the hope of reaching settlements, and perhaps at last being able to obtain food to extricate ourselves from the ghastly dilemma we were in. It was not to be, however. About dinner-time the previous evening the air had become very still and stuffy, whilst lightning played away round us to north, east, and west. About 11.30 P.M. I was awakened by a terrific storm which burst over us. For three-quarters of an hour the rain descended in absolute sheets, accompanied by a perfect hurricane of wind. The noise of the rain on our tents was almost deafening, and one could barely hear oneself think. It was maddening and miserable, for another day would be lost after this visitation, and we expected every moment to find the tent tumbling about our head. The mess tent, next to mine, came down with a broken tent-pole, but the noise of falling rain was so great I heard nothing. Bright and I had new Willesden canvas tents taken out from England, but Garner had not, and his kept no rain worth mentioning out. It rained off and on all night, but not, Heaven be praised! with the unabated fury of that three-quarters of an hour, or we should have all been afloat. My bed was wet, rain being driven into the tent, whilst the ground inside was a bog—so I was not happy; but think of the wretched men with no tents, and only blanket shelters! They hadn't a dry stitch to their bodies, poor souls, and were

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absolutely curled up, as it continued raining until 7 A.M., so Garner dosed every man with quinine.

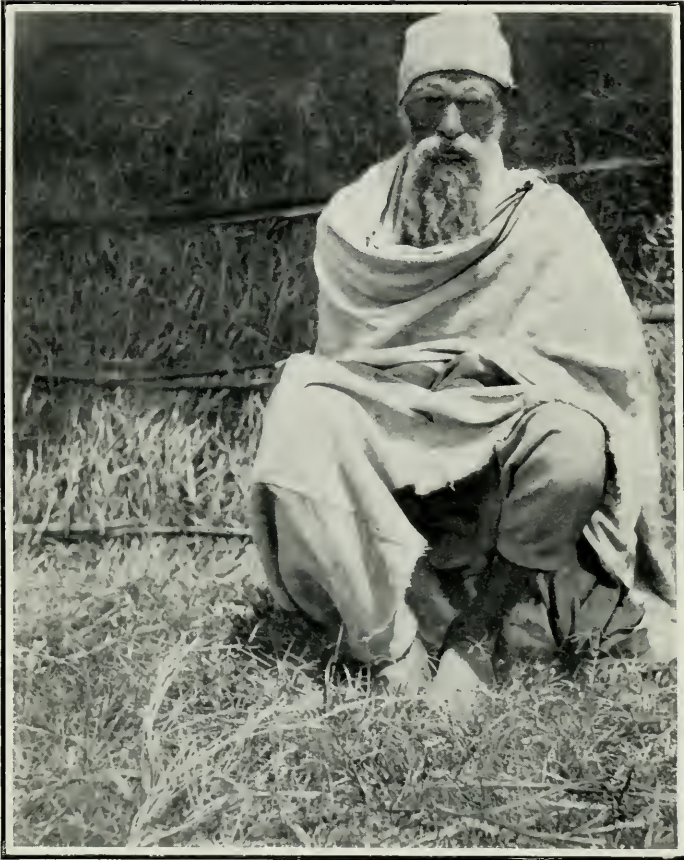
A small khor near camp, a hundred yards or so to the west of our little plateau, was a roaring torrent, and effectually barred any idea of progress. It had been bridged the previous day, and a passage cleared through the belt of thorn for our forward move. Where that bridge now was probably Lake Rudolf alone would have been able to tell. It must have reached there by now. We got sunshine later and began to thaw again.

We could not hope to get any breakfast, as no fuel in the country would light after the soaking all the wood had been subjected to, so we had to await King Sol's greeting. Fortunately no rain fell that night, so on the 19th we started again. We were unable to cross the khor where it had been prepared, for it was still running strong, and had to proceed about half a mile up stream and construct other bridges there. It was two hours before the column was across, after which we followed a native track which took us through the broken clay cliffs by an easy route on to an open grassy plain, over which we struck in a westerly direction, the track going off south. Travelling was excellent for a couple of miles or so, when we again stumbled across the edge of the clay cliffs, round which we had to make détours to avoid abrupt cracks and ravines which ran up into the plain. We thought it advisable after some five miles to make north again, with the idea of finding water somewhere near the river. Worrying along the broken ground we shortly reached

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a large depression, in the centre of which a charming little lake was set. The shores were swampy, fringed with papyrus, and unapproachable; a thick forest-growth also bordered the margin, so we struck west again through broken hilly country, and turning north camped on the western shore at the foot of clay cliffs—at the only point where we found the water could be reached without difficulty. This pleasing sheet of water was perhaps about a square mile in extent, the surface covered with water-lilies and weeds, where not quite open; and it was probably the same lake which Donaldson Smith had observed hereabouts.

Next day we reached and camped on a spot some miles to the west along the river, where we came upon an old zeriba, which may possibly have been one of that explorer's camps, at which he had obtained so much food from the natives. We had much difficulty in reaching this point owing to the intricate nature of the country traversed, and much labour was expended in zigzagging about between these low clay spurs which radiated in all directions. Eventually, after going north, south, and west, I hit on the head of a small grassy valley which took us down to the forest-belt on the river-bank, and we then proceeded in a direction south of west, as the river swung due north for a mile or so before turning east again. Not a single native did we see, nor any sign of cultivation, nor was there even the semblance of a track visible anywhere. It was obvious the country was deserted, and it seemed useless to go any further in that direction, as what habita-



*An Abyssinian Priest at Goré.*<sup>77</sup>

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tions we had previously seen were now to the east of us.

Whilst camp was being pitched I pushed through the forest-growth with two men to the river, which we ultimately reached by following a hippo track in a stooping position. The Omo here was eighty to one hundred yards wide and infested with crocodiles, one of whom came and leered, as though he would like to have a cut off the joint of one of us. Sick at heart with the continued disappointments we had experienced in our efforts to obtain food, I thought to reverse the process, and let drive at him with my rifle. He was only twenty yards off, and the bullet entering his brain, killed him on the spot. He turned over on his back with belly uppermost, and was in this manner floated in by the current against the bank. I sent the two men down to secure him, but the bank slopes were so boggy and steep that they sunk in up to the knees in soft mud before they reached him. They could not hang on with the poor footing they had, and were compelled to abandon the attempt. On being released the carcass was at once carried away by the stream, much to my disgust, as he was a huge brute and would have provided plenty of meat for all in camp. The disappointment was a very bitter one.

To attempt now to proceed along the Omo to the Abyssinian highlands, with the object of reaching safety, was quite out of the question with these fearful rains on. We were still in the plains, and our wretched transport animals had already shown serious signs of breakdown owing to their miserable

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condition. I knew that primeval forests and difficult hilly country intervened to the north, which we should be quite unable to cope with. The attendant cold and tropical rains of those regions I was convinced would kill off the majority of our animals within a fortnight, from our experience the previous year—and then in the dry season. We had no guides. After discussing the whole matter carefully we formed the unanimous opinion that to proceed north at this season would be suicidal. We must stick to the plains and get out of this infernal rain as rapidly as possible, as we should be hopelessly bogged otherwise and rapidly lose our animals, on which our very lives depended. First we must return to Murle to see whether in the meantime the food supplies that should have met us there had arrived. Their advent we now began to regard as an extremely remote possibility. Had they not arrived by the 25th I decided it would be madness for us to remain any longer in the country. We must strike south at once along Lake Rudolf, living as best we could on our transport animals until we reached a British post of the Uganda Protectorate, which we believed existed near the Ribo Hills to the east of the Suk country. We hoped to arrive there in six weeks. We well realised that great suffering and hardship would be entailed on all, and I anticipated a loss of perhaps twenty-five per cent. of our men and fifty per cent. of our animals in the undertaking. In my most pessimistic mood, however, I never imagined the terrible loss of human life we actually suffered, nor realised the horrible experiences we were to undergo, and that



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fourteen only of the fifty-nine men with us were destined to reach safety.

With my mind now firmly made up that our only chance of salvation lay in that direction, we started south again on April 21, on a bearing I estimated should bring us to the camp of the 6th, where we had first reached the Omo. Fortunately during the two previous days rain had not fallen on the plain, though heavy storms had visited the hills to the north of us. For the first mile or so we worked our way through the broken ground more easily than I had hoped; after which we found ourselves on a large plain, consisting of thorn trees and open grassy stretches. We were favoured by a fine day, and the animals travelled well in spite of the heavy going in parts, where we came upon bogs, and had to skirt swampy areas bordering small lakes which had been formed in depressions out on the plains. Just before sundown, when we anticipated we could not be more than a mile and a half from the Omo, we unexpectedly came upon a large flock of goats and sheep, a few cattle and some donkeys, lying and standing about outside a zeriba near a large pool of water. The natives fled on our approach, leaving all these animals (there must have been over 1000 goats and sheep) in our hands. We had great difficulty in persuading them to return, and pitched camp with the object of bartering with them for the purchase of some of these animals. They wished for iron wire, and we fortunately had a whole load of that material. After we had purchased twenty-two goats and sheep, including four milch ones, the

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natives drove off the rest, having acquired as much iron as they coveted. It was a great temptation, in our present straits for food, to capture all these animals; and I frankly admit that had any of us formed the slightest conception of what we were subsequently to undergo, those creatures would have been driven along in our train even had we to fight our way through the country. Our moderation and fair dealing we hoped would, however, meet with its own reward, as there was still the possibility of obtaining grain food—which was so eminently essential to all of us, black and white; but more especially the former, whose staple food it is—at Lumian on Lake Rudolf. The colony of Marle (as distinct from Murle) people there had rescued my column in 1898 from an equally awkward dilemma, and why not again?

We were by no means disheartened, and still hoped against hope that affairs really were not so black as they appeared. The food supplies for aught we knew might be quietly awaiting our arrival at Murle all this time, in which case on the morrow we should again be in the midst of plenty. Still sanguine, we reached our old camp of April 6 early next morning, after traversing a mile or more of thorn; but the longed-for supplies were not there. We then moved about a quarter of a mile east to one of our 1898 camps, on a high cliff overlooking the stream below, where more grazing was procurable for our animals, and near which was a suitable watering-place. As soon as camp had been pitched the boat was put together, and Bright, with a few

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men, crossed the river with some trade goods in order to try again to purchase grain from the natives. He returned shortly after noon with the doleful report that he could get nothing—that although the natives met him in a friendly way, they appeared to possess no grain, and that not even any standing crops were visible, and all he could obtain was a few fish. These the natives caught in semi-globular nets constructed of a framework of twigs bent to the required shape, the intervals being covered with a meshwork of string made from fibre. They are from twelve to fifteen feet in diameter, and are either worked from land, where they are secured between wooden uprights, or from the prow of a canoe. The procedure is very simple, the whole net being merely lowered under the surface, whence, after a short immersion, it is levered up again, and generally is found to contain a good supply of fish. These snares are much in vogue amongst the different tribes inhabiting the bank of the Omo hereabouts.

Our complete stock of food now consisted of six bags of rice, six of lentils, and three bags of salt belonging to the men, and three bags of wheat flour and four of rice belonging to the mess, which were now handed over for the benefit of our Sudanese. For the present, therefore, it was arranged that a quarter-bag of flour, a quarter of rice, a quarter of lentils, and a sheep every alternate day should be the ration of the column. In this way the flour would last twelve days, after which we would be left with three bags of rice, three of lentils, and three of mess rice, which would do for another twelve

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days. We could rely, therefore, on giving the men a little grain every day for the next three weeks. Just as we had finished dinner on the evening of our return to Murle, Mabruk Effendi, Bakhir, and two or three of the Jehadia reported that Sarur, the Jehadia corporal in charge of the donkeys, was absent, and had not been seen by any one since he came into camp—about 1 P.M.—to get his food whilst the donkeys were grazing. He was about the best transport man we had, better even than old Bilal, and an extremely hard-working, conscientious fellow, so we were not a little surprised. From what we could gather he was last seen going out of camp with his rifle after he had fed, presumably to resume his post with the donkeys; but he had not accompanied those animals when they had been brought in for the night, which he invariably did, to see that the numbers were correct. I much feared, therefore, that he must either have been carried off by a crocodile down at the river-side—these brutes here being very voracious—or had gone off on a foraging expedition and been speared by the natives. Whilst at lunch Bright had suddenly said, “Listen! I believe that was a shot.” It came from some distance in a south-easterly direction up the river, and Bakhir had apparently made a similar remark to Mabruk Effendi at the same moment, whilst they were sitting together in their tent. It is more than probable, therefore, that our surmise was correct, and that he had been either killed or wounded by the natives. A search party was sent off with lanterns to visit the village about a quarter of a mile distant, near our camp of April 6,

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but returned finding it absolutely deserted. Two more parties, one of Jehadia under Bilal, and another of askaris under the sergeant, were sent out in different directions next day; but their search proved fruitless.

The natives who had been fishing opposite to camp the whole of the previous day never showed up at all, which in itself was a suspicious circumstance, and left little doubt but that Sarur had been speared, and his body and rifle thrown into the river. Whilst the askaris were coming back to camp through the fields of cultivation some of the natives had attempted to spear the sergeant, whereupon one of the other men fired at them, and all the natives had in consequence plunged into the river and swam across to the opposite bank. It was decided, therefore, to take reprisals, so thirty men were sent off with Mabruk Effendi, accompanied by forty donkeys with empty saddles, with instructions to cut down as much standing grain as they could, load up, and return with it to camp. They were absent four or five hours and brought back a lot of dura, and some fifteen donkeys carrying beans in pods on their stems. The dura was far from ripe; but still we hoped to obtain a few bags both of that and beans, after we had dried them in the sun and winnowed it out. We halted again on the 24th to dry as much as we could, and that night at 1 A.M. Mabruk Effendi woke me to say that a native had hurled a spear into camp, which he brought round to show me. It had narrowly missed one of the Jehadia, who was sitting over a fire. Nothing could be done beyond warning the sentries to be on the alert in case of an

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attempt on the camp, which we hardly expected. We were to continue our march to Lake Rudolf next day, so an odd spear thrown into camp, especially as it had done no harm, was of little account. We had not time to fight natives now, and must push on towards safety.

## CHAPTER IX

### 'DOGGED BY GIANT NATIVES

ONE of our camels had died on April 24, and a second on the 25th, apparently from eating some poisonous herb, and the rest were looking anything but robust, thanks to the heavy rains to which they had been subjected. We could not now hope to make the twenty-mile march across to the Sacchi in one day as we had formerly, owing to the boggy nature of the country; but I intended to strike west to that river first, and then work down to Lake Rudolf, in order to avoid the big swamp we felt sure must exist now where the Sacchi spills out to the north of the lake, and which would bar progress by the route we had followed in the dry season of 1898.

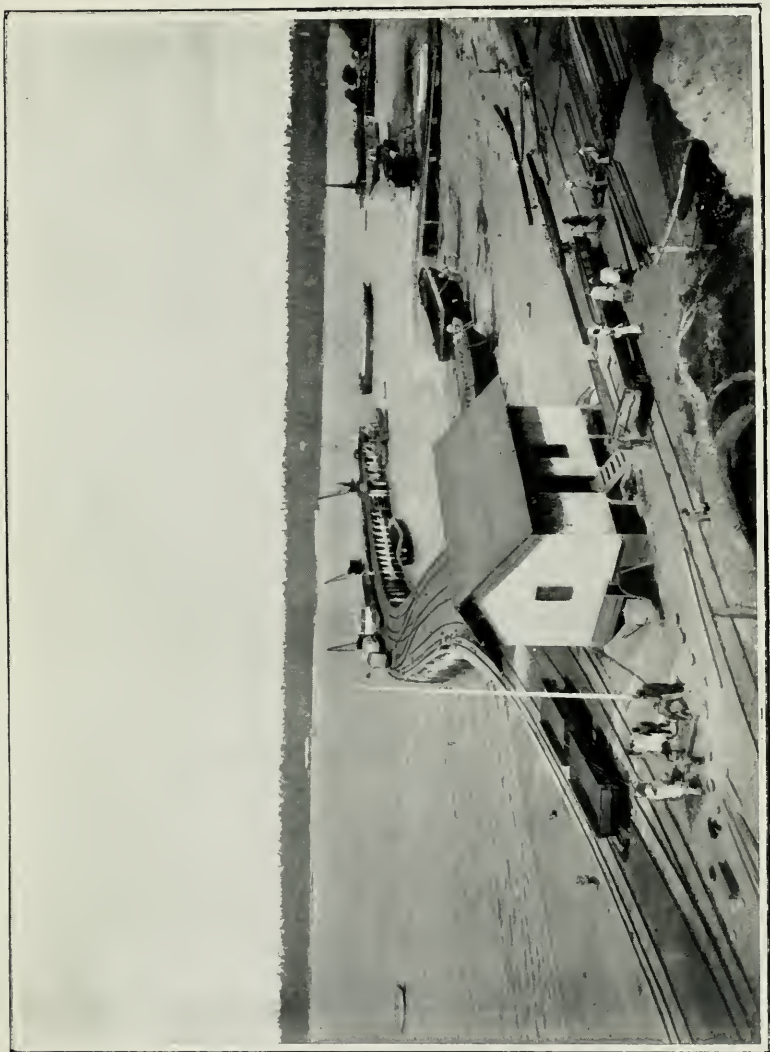
On the morning of the 25th we were treated to a very heavy downpour of rain until 1 P.M.; but we made a start shortly after three, and, marching some four miles through very boggy ground, camped for the night on the edge of a swamp near where the Omo swings south to the lake. Starting west again next morning we travelled well for the first four miles, after which we became involved again in a very boggy tract. It was impossible to avoid it, as the soil of the whole plain was of a "pat" nature here, and as through it the loaded donkeys could not

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travel, they had all to be unloaded and their burdens conveyed across by the men. Both animals and men were thoroughly exhausted when the transportation had been completed, so we camped on a dry sandy spot, obtaining water collected close at hand in the indentations formed by elephants' feet. We devoutly trusted it would not rain that night, or we should probably have been unable to continue next day. Fortunately no rain fell. We lost another of our Omdurman mules on the march, and only one now remained of the four. I was evidently in bright spirits on this day after our wrestle in the bog, as in my diary I had entered, "Things are assuming a decidedly cheering aspect, and all I can say is that I shall be more than glad when we are aboard the Uganda Railway, bound for Mombasa and home."

I had rather bad luck on the march, as I had knocked over my first oryx, with the only shot I had ever made at these animals, and lost him in the bush. However, I bagged two others later. It was a long shot of over 300 yards, and the animal was standing facing me when I took a kneeling shot, and dropped him where he stood. He lay struggling on the ground unable to recover his feet until I got up to within sixty yards of him, concealed by bush. My idiot of an orderly, however, making sure the beast was done for, allowed himself to be seen, upon which the oryx regained his feet, and staggering off about thirty yards collapsed again. If I had been sensible I should have given him another bullet then, but I, too, imagined this was his last effort, and began to walk quietly up to him to cut his throat.





*The jetties at Kilindini Harbour, Mombasa.*



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Suddenly up he got, and dashed off into the bush with the blood pouring from a wound in his side, and I could never find him again. He probably died shortly after; but we did not get his meat, and we wanted it badly.

We had had some trouble lately with my servant Hanna, who had been stung on the heel by one of those venomous "schmall schnakes mit feet" some three weeks previously, and had been unable to walk since. Garner had injected ammonia into the place; but a deep-seated wound in time formed, which he subsequently had to open out, and Hanna had been compelled to ride a donkey ever since. He and Mahomed, the cook, were now the only two mounted men of the cavalcade; but before long we were obliged to mount several others who showed signs of exhaustion. On April 27 we had a long and tiring day's experience before we eventually reached the Sacchi at sundown. We had not gone a mile out of camp before we became involved in a fresh bog. We made two and a half miles with the camels and mules with great difficulty, and then had to send men back to assist the donkeys, who were another hour and a half before they got through. Whilst waiting with the advanced-guard, camels, and mules, we espied a herd of gazelle, so I stalked up to them concealed by bush, and knocked over three with five shots. Two other wounded ones got off, and we came across one of them later lying down, but on our approach the wretched creature dashed off evidently quite on its last legs, and we lost it altogether in the bush. The meat was a perfect godsend, so the

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camels were loaded up with it before the last of the donkeys had arrived, and we were able to push on again.

We made another four and a half miles, when progress was barred by a khor full of soft mud and water. It had to be crossed, and here again we had to unload the animals, who were given a rest before proceeding, as they were pretty well exhausted with their efforts. Starting again at 3 P.M., we travelled well and steadily for three miles or so until within a mile of the grove of trees on the river-bank, near our camp of April 4. The ground now became muddy again, in another quarter of a mile swampy, and shortly after absolutely impracticable for transport animals, and we were only 800 yards from the point we wished to make! It was maddening, as the sun was already setting; but back we had to go, to try and find some other way through, with the prospect before us of not being able to reach the river at all before night-fall. Halting the animals outside, I went ahead with some men, and found a muddy pathway evidently trampled out lately by elephants. We got through to the river without difficulty this time, and shouted for the animals to be brought on, which was done slowly. We camped on the bank some 200 or 300 yards distant from our camp of the 4th, part of the animal zeriba of which we could just make out. The river had recently overtopped its banks, forming the swamp we had been unable to traverse, and flood marks were visible everywhere. The stream now was four or five feet deep and twenty yards broad, and there was almost a total absence of thorn or firewood along the banks. It was not

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until 7 P.M. that we were settled down for the night, being favoured fortunately by a moon; but the men obtained no food until past 10. With considerable difficulty we continued some three miles along the bank next morning, when we arrived opposite some high ground, to which it was decided to cross, as the country along our bank, and between the river and Mount Nakua, appeared to be most uninviting swamp. We were occupied until 3 P.M. transporting loads, &c., across in the boat, and then had the loads removed to the top of the high ground. It was fortunate we had proceeded to this point before crossing, as we subsequently discovered that another swampy stream flowed from the west into the Sacchi about 500 yards above our crossing, which would have proved a nasty obstacle had we crossed the Sacchi where we were camped the previous evening, as its low banks were very boggy and unapproachable.

Shortly before reaching our ferrying-place we saw some natives walking towards the river from the direction of Mount Nakua, so gave them a hail. They were accompanied by three young donkeys, which they abandoned on our bank, and, wading across the stream, disappeared. When we reached the bank I was not a little surprised to be suddenly confronted with these three asses, who boldly walked up to me like dogs. They joined our herd and grazed a little apart whilst the transportation of loads was being carried out, and accompanied us on our journey. They were the most quaintly-clannish creatures imaginable—always fed together, and would never separate on the march, or have anything to do with the

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Omdurman donkeys, keeping always entirely to themselves. One of them, later, was the first donkey killed for meat, and we enjoyed him so much that it was disappointing to find our weather-beaten old load carriers were not equally succulent.

Being on the right bank of the river again we were congratulating ourselves we should now easily be able to work round any swamp the Sacchi might form, having the open plain to the west to operate over. We started off with light hearts, therefore, on April 29, hoping to reach the shores of Lake Rudolf in a day or two now, as we expected soon to be out of the rain zone. As we were striking camp dense masses of black threatening clouds began to gather north, east, and west, and we soon saw that it was coming down in volumes in those quarters. It was clear to the south, so we hoped by pushing on we might escape the deluge. One of the camels collapsed as we left camp, and died almost at once, which was the first calamity. Following a good native track we proceeded capitally for the first mile and a half, then the storms from the other three quarters met over us and gave us a most fearsome ducking, and rapidly converted the whole country into bog. Up to now we had been proceeding south-west; but being confronted by a khor full of water, which was impassable, we had to turn off west along high ground to work round it. It was raining like mad, and the sodden ground delayed us at every step; but in course of time we managed to get round, and came on a belt of thorn-bush. There seemed no prospect of the rain ceasing,

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and progress was almost impossible, whilst just ahead was another khor coming down in flood and spilling all over the place, so we pitched camp in the pouring rain on a small sandy patch. There was no cessation until past midday, and we were benumbed with the cold and misery of it all. It then cleared a bit, and when later in the afternoon we were treated to a few hours bright sun, men and animals began to come to life again. They were dead to all intents and purposes until then. Fortunately plenty of fire-wood was obtainable, and after this had dried we built cheery fires and hoped that soon there would be an end to this sort of thing.

We had another sickening day of it on April 30. Striking south-west through thorn-bush on leaving camp, we zigzagged about a great deal, avoiding boggy tracts and inundated areas, and made towards a wooded ridge, along which remains of old kraals were visible; subsequently reaching open grass land, we still had to steer a westerly course, as an intervening depression to the south was most obviously swamp. The croaking of hundreds of frogs indicated that fact. Eventually further progress was barred by a muddy khor containing the most awful slime and slush. We had to proceed north along it for some time, and crossing it higher up after much labour were at once confronted with the main channel, a running stream fifteen yards wide, which was in flood, but recently had been much higher, and the intermediate levels were soft mud and slime. We had the animals unloaded, and by cutting branches, grass, &c., ultimately constructed a causeway to the

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water, and launched the boat to transport the loads across. The space available for work was very restricted, so the business was a long one, and it was past 7 P.M. before loads and animals were over and settled for the night in camp on high ground overlooking the stream. It had been a long and tiring day for the men, who had no food until late. Fortunately on the march I had shot a fine buck gazelle and a lovely fat cow oryx, which gave every one meat for the day and a plentiful supply for the morrow, when we felt we must halt to give the men a chance after their recent heavy work since leaving Murle.

Our bright camel-men, whilst the loads were being ferried over and the animals were grazing, succeeded in allowing their charges to stray, and the finest beast of the whole herd they were unable to find any traces of, a fact they did not report to me until sunset. All through the expedition these two Arab dolts had caused an immense expenditure of temper on my part by their hateful carelessness and laziness. Time after time camels had been lost, but eventually recovered, to which I have made no previous allusion, and now again, and by no means for the last time, through sheer downright laziness — sleeping when they should have been keeping an eye on their charges — they had lost our best animal. I told them I would cut £14 from their pay if they failed to recover it next day—that was the price paid for it at Omdurman; but his value to us under present circumstances could not possibly be estimated by mere money. The whole of the camel-men, including the Jehadia attached to this transport, were sent off early next morning,



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and returned at midnight—without the animal, but with a very wonderful yarn, which they seemed to think quite good enough for the simple white man. We now only had ten camels left of the original fifteen.

The prospect from our camp on the bank of this stream was very pleasing, and would have been much appreciated under happier circumstances. We were on the edge of an open grassy plain, and looking south it appeared as though nothing now should hinder rapid progress in that direction to the lake and Mount Lubur, which now showed up well in the distance; whilst to the south-west the Lorusia Mountains loomed large. This plain afforded good grazing to hartebeeste and gazelle; ostriches and quails were plentiful; and the cackle of guinea-fowl and the calls of partridge and bush-fowl along the river-bank denoted their presence also in large numbers. The bush-fowl, however, were very hard to put up, and it was scarcely worth while going after them, as they concealed themselves the whole time in the long grass, through which they ran like hares, never giving one a chance of a shot, although hearing them on all sides. Game altogether was excessively wild, and we obtained nothing. On May 2 we hoped to be able to reach Lake Rudolf, but the early morning outlook was so much like that of April 29 that I decided to make an afternoon march instead, after the expected downpour. The rain, however, passed round us to north, east, and west, so we started at midday after the animals had grazed and been watered, marching south (approximately on Mount Lubur), traversing open grass land, and subsequently thorn-bush tracts.

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We carried water for the night, and pushed on again next morning. Although we succeeded in marching some eleven miles we were compelled to zigzag about all over the country—now in a westerly, now in a southerly direction—skirting large areas of bog and swamp, which prevented us working towards the lake shores at all. Almost immediately after leaving camp we encountered swamp, and were obliged to swing a long way south-west before we could get round it and turn south again. We were able to proceed some two miles in that direction, and again had to trend off west to work round more swamp. Eventually we came across a large area there was no getting through, and for the last five miles of the march we had to skirt this as best we could, picking our way between swamp to right and left, making the whole time steadily towards the base of the Lorusia range. We camped shortly before midday on an open patch of “pat,” with thorn trees near and water in the grass in front of us. I feared now that this belt of swamp might extend beyond to the foot of the hills, in which case there would be no way round it, and became most anxious. Certainly if it rained heavily during the night we should become hopelessly bogged on this awful soil, and it was difficult to see what we could do to extricate ourselves. Had we been well supplied with food the matter would be only one of time; but under present conditions these delays were becoming insufferable, and causing a great feeling of unrest.

The only bright spot in the day's march was my shooting a fine bull oryx, which was opportune, for

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it was meat-day for the men. We had seen a big herd of giraffe in addition to zebras, oryx, hartebeeste, gazelle, and ostriches; but the game had all been very wild, and I was fortunate in bringing down this solitary oryx with a long shot, as that once was the only opportunity I had of using the rifle. I fired from a distance of between 200 and 250 yards when he faced me, and he jumped up in the air to the shot. He then trotted off for about a couple of hundred yards and then collapsed, rolling about on the ground in his death agony. Giving him time, we approached, on his struggles ceasing, and found him dead.

On the 4th May we made a further effort to struggle through the swamp in front of us in a southerly direction, and with great difficulty managed to make about a mile. In every conceivable quarter we hunted for a way by which we could proceed, as the animals had been much bogged. It was of no use, so I gave orders they should be helped back again to our camping-ground, whilst I retraced my footsteps with two men to look for a way round, feeling sick at heart at the prospect of progress now being absolutely barred, which would necessitate—goodness knows what, for it was raining, and the ground was getting worse every moment. Bright and Garner I left to superintend the struggle back. To the west of us there appeared to be a lake of water in the seeming depression running north along the foot of the hills, and the men shook their heads doubtingly as we started off north-west to see if we could reach the lower slopes of the hills. I stationed

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one man about a mile from camp to give the line to the column to follow, and then continued with my orderly. Fortune favoured us. On reaching the apparent swamp we found it to consist of white flowers of a weedy nature, which, even through our glasses, had given the ground the appearance of being covered by a sheet of water. We made for an ant-heap and signalled for the column to come on; but they could not see us. Leaving my orderly on the ant-heap, I pushed on again through these flowers and arrived at the bed of a khor over dry ground; hoping that now at last we were safe, I fired my gun several times as a signal that all was well. I now waited for the column; but it did not appear for some time. Eventually it hove in sight, and when the men with the animals now found Bright working towards the same lake, they had expressed an opinion we could not get through—deceived as we all were by the flowers. Their doubts were soon dispelled, and we were over the khor, and proceeded generally south for some five and a half miles along the lower slopes of the outlying spurs of the Lorusia Mountains. We crossed several water-courses from the hills, and the irony of it was that they were all as dry as bones, their beds being stony. At last we came upon a really large one, with a broad belt of thorn and other trees on both banks—as dry as the others—and the question of water for our requirements again arose. It was decided to follow down this khor, as it was already past 1 P.M., so we made again towards the plains, along the right bank outside the belt of trees, until about a mile and a half

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further on we came across some pools of water, near which we camped. Shortly before I had shot a gazelle with a long shot of 300 yards at least, so we were able to give the men meat. This was the last antelope shot by any of us for many a long day—in fact, with the exception of a doe impalah I secured on June 4, no other antelope was shot during the remainder of the journey to Baringo so far as I remember.

It is generally that way; when you are terribly hard up for food game is always scarce. If it is imagined that one can feed a column by the meat shot on the march, this impression may at once be removed—at all events in the regions we were in. It is likely to land any traveller in the desperate straits that we experienced, if he starts off with the idea that his trusty rifle, however good a shot he may be, is going to keep his men supplied with food. Without any conceit, about this time (thanks to a beautiful weapon that I possessed) I was making very accurate shooting generally at long ranges, as one could rarely approach animals closely. Yet the game we had obtained was very little, and later we saw practically none at which to fire.

On May 5 we continued our march in a southerly direction for the first six and a half miles near the foot of the hills, crossing several water-courses, until we reached a large wooded nullah with several branch channels, which we crossed and halted. We had seen a few natives at some distance; but they had made off into the hills, amongst which they were now apparently living, depending on the rains for their water supply,

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as we had passed traces of a few old deserted kraals. I felt now that we should be almost due west of Lumian, where we had met with such a hearty welcome from the Marle natives in 1898. From these we had purchased some seventy bags of grain for my column of 180 souls, when we were clean out of food, and still six weeks distant from our base on Mount Elgon. They had rescued us then from a most difficult and embarrassing position, and we still hoped that once again they would come to our assistance. We turned off east, therefore, making for the shores of Lake Rudolf along this khor, and followed approximately the line of trees indicating its course for some two miles to the end of the trees. We here found water in pools in the bed, and camped near the site of an old deserted kraal, at a point where another small water-channel from the hills entered this main one. We were on a grassy plain, and with difficulty constructed a zeriba for the donkeys by dragging the thorn from the kraal close by.

Shortly before 3 P.M. intelligence was brought in that three of our men were lying dead out on the plain—not a mile from camp—speared by natives, of whom we had seen no signs since early in the day. This ghastly piece of news was naturally a great shock to us all, as we had hoped soon to be amongst friendly natives, who could help us in the matter of food. The victims were Onbasha Abdil Kheir Mahomed, one of the non-commissioned officers of the escort; a private, Hassabo Adam; and our cook Mahomed. The details of the treacherous attack will never be known, nor can a reason be assigned for this unprovoked brutal murder,

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as we had never harmed these natives in any way. Those who had found the bodies reported that the clothes, rifles, &c., of the victims had been plundered, and although we could plainly see the spot indicated from camp, not a single shot had been heard by any one. I sent Garner out with a party of twelve rifles and two camels to recover the bodies and bring them into camp for burial. He reported it as his opinion, from the position of the bodies, wounds and so on, that all the men had been stabbed from behind, and there was no sign of a struggle. It was nearly dark before the graves were dug and the bodies interred, and we were late in settling down for the night.

We could not construct a zeriba round camp, which seemed advisable as the natives were evidently hostile, on account of the total absence of thorn, so sentries were doubled for the night, whilst every man slept as usual on his post round the camp, ready for any emergency, with fixed bayonets. That night for the first time we saw a striking comet in the constellation of Orion, its appearance leading to a good deal of discussion amongst the men. The more superstitious regarded it as a very evil omen, although we tried to persuade them that our luck was now about to change. Bakhir, the interpreter, reminded me that the only previous one he had seen was in 1882, when misfortune overtook the Egyptian troops at the bombardment of Alexandria. I said, "Yes, but it was a lucky omen for the British navy." He was unshaken, however, in the opinion he had formed.

Assisted that night by a full moon, a band of from forty to fifty warriors had collected in the khor some

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thirty or forty yards distant, and at 1.30 A.M. they made a dash for the camp, yelling like demons and looking "larger than human" as they charged towards our four tents. The promptitude of the sentry in front probably saved our lives, for, shouting to the guard to turn out, he fired as he shouted; and, in less time than it takes me to write it, the whole of that side of the camp was firing on the advancing foe, who were unable to face our rifles, and turned and fled before they had succeeded in reaching the line of men. It was one of the quickest and smartest pieces of work we had ever seen done, and I was very highly gratified at the excellent fire discipline observed by the men. There was no wild senseless waste of ammunition, and firing ceased directly the enemy disappeared, which I need hardly say is not always the case with native troops—or white ones either—who have been suddenly alarmed at night. A second attack was also attempted by another body on the rear face of the camp, but they were easily driven back, leaving several spears, which they had hurled into our camp; but which, happily, had done no damage. Doubt could no longer exist that the incident of the afternoon was not merely an isolated act of treachery. It was evident the whole tribe was bitterly hostile; and had it not been for the fact that the nerves of the men had been previously highly strung, and that they were, in consequence, especially on the alert, we might have fared extremely badly had the natives once got in amongst us and the animals. Our camp could never be enclosed within a compass less than forty yards square at this time, which only allowed ten to twelve rifles to protect each





*A young Turkana giant compared with one of our ex-dervishes, who stands about 5 ft. 9 in. in his boots. Notice the circular wrist knife.*

[To face page 190.]



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side, with an interval of from three to four yards between each man sleeping on his post. The Jehadia had little idea of the use of a rifle and sight, and in order to make each face reasonably safe, Askaris of the escort were always distributed amongst the transport drivers—three or four of the regulars, who could use a rifle, being posted along every side of the square.

Next morning, after proceeding some two or three miles in an easterly direction along the khor, we arrived close to the single tree on the shores of Lake Rudolf, where formerly the Lumian colony of natives had been found, from whom we had obtained so much food. Tracts of cultivation existed as of yore ; but were in a more backward state than on the Omo, and unfit for food, standing as they were on a swampy area near the mouth of the khor. We had seen scarcely any natives, the few whom we had caught sight of at once fleeing and concealing themselves in the grass and crops. History, therefore, to our bitter disappointment, was not going to repeat itself at Lumian. It was still early and cool, so I decided to push south along the lake to the former settlement of Komogul, situated on a khor some seven or eight miles distant, on the banks of which we knew there were trees and thorn wherewith to construct a zeriba for defensive purposes. Not a tree beyond the solitary one I have alluded to was seen at Lumian. The whole nature of the country had changed in a most extraordinary manner since our previous visit in September and October 1898. Then the burnt-up plain was almost bare, whereas now we

## DOGGED BY GIANT NATIVES

were confronted with coarse grass and patches of swamp, which impeded progress. The natives then were friendly, and not only sold us food, but gave us warning of an attack the Turkana meditated making on our camp one night.

The gathering warmth of the sun brought the natives out from their lairs, and our footsteps were dogged by bands on our flanks, who moved along at some distance, parallel to our line of march. The failure to obtain food here had now placed us in the most critical position I have ever been called on to face in view of starvation. On reaching the Komogul khor we found water near the surface by digging, so pitched camp on the bank, and at once constructed zeribas. The natives were lurking about 'mid the trees, and pickets were placed out to give timely notice of any hostile move that might be made whilst this work was being carried out; and the animals were restricted to a small area whereon to graze, immediately outside camp on the plain. This left only a few men available for zeriba work, which was not completed until nearly dark. A large body of natives had collected in a village about half a mile distant after dark, and we heard much shouting from that direction, and it was anticipated a more serious attempt might be made on our camp during the night. Unfortunately I had now another attack of sickness, and had to retire to bed before dark; but happily we were left unmolested during the night.

The following day we crossed the khor, with its steep banks, after some considerable labour, and for

## DOGGED BY GIANT NATIVES

some distance struggled through long coarse grass intersected with numerous depressions filled with water. We then reached more open ground with short grass and sandy soil, so travelled better, and the large number of natives dogging our footsteps on the flank withdrew to a greater distance, still moving parallel to us. We made gradually for the lake shore, and after marching some four miles camped on a low, sandy cliff immediately overlooking that grand expanse of water. Few of our men had ever seen the sea, and were filled with astonishment at not being able to discern land across that inland ocean, the Nile being previously their idea of a great body of water. Our position was a strong one, the low cliff forming an impregnable position on the lake side, whilst an abundance of thorn was available for constructing a strong zeriba on the other faces, and for the donkeys in the centre of the camp. The natives, who had taken up points of observation screened by bush throughout the day, evidently withdrew during the night, and the following day we had soon crossed the Marle border and entered Turkana territory. We marched south along the lake shore, when, on approaching the foot of Mount Lubur (a striking extinct volcano which rises abruptly 3000 feet from the plain, about a mile to the west of the margin of the lake), I again suffered from a gastric attack. Garner insisted on a halt during May 9 and 10, as I was seriously ill and unable to keep anything down; the nauseating lake water permeated everything offered me, at which, in my then condition, my very soul revolted. I was soon reduced to a mere wreck, and my spirit chafed at this

## DOGGED BY GIANT NATIVES

delay in our present straits; but Garner feared any attempt just then to proceed might result fatally to me, as I was too weak to stand, and the jolting of a camel he dreaded might intensify the nausea. For two days, therefore, we remained camped on the lake shore

## CHAPTER X

### THE HOSTILE TURKANA

ON May 11 we made a fresh start in a southerly direction, a camel carrying me at the head of the column, whence I was able to point out what line of country to take. We rounded the southern limit of Sanderson Gulf, and then struck across the base of the sand-spit which runs northward out into the lake, and camped again near the shore. Happily I had suffered no relapse from the uncomfortable motion of my steed, although much exhausted at the end of the march, so I went to bed as soon as camp was pitched. Since reaching Lumian we had been on familiar ground, and as I had formerly in 1897 and 1898 surveyed the whole of the country from the Uganda road near the Ravine station, to the north of Lake Rudolf, along the route it was now my intention to pursue, I retained a very distinct recollection of every march, and could guide the column; for no further survey work was now necessary, except occasionally to take positions by stars at night to locate absolutely our position during our dreadful journey.

We still moved south next day, seeing no sign of the Turkana as yet, though formerly the shores had been fairly full of them. To our great disappointment many water-birds which had frequented the numerous

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lagoons along the western shores in 1898 were now conspicuous by their absence, and we were scarcely able to obtain anything in that line for food, though we had been counting upon them. The rations, which had recently been still further reduced all round, were nothing like adequate; but still it was unavoidable. The result was that signs of demoralisation were becoming evident, and on May 13 three of the Jehadia on the march were convicted of breaking into one of our precious bags of lentils which had fallen off one of the animals, and received a flogging for their temerity. There is little to describe in the next day's march, which was devoid of incident. We made satisfactory progress, reaching the fourth degree of north latitude. I was recovering very slowly, and was still most helpless on my feet, and always glad to tumble into bed as soon as camp was pitched, for I found the motion of my camel very trying. In my diary of that day I scrawled, "No appetite; living on slops. Long for delicacies at times; would like to take a pull at a jelly, or munch a few grapes. Nothing in this cursed country but lake water, and that most unsavoury."

On May 15 we passed our old camp of August 31, where we had first struck the lake after our journey across the desert from the Turkwel River in 1898. The men were now getting only about a quarter pound of grain each per day and a small ration of meat, one goat or sheep being killed daily and divided between over fifty men. We had lately started on camel, as these were beginning to break down, so when one collapsed he was slaughtered and his meat carried on. There was no game to shoot—not even a hippo



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or crocodile could we obtain. The Turkana kraals became far more numerous, although the natives avoided us, for which we were devoutly thankful, for we were in no condition to enjoy a skirmish with these huge warriors, and my one anxiety was to try and struggle through without hostilities. Our progress on the march was dismally slow in spite of the easy nature of the country, owing to the wretched condition of our camels. There was plenty of low scrub, on which the Turkana camels browsed and waxed fat, growing up out of the sandy soil; but our brutes turned up their noses at this, and as there was little or no thorn for them, they rapidly degenerated into skin and bone. We proceeded slowly for the first seven miles on May 16 before halting; but a mile further another loaded camel collapsed. There was no beast available on which to adjust its load, so we camped a short distance further on, and then sent back for the loads, the camel having its throat cut to provide meat for that day and the next. We remained halted on the 17th to give the camels a little rest, and employed the day in reducing kits all round, and burning and destroying things to lessen the work of our transport. I "enjoyed my first smoke for ten days," my diary says. I did not really enjoy it a bit—tobacco was still an abomination to me, although usually I am a very heavy smoker—so it must have been a mere *façon de parler*. We marched off again on the 18th, and some two or three miles from the start found ourselves in broken ground, as the low coast hills, which were generally six or seven miles from the margin of the lake, approached it

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closely at that point. We then worked out nearer the shore and travelled better, and in spite of vexatious delays on the part of sick men who had to be carried on donkeys, marched about ten miles. Then the camel carrying the boat collapsed, so his throat was cut for meat and the boat burnt, as we did not anticipate having any further serious obstacle to encounter in the way of rivers, provided the Weiwei and Kerio in Suk country were not in flood.

Some of the Jehadia at this time began to behave like absolute beasts of the field, and during the halt the previous day had so gorged themselves on every portion of a camel, including the hide, feet, and blood, drawing the line only at the bones (which presumably they were unable to crack with their teeth), that they were showing signs of breaking down, and we had been compelled in consequence to mount several of them. The number before long was increased to as many as thirteen mounted on donkeys on the march. The regular soldiers—the askaris—on the other hand were behaving splendidly, and set the others such an example, that had it only been followed by the transport drivers, would probably have resulted in a less serious loss of life. All the men were most visibly suffering greatly from the want of carbo-hydrate food, as the supply of grain they received daily was necessarily very limited in quantity, and on meat alone they appeared quite incapable of maintaining their strength. The askaris all messed together, and derived considerable benefit from clubbing their rations, and obtained, moreover, a sustaining soup from the meat, which was always well boiled by them. The Jehadia,

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however, so little trusted each other in their present straits, that they fed independently, and therefore derived less benefit from their rations. We had seen some of these ex-dervishes tearing the meat off a camel bone with their teeth, raw. Ultimately, when our losses had become so serious that there appeared grave doubts of our ever getting through, a general mess for the whole camp was insisted on, and proved much more satisfactory. It was necessary, too, always to burn the hides of the camels and donkeys immediately the animal was slaughtered for food, otherwise our wretched men would devour every bit of them, fur and all!

A foretaste of what was to come was given us on May 19. To start with, one of the Jehadia had died during the night, and had to be buried whilst the animals were being loaded up; another of them succumbed soon after the start, and dying when being held on to a donkey, was left at the side of the track. Two camels were unable to carry loads and merely struggled along; all our servants had to be mounted, being incapable of walking, and as another half-dozen Jehadia were also mounted, the rear was brought up by a cavalcade of ten sick men sitting astride donkeys. We marched south, and two miles from our previous camp entered a thick belt of wood bordering a large, sandy-bedded khor, which delayed us for a long time, as the bush in parts was very thick. Eventually, after a wearisome tramp, we reached a point near the head of a small bay which was formed by a long spit of low sand-hills running out in a northerly direction into the lake. We passed a small lagoon where formerly

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the waters of the lake had been, but this was now at a much lower level than in 1898. We camped near by, and had the utmost difficulty in dragging the riding contingent up from that pool to the camp, as they had thrown themselves down on the ground in a state of collapse. Poor old Bilal, who like me had been riding for the past week, died from utter prostration and exhaustion during the afternoon—the third Jehadia who had died during the day, and the remainder were in a most demoralised condition, with a few notable exceptions.

In the evening I had them all fallen in, and proceeded to deliver them a homily. I pointed out to them that their breakdown was entirely due to their own bestial behaviour with regard to their food—as witness the fact that the askaris, on precisely the same rations, were still capable of work and behaving grandly. Unless they mended, I assured them that not half of them would live to see Omdurman again, and exhorted them to buckle to like men, and work as they had done formerly; feeding in moderation and decently, and not gorging themselves on blood, &c., like hyænas, as they were now doing. Then, with God's help, I told them, I hoped in six weeks we should reach the Uganda railway and proceed by the "babur" (train) to Mombasa, and back to Cairo by sea. They expressed contrition and regret for their recent conduct, and promised in future to follow the example of the askaris. Yet that same night I was aroused by shrieks at 11.30 P.M., and going to investigate the cause, found that one of their number had gone outside the camp zeriba to take a cut off a dead

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camel lying out on the plain near the pool of water. He had been attacked and speared in the loin by Turkana, and had rushed yelling back to camp before he collapsed in the grass some little distance away, and was brought in with difficulty. We carried him for several days on a donkey before he succumbed to the wound he had received. It was maddening. Time after time the men had been warned that our every movement was being watched by hostile natives, who, though unseen, were always lying in wait, ready to spear any straggler who might wander unarmed from the precincts of the camp.

Bright and I had previous experience of the Turkana, and knew their treacherous character, and had almost daily tried to instil into the minds of our men that the natives we were now amongst were not of the timid, shy nature of the Anuaks and other kindred races, but were of exceptional size and strength, warlike, treacherous, and enterprising. On May 20 we had another dreadful day; two more of our camels collapsed, whilst the mules, too, and the donkeys were becoming exhausted after the poor fare they were able to pick up along the lake shore. We found another of the Jehadia, Razgalla by name, who had been riding a donkey on account of a bad leg for some days, missing when we arrived in camp; whilst Garner's servant had collapsed, and I had handed over my camel, on to which he was strapped, as he was in a comatose state. I walked for the remainder of the march for the first time since my illness, and gradually gaining strength in my legs day after day, did not ride again until towards the

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end of the expedition. Mahomed was brought round with difficulty after we camped, on drinking a little brandy; but his hours were obviously numbered, and he died at the end of our march next day.

On leaving the camp where Bilal had died, I picked up a curious relic, probably of our '98 expedition—a Martini-Henry cartridge covered with mildew, which doubtless had belonged to one of our Swahilis. We had struck towards the southern end of the bay, and then rounded the base of the peninsula of sandhills, and travelling by an easy route halted, after we had marched six miles. The lake was not visible as we were on high, undulating, sandy ground, covered with camel scrub, separated from the lake by a low line of sandhills and cliffs, which constitute its western shores hereabouts. Several of the mules had been brought up to the halting-spot with difficulty, and Mahomed was in an insensible condition. We halted for an hour, removing the loads from the mules to give them the benefit of a rest, and then pushed on again. Mahomed was on my camel, so I guided the column on foot for the next hour over this undulating country. We then turned towards the lake, down a small valley flanked on both sides by low sandhills, but were soon brought up sharp by an abrupt line of clay cliffs, sixty to eighty feet above the level of the lake. For the next mile we held along the summit of these cliffs by a villainous route through loose sand, until eventually we found a way down to the margin of the lake by a steep native track utilised for watering animals.

We camped below at a point where a small spring

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issued out of the cliffs and trickled into the lake, from which we obtained fresh water—a pleasant change from the disgusting apology for it of the lake. There was, however, little or no grazing for our wretched animals, which were in a debilitated condition, and breaking down daily. During the afternoon we threw away many of our personal belongings in tin boxes, which we sank in the lake by striking holes in them with a pick-axe; for, the first box—Bright's, if I remember rightly, as it was launched into the deep, started gaily floating off to sea, until retrieved, when holes were drilled to make it fill and sink. We also destroyed all our chairs and tables, with the exception of one small mess-table between us, and three small camp-stool chairs, and reduced and burnt loads all round. Mabruk Effendi's and Bakhir's tents went as well as the mess tent, so we lightened the column considerably; but it was a bit disheartening. We killed another camel next morning that was unable to get up, whilst camp was being struck, and loaded up all its meat in saddles on our donkeys for the march. We now had only four camels left.

Presently to the north, along the sands at the foot of the cliffs, we made out a clothed figure painfully struggling towards us in an exhausted condition. It proved to be the lost Jehadia, Razgalla, and he told us he had fallen off the donkey he was riding whilst we were rounding the sandhills at the end of the bay. Nobody saw him, so he must evidently have dropped off amongst some palms we had worked through, and he certainly could not have

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made any effort to attract the attention of the rear-guard. He went on to state that he had followed to where we had deserted one of the camels—that was at the halt—and found its carcass surrounded by Turkana, who commenced to manoeuvre round him with a view to spearing him. He said there must have been sixty or seventy of them, and that after he had shot three with his rifle, he only had to point it in any direction and they all immediately threw themselves down on the ground. He struggled down to the lake at night and lay out on the beach, but never had any sleep, as he feared the Turkana would bag him if he closed his eyes. Allowing for Oriental exaggeration, he probably did have a most anxious time of it, and showed great pluck and determination in following us, crippled as he was by a bad leg, and barely able to walk. We again mounted him on a donkey, and marched some three to four miles along the sands; the going was very heavy until we reached the Muruanore khor, one of our old camps of 1898, where the cliffs terminate, and here we camped again to give Garner's servant every chance, and also to rest the men and animals, as a little coarse reed-like grass was obtainable here. Mahomed died during the afternoon, and we lost another camel as well, and seeing the exhausted condition of all, it was difficult to keep up our spirits. We calculated we could continue giving the present small stock of grain, which appeared totally inadequate, until June 10 or 11, when it would be finished. Then nothing would remain but the porridge and a little emergency rice belonging to the mess, which we were still keeping



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up our sleeves, as well as a few tins of Benger—beyond the animals. On an entirely meat ration we knew the men could not subsist; for even now, when they were receiving three to four ounces of grain in addition, they were in a dreadful state.

On May 22 we only made a short march of six miles to our last camp on the lake, for I had decided from this point to cut across country to the Turkwel, instead of following our 1898 route, which was more circuitous. Leaving our Muruanore camp I fortunately found a good way through the sand hillocks to high ground inland—away from the lake shores—and for the greater part of the march traversed easy ground for the animals. We reached the wooded khor which enters the lake in a small open bay that I had purposed camping at early, and as grass was a little more abundant, though of a very coarse nature, springing up in tufts from the sandy soil, the animals obtained some grazing. We saw several Turkana whilst camp was being pitched, but beyond watching our movements from a distance, they made no attempt to approach. For the first two hours after striking south the following day we became involved in broken country. Rough and uneven hillocks of sand abounded, the going was very heavy, and our progress in consequence was wretchedly slow. Great delays were caused by the sick brigade in rear, who were constantly becoming unseated, and had to be placed on donkeys after these had again been captured. It was a most depressing business. We eventually reached more even country, and for the next hour proceeded more satisfactorily, before making

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the usual halt after three hours' march. We were now only some two miles distant from the tall belt of trees beyond which we knew we should reach the bed of the Turkwel; but as I anticipated we might have to march a considerable distance up the bed before we should chance on a water-hole, we unloaded the mules and gave them a good rest, starting off again at ten. Before long we reached the belt of trees, through which we wound our way. We had recently seen signs of Turkana; many natives of this giant race were settled in kraals along the river, and we were followed on the flanks by parties of warriors, who, however, did not venture to molest us, as we kept well closed up always on the line of march. On coming out into the bed, which was nearly half a mile wide, we found it dry, as we had expected, and its sandy surface hard and firm. We were now much delayed by a Jehadia in a comatose state, who was held on to his donkey with great difficulty. The poor fellow was done for, and shortly after breathed his last, so was left on the road.

Bright on rear-guard had managed to persuade some of the Turkana to draw near by making friendly signs, and when they understood we were anxious to find water, several of them accompanied us in a perfectly confiding and seemingly friendly spirit. They conducted us about four miles further up the bed, and pointed out a small water-hole to us, so camp was pitched on the bank in a glade of acacias. A large number of Turkana had joined us at intervals, and giving them tobacco to chew and so on we tried to make them understand we would sleep



*A Turkana elder, showing head-dress affected by these natives.  
Notice his murderous finger knife.*

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here, and were anxious to purchase goats and sheep. When camp had been pitched men were sent out to enlarge the water-hole, and excavate a second one for our transport animals, which were driven under a grazing guard to feed on some green grass about 200 yards down stream, whilst a picket in addition was placed as a protection on that flank of the camp. Meanwhile, after the Turkana had seen us settled down, they had dispersed, and we were congratulating ourselves on the amicable relations that had been established, and enjoying a much-needed cup of cocoa after the hot march up the bed of the river, when there was a shout of "Guard turn out!" from the pickets. Dashing out to see what was the matter, we noticed the grazing guard driving back the animals, and learned that Abdalla Tahir (he was appointed corporal in place of Sarur) had been stabbed by a Turkana, who had crept up to him in the grass, plunged his spear into him in several places, and decamped with his rifle. Nothing could of course be seen of those treacherous brutes, when men were sent out to bring in Abdalla. He lingered part of that day, but died during the night from his wounds. The whole affair was most exasperating. It was useless to try and maintain friendly intercourse with such treacherous tigers as these Turkana are, though we were particularly anxious to do so, for in our wretched condition we were quite incapable of any offensive action, and Heaven knows we could have made but a poor show of defence on the line of march, were we attacked in force.

Our position was fraught with the gravest anxiety ;

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the men, in an exhausted state from want of nourishing food, exhibited traces of indifference and apathy regarding their ultimate fate; whether death came by the slow process of starvation or by the swift and sure plunge of a hostile spear, they seemed to care little. Utter and cowardly demoralisation had set in amongst the Jehadia, who thus early in our dreadful bid for safety flung all hope to the winds. Had it not been for our gallant askaris, who were bearing themselves like heroes, and faced each emergency like the disciplined men they were, our position would indeed have been bitter and unendurable beyond all imagination. In 1898 the Turkana of the Turkwel had harassed my column of 180 men and caused much trouble and anxiety, owing to their repeated attempts on the transport animals whilst grazing. It may be realised, therefore, that with one quarter of this number, and the larger majority of the men incapable of much active work, I did not at all relish the passage through their country. There was no alternative. Through Turkana we *must* go, and our only chance of salvation was to exercise the utmost caution, and to give as little opportunity as possible for the natives to do us serious damage. The success of the Turkana warrior, who had so easily speared Abdalla, and who had taken possession of his rifle as proof of his prowess, would, I feared, cause others to emulate his treacherous and daring deed. In this case, to our difficulties regarding food would be added the hostility of the natives, necessitating a never-ceasing watchfulness, day after day, with its attendant strain and anxiety to all.

## CHAPTER XI

### ON DONKEY DIET

“*Friday, May 24.*—Queen’s Birthday—God bless her!” So my diary was headed for that day, when we remained halted on the Turkwel, after the Turkana outrage. Little did we know, when those words were written, that she whom we so much revered had early in the year gone to her last long rest. It was not until we met Mr. Hyde Baker at Baringo in August that we learnt the sad news. Perhaps we three Englishmen were the last white people in the whole world to hear of the demise of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria.

We arranged during the day to burn everything that could be dispensed with, as two more of our camels had to be slaughtered, and one alone remained of our original fifteen. Three more tents went into the flames, all spare saddles, with the exception of ten or a dozen, in case we should still be able to purchase food at Ngaboto or Suk country, and the heads and trophies we took so much pride in were also thrown into the bonfire, for it was imperative that the work of men and animals should be considerably lessened.

“The general hopeless condition of the Jehadia is most dispiriting, and I look forward with considerable

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dread to our fresh start, in spite of lighter loads tomorrow, as we shall have a helpless mounted brigade of ten or a dozen men, which leaves very few able-bodied Jehadia to drive the animals along the line of march," is one of my entries for this date. Many Turkana during the day passed up and down the river, diving into the bush when nearly opposite camp, and appearing some way up or down stream again when they thought themselves out of range; for the bed here was from 400 to 500 yards wide. Strict watch was kept all round, especially on the animals whilst grazing, as we desired no repetition of the previous day's treachery, and the men were ordered to fire on any native who ventured too close. We had scarcely left our camp the following morning before it was inundated with Turkana, who subsequently followed in our wake. We kept well closed up along the bed of the Turkwel, for both banks were thickly wooded, and we knew not when a sudden rush might be made at our wretched column, the rear of which was brought up with the helpless ones referred to. Where the reaches were open and broad with a good field of fire, we felt we could hold our own; but when in places these narrowed to about sixty yards, with thick bush on both banks, it was scarcely so pleasant, and we were always glad when the reach broadened out again.

Our progress for the first three hours from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M. was fairly satisfactory in the cool of the morning; but later when the sun began to make itself felt, men and animals cracked up, so it was with a thankful feeling that, shortly before eleven, we reached a point where two other khors from north and south



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joined the bed of the Turkwel, in which we were now able to obtain water by digging. Two donkeys and a mule had to be abandoned, which were promptly fallen on by the Turkana, who still followed. The difficulties in watering the animals at this time were very great, and entailed much labour on the men, as each individually had to be given a drink out of a bucket. This occupied the Jehadia the whole afternoon, and the askaris not on picket had meanwhile to construct a zeriba for the donkeys, and another zeriba round the entire camp. It may be imagined, therefore, with the few sound men available, although we usually tried to camp about midday, the work was seldom completed before dusk. As our losses in personnel increased, a greater weight of work was thrown on the survivors, as it was essential that zeribas should be constructed, not only for protection against attack, but also to prevent animals loaded in early morning from wandering beyond the precincts of camp in the dark, as they would have done, for we had not sufficient men to look after animals once loaded until we were ready to march.

When these were being brought into camp, after they had grazed and been watered, our last remaining camel broke loose, and was off into the bush in the twinkling of an eye. He was the same villain that had caused us all that trouble on the Pibor early in our travels, when he could not be caught. He was a fearfully wild brute, and had always to be tied by the leg, and had easily outlasted the others. One of the Arabs unfastened him and let go of the rope, prior to leading him into camp. Realising

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perhaps that he was the last of his race, and that he probably would be shortly called upon to provide a meal, like the rest of his comrades, the brute seized his opportunity, and was on the horizon (which was not far in this enclosed country) before the dolt of an Arab had quite grasped the situation. It was now dusk, and the few men who went in pursuit I recalled shortly by bugle, as I did not wish them to get speared by the Turkana, who had been hovering about throughout the day. On their return they reported the camel had been quickly surrounded by these natives and driven off by them at a great pace—so he was gone. On that Arab, Sheriff, I poured out the vials of my wrath, for I was fairly livid with rage at his carelessness. Generations of his ancestors back to the Flood, and all the collateral branches of his family, they all came in for my righteous abuse; whilst he personally was likened unto the son of a dog and every unclean beast that prowled this earth. He should have withered up and died on the spot; but, extraordinary to relate, he and one other Jehadia alone, of all our original thirty-two, survived to reach Cairo and Omdurman. He was surprised, however, on my fining him as I had promised to do.

On losing this our last camel we had to destroy and bury various things in the camp that we could now no longer carry, and continued next day as before along the bed of the Turkwel in a westerly direction. Our progress was far from satisfactory, as about ten of the Jehadia were all that made any pretence of doing any work at all, whilst the remainder were helpless and useless, merely sitting on donkeys until camp

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was reached, when they would throw themselves down under trees whilst work was being done, and only come to life again when rations were being issued. Then they invariably put in an appearance. One other Jehadia died this day, and so dismal was our rate of progress that between 6 A.M. and 11 A.M. we had only marched about eight or nine miles, though the track was along a level sandy bed. The animals had also exhibited signs of exhaustion, so we were glad to be able to camp near a nice pool which held plenty of water for all our animals, who really now for the first time since leaving Lake Rudolf were able to obtain a satisfying drink. Three donkeys were lost by the Jehadia during the afternoon, when the animals were out grazing, in spite of our going out at intervals to shout out to them to keep them all together. These men were now becoming past all caring, and appeared quite indifferent to the whereabouts of our humble carriers, on whom our lives so much depended.

Several times at this period I dreamt at nights of having happened on plenty of food; and I used to find myself with the column in all quarters of the globe, conducting them to America, Secunderabad, and even to England! Then that awful bugle would go, which called me back to Mother Earth, and the real situation we were in would descend on one with a shock. Thus on May 26, I remember vividly, I had marched the remnants of the expedition into Clifton, my home! I had come across one of my sisters, I think it was, whom apparently I had met, after pitching camp on the Downs; and was holding forth to her

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that I couldn't get any food for my men, and they were all dying from starvation and exhaustion. "What men?" was the query. "Heavens! that's just like a girl. My Sudanese, of course. What other men could you possibly imagine I had in tow?" That apparently staggered her. "Sudanese? Here in England? What did you bring them here for?" "To look for food, of course," I yelled. "I have already taken the wretched fellows to America, and India, and they are simply dying from starvation, I tell you." "Then why don't you go to ——'s?" The man was a confectioner, where you get the usual seven buns or tarts for sixpence. I had never thought of that, so dashed off, and arrived breathless before the counter, and demanded a ton of flour (forty of our 56-lb. bags) on immediate payment! The young ladies behind the counter nearly fainted, thinking by my wild hungry looks that I must be a bit irresponsible. They apologised for not having quite that amount in stock all at once; but they could let me have 100 lbs. to go on with, and would send the remainder round to the camp in the course of the day, in 100-lb. bags. Food at last! How sweet the thought that those unhappy men and ourselves would soon have as much flour as would last us for six weeks! I hugged myself in my little camp-bed with pleasure, and then—something tootled. It was that ghastly 4 A.M. bugle. 'Twas but a dream then? The stern realities of our awful position began slowly to dawn on me again, as I tumbled out of bed to dress.

And truly it was a dreadful day for which I was

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dressing; four more men died from exhaustion after, with much labour, we had got them into camp, including the first of our askaris—Abdul Basit by name. The effect of these deaths on the survivors was most depressing, and one felt that with the few men available for work, and these becoming daily weaker by the extra work thrown on them, nothing short of obtaining food soon could save the majority of the men from death. We had left the bed of the khor on marching from camp, and travelled over open sandy ground on the right bank of the Turkwel, outside the belt of trees indicating its course. Our progress was appallingly slow for the first three and a half hours, owing to the collapsed condition of the men. After the halt, as men and animals were so done, we made for the river-bank again; but were confronted with a very difficult tract before we could reach it. At first when we entered the belt, we found the whole of the ground covered with huge dead logs of trees, branches, and thorns, and in avoiding these we became involved in a dense growth of dwarf palms. With infinite labour we threaded our way through, and eventually found a wretched patch of ground whereon to camp, after we had ascertained that water was procurable near the surface on digging; but our animals got very little. Another Jehadia died during the night; and as the serviceable transport drivers were now so reduced in numbers that they were quite incapable of looking after the animals on the line of march, I had all the askaris up and informed them that they must do transport work in addition to their other duties, for which they would receive an increase

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of pay. They expressed themselves well pleased, and said that so long as God gave them strength to work, they would do all in their power to pull the expedition through, and most faithfully did the majority of them carry out this promise.

We again continued west along the right bank of the river, some distance inland over an open, undulating, sandy plain. All this country here, through which the Turkwel finds its way, is an arid desert, the thirsty soil of which entirely absorbs that large volume of water draining from Mount Elgon and the Suk Hills (which combine at Ngaboto) during its course when flowing north and then east towards Lake Rudolf. Despite the important nature of the river Turkwel in its upper reaches, seldom, if ever, do its waters pour into that great reservoir, which is continually fed alone by the mighty Omo. Thanks to the excellent way in which the askaris worked, whilst driving the animals on the march, we travelled along in great style, and towards the time for making the usual halt after three hours, I turned down again towards the river, which was reached without difficulty by an elephant track. As the river-bed now was moist and firm we continued along it to near our camp of 1898, where we had left the Turkwel to strike across by the desert route to Lake Rudolf, and camped near two low rocky knolls on the left bank, close to some fine pools of water—evidently much used by the Turkana for watering their animals. Three more donkeys had to be abandoned on the march; but we had no difficulty with the sick.

We were now congratulating ourselves that really

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we were going to be able to push along at last ; but our hopes were soon dashed to the ground. One of the askaris, Farag el Gak, had apparently eaten some poisonous berries during the day, for in the morning when we were about to start, he complained of most violent pains in his stomach. The whole march he kept falling off his donkey, being strapped on, throwing himself off again in his spasms of pain at such frequent intervals that we were insufferably delayed. In spite of a very early start we had only marched three miles by 9 A.M. on account of this man, and as we saw that it was hopeless to continue in this way I was compelled to abandon a short cut across country that I had intended to make, and to turn off to the river again, which we reached by following a broad native watering-track through dwarf palm, and a belt of tall table-topped acacias. We halted here for a short time on the bank, and watched a large drove of magnificent camels and some donkeys being watered at a well in the river-bed. There were only a few men conducting the operations, and they were assisted by several Turkana dames and damsels. Their donkeys were full of cunning, and amused us by their efforts to obtain water in likely places where it was near the surface. Using their fore-feet in much the same way as we would our hands to scoop away the sand, they rapidly cleared a small well until water was reached, when they shoved their muzzles in to take a drink, showing that they were well up to the usual dodges for obtaining this precious liquid in that barren, inhospitable, desert waste. Still we moved

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on westward, along the river-bed, as we felt we could not travel far from water on account of Farag, and eventually camped amidst thick bush on the right bank, from whence we anticipated considerable difficulty in getting through to open country next day. Sure enough we became fearfully involved in a dense growth of dwarf palm and bush, and for the first two hours we were constantly being confronted with regular culs-de-sac, necessitating a retracing of our footsteps. Naturally the donkeys were difficult to keep together, and one was lost with its load, whilst several other batches were lighted upon by the greatest good fortune by Garner on rear-guard. The Turkana dodging about on his flanks amongst this thick growth caused him no little anxiety, for on several occasions they made as though about to attack the rear-guard, the column being much scattered, and straggling unavoidably in this thickset bush. Happily they did not venture to try and rush us, or we should have fared badly, as in that sort of growth their spears would have been quite a match for our rifles. Three more of the Jehadia died on the march; one of them being Razgalla, whose adventure I have previously recorded, and another, Mahomed Nur, the head of the two Arab camel-men. Then Sheriff also went and lay down in the bush to die; but Garner providentially spotted him some distance to one side, and insisted on the cur mounting a donkey. He would have been speared otherwise directly we had got a short distance on by the Turkana, who like huge shadows were dogging our movements



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amid these palms. However, all things have an end, and after most discouraging attempts we did at length reach open country, and travelled satisfactorily for the next hour and a half, when we again made for the river along an open watering-track, and now found a small flowing trickle of water. For the remainder of the march we held our way along the bed, which soon became quite dry again, and it was with some labour that we continued until we reached a couple of pools and camped on the left bank of the river close to them. Our animals were doing wretchedly as well as the men, and three donkeys had to be abandoned on the road.

After camp had been pitched one of the young donkeys we had gathered up on the Sacchi was caught from the grazing herd, and his throat cut to provide meat for all of us. The men were inclined to kick at donkey-meat, when I first gave the order; but when we made a great point of the saddle being reserved for our mess, they thought probably that if we intended to eat donkey there could be nothing unclean about the flesh. Ever after, until Baringo was reached more than two months later, donkey was the fare for all of us, and a pretty poor diet it was. The first creature we killed had never carried a load in its life, and was really not at all unsavoury. It was tender, and had quite a venison flavour, I remember, and we all remarked at dinner that night that it was preferable to zebra. The start was therefore auspicious, and the men, too, I think, were now quite reconciled to donkey-meat. But heavens! how

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shall I describe our worn-out travellers of the asinine race who subsequently provided meat for us? We passed the saddle after our first fruitless effort to chew it, as none of us possessed steel teeth with saw-like edges. Part of the haunch in the future was our reserved portion of the beast. We had a mincing-machine—no traveller should be without one—and after solemnly working fids of meat through this for an hour or so at a time, it was ready either for stewing or to flavour with curry powder, a small tin of which we fortunately possessed in each box of provisions. The machine had done the masticating for us, so we could now afford practically to swallow the meat without further chawing. Tough? Yea verily, it was tough; and had we a large supply of ammunition-boots on hand we might have resorted to those in preference to the gentle, overworked moke. It was always those that we feared would not be able to last out the coming march that were slain, when they already had three feet in the grave; for the stronger creatures capable of carrying loads were urgently needed for that purpose, until exhausted nature gave out, and they were thrown, in turn, into our hungry maws. Look at it any way you like, it was not high feeding. Can my reader picture himself sitting down with a hearty appetite to tackle curried donkey and two gingerbread biscuits, as his ration for a meal? Flour we had none of, and how we longed, and longed, and longed for just a simple piece of bread, to eat with our ass! The small tins of biscuits we had in our provision-boxes were all of a sweet sort, merely intended to take with cocoa

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on arrival in camp or for afternoon tea, such as Alberts, Marie, Colonials, and ginger-nuts. They did not blend very well, therefore, with curries of any description, as I think every housekeeper will readily admit, who has seldom served up a steaming dish of donkey. We never really acquired the taste for this flesh, and preferred beef when we got it at Baringo. We perhaps were fastidious; but if you had seen and watched with interest, daily, a certain donkey becoming, march by march, thinner and bonier, until he was no longer able to travel, and had therefore become fit for food, you will be perhaps able to sympathise with us in our afflictions. Well, those days are over, I devoutly hope never to return, so we can afford now to look back with a certain amount of equanimity on our strange experiences, which are already little more than a hideous nightmare.

Whilst our donkeys were grazing on the opposite bank to where camp had been pitched during the afternoon, amidst tall grass and thick bush, a shot was fired by Farjalla, one of the grazing-guard, who shouted out at the same time for the guard to turn out. "The Turkana again," we thought, and expected to find another man speared. On arrival with a few men at the spot whence the shot had been fired, we found Farjalla standing in the grass by the side of one of our finest donkeys, which was lying stone dead. He told us that a lion—it was probably a leopard—had sprung out of the bush on to this animal, which it felled with a blow on the neck, and was sitting over its victim when he fired, on which it disappeared into the bush. The mark of

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claws and the heavy blow were visible; there was a certain amount of truth, therefore, in Farjalla's report, so the dead donkey was dragged into camp and cut up also for its meat. We halted during May 31, and made a still further clearance of kit, breaking up the rifles of the dead men, &c. Little of our own personal belongings afterwards remained to us, and what we still possessed were packed into empty provision-boxes 22 inches by 16 inches by 11 inches, one of which we each had carried, in addition to a camp-bed and a roll of bedding. Our tin boxes, containing what we were to abandon, were buried in the centre of the donkey zeriba, together, if I remember rightly, with some .303 ammunition and the broken rifles. After the donkeys had spent the following night on that spot, there was little left next morning, when we marched, to indicate the presence of treasure-trove below the surface.

It is more than likely that one of my readers, of an exploring turn of mind, may some day find himself trudging along the Turkwel in our footsteps, so let me take him into my confidence and tell him where he will find those things we buried. On the left bank of the Turkwel, at a point where the river makes a sharp bend, close to the bank will be observed a tall, spreading, isolated tree, whilst some distance withdrawn from it across an open glade are more trees of the acacia species. Starting from this tree, and walking towards the glade, from the bank, for some fifteen yards—halt. Fix up your theodolite, or your sextant, if you use that, and take observations for latitude. If you find

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your position to be latitude N.  $3^{\circ} 0' 30''$ , dig for all you are worth, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul if you explode those cartridges!

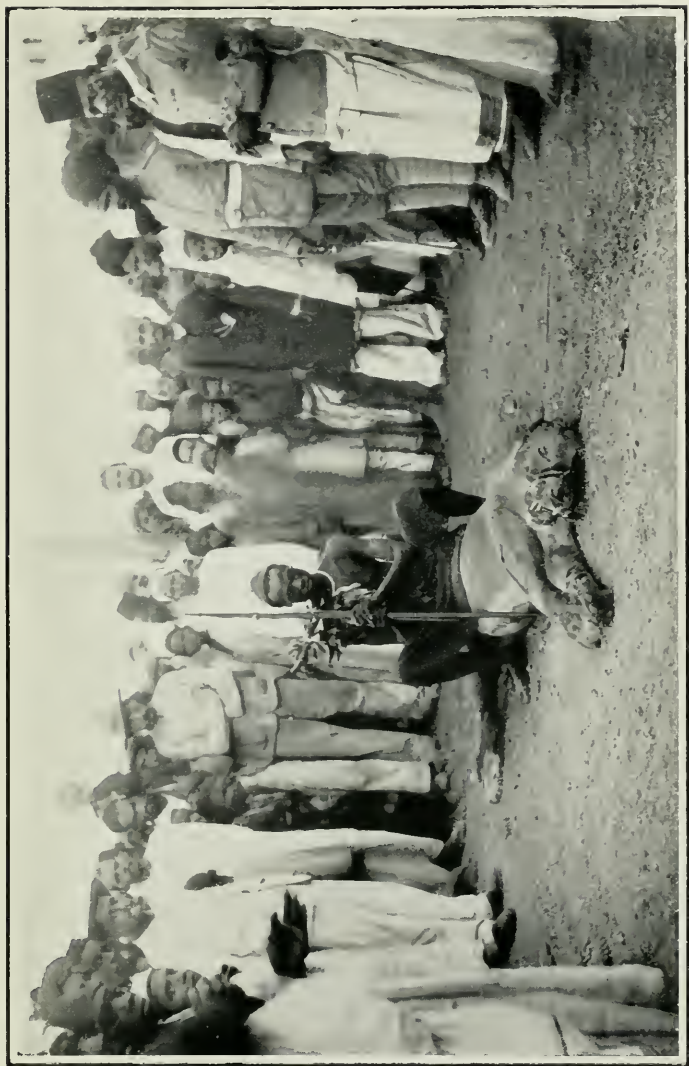
We made another start on June 1, keeping throughout the march along the bed of the river, for the bush on both banks was so dense that I did not consider it advisable to attempt to work through to more open country. After we had marched some seven miles, towards the end of which the Turkwel was a tiny running stream, we came out at one of our old 1898 camps, near two low hills on the right bank. The river here makes a big bend, and as I knew it would be difficult to get down to it from the open ground we now were on, it was decided to camp at this spot, so familiar to us in connection with troubles with the Turkana some three years before. I shot a most extraordinary goose at the side of a pool on the march, which was quite new to all of us, so I made a rough sketch of his head in my diary; but we ate his body for dinner, it being my birthday! He had a white neck and body, black and steel-blue wings, and a small patch of orange-coloured feathers under his tail. His head was speckled black and white, whilst out of his upper mandible grew a large black fleshy protuberance, extending almost as far as the point of the beak, and in a vertical direction above the level of the top of the head.

We had a little excitement whilst we were halted in the nullah bed on the march. One of the Jehadia had climbed up the bank, which here was steep, to rest under the shade of a large dense patch of under-

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growth. He suddenly came flying down out of that when some creature inside snarled angrily at him; but, like an idiot, left his rifle where he had been sitting. He then came and complained that every time he had made an attempt to recover his abandoned weapon the brute inside had growled like a roll of thunder. It was true, for we, a little further up stream, had heard it, where we were seated some twenty or thirty yards distant in the bed, under the shade of an overhanging tree. "You've got to get back that rifle," I told the man; but he didn't seem to care about the job. We three, therefore, loaded our rifles and proceeded to the spot, taking up our positions in the bed covering the undergrowth in which the animal, apparently a lioness with cubs, was lurking. "Now then, s-coot!" I shouted to the man. He had a certain amount of confidence in our rifles, and at all events *hoped* we would knock over the brute and not him, if it came out at him, and went for it. He was met with a growl; but grasped his rifle and made a ten-yard stride back to us — breathless, triumphant. At least his legs worked so rapidly on the return trip that, to all intents and purposes, it was a ten-yard stride; his motions were blurred by speed. We left that lioness alone then.

We saw several Turkana during the afternoon coming up the river-bed, and they shouted out when they caught sight of the camp, and dived into the bush bordering the banks. We wanted to have nothing to do with these gentry, and preferred them at a distance, as we had no desire



*In Mombasa. A man-eating lioness killed outside the town by a native armed merely with a spear.*

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that they should obtain full knowledge of the wretched and debilitated state of the column, which would possibly invite attack. If they only left us alone to our own miserable devices, that was all we asked. We proceeded generally south the following day, and were considerably delayed during the early part of the march by the rocky and difficult tract we had to negotiate when passing between the two Kalnalechikal hills. We then traversed an arid district of sand and gravel, thickly sprinkled with thorn, of which the entire country bordering the Turkwel, except immediately near its banks, consists. Several large, dry, sandy beds of khors were crossed before we turned off southwest, with the object of camping again on the river-bank, which happily we struck without difficulty by following the traces of old animal watering-tracks. The river here was now a fine running stream, and fair grazing-ground was close to camp; but from morn until night we were never free from anxiety regarding our transport animals, for the Jehadia were now quite above caring whether the donkeys strayed or not. Throughout the afternoon, therefore, one or the other of us would sally forth to shout and curse the men for not keeping the animals together. I had long since been compelled to knock off flogging from amongst the list of punishments, for in their present weak condition I was loth to order so many stripes for certain offences, fearing whether the men would recover from the effects. Fining, which was practically the only other form of punishment that could be administered,

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the men at this stage appeared to regard with perfect indifference, although usually so keen on the dollars, as the Jehadia doubtless imagined they would never live to draw any pay, so what did it matter? One more of their number died on June 2, so already half had succumbed—sixteen out of thirty-two—either to exhaustion or native spears. Of the four servants two had died or been killed, and three of the askaris had either died or been killed. That is to say—of the fifty-nine natives by whom we were accompanied, twenty-one were already dead, and our force of blacks was, therefore, reduced to thirty-eight. It was another two months yet before we were fated to reach safety, so our subsequent progress, it may be imagined, was appalling beyond speech. I feel that, before closing this chapter, I should quote from Garner's report regarding the curious symptoms and ailment that carried off so many of our men. "This excessive nitrogenous diet (*i.e.* so much meat as compared with such a small quantity of grain) produced curious, and, I am sorry to say, very fatal symptoms. The patients' faces became puffy, so much so, indeed, as to cause almost complete obliteration of the features; the œdema of eyelids and ankles being especially pronounced. They complained of severe pains in the head as well as the muscles of the neck. When asked to describe their complaint they invariably answered, 'I am dead all over.' The speech was blurred, and the case closely resembled myxœdema. They became listless, were unable to march, and incapable of performing even the lightest camp

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work. Referring to my notes, I find that thirty-five men died from this cause. At this period I have counted as many as thirteen men riding donkeys on the march. This was very serious; our numbers were already becoming reduced; we were in difficult country, and required every one for transport driving, and for protection of the column.”

## CHAPTER XII

### THIEVES IN THE CAMP

WE made a fairly satisfactory march of about nine miles on June 3, generally in a southerly direction, the country being easier, in spite of many dry, sandy water-courses. In places we encountered very thick bush, which would have been difficult to get through had we not come upon elephant tracks, which steered us through seemingly impossible places. For the first six and a half miles we had no serious hitch; but the most anxious part of the day to me was to find the river again after the halt, as one could never tell what obstacle in the way of impenetrable bush might be met with in our endeavours to reach the water. Bright and I well remembered that in 1898 our professional Suk guide had on several occasions hung us up badly, when making for the stream to camp, after having taken to higher and more open ground some miles away from the river during the greater portion of the march. The river makes such extraordinary twists and bends during its northerly course before its eastward swing north of the third degree of latitude, that it was quite impossible to predict exactly where you should come upon it.

I freely confess that every day I carried my heart in my mouth when turning off to the river; for it

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was not as though we were accompanied by strong lusty men and animals, capable of endurance, who could worry along somehow, an hour or two extra being of little account. We knew that beyond mid-day there would inevitably be more casualties if we did not reach water, for the men were practically incapable of lasting more than six hours or so on the road. It seems ungenerous to keep harping on the foibles of our transport drivers; but did I not do so it were useless my attempting in any way to describe the trials of this dreadful journey, since we had marched from the north of Lake Rudolf. Starving men do not stick at such trifles as thieving from each other, and in my diary of the 3rd June I read: "Things are rapidly becoming perfectly insufferable—chiefly amongst the Jehadia, who have now developed into the most infernal set of food thieves that it has ever been my misfortune to have any dealings with. Had I Swahilis, and the present escort of Sudanese, I feel certain we should be able to sail along." This is merely a case in point, to show what discipline is capable of doing. Here were two bodies of men of precisely the same breed, the regulars being accustomed, when with their regiments, to a far more liberal scale of rations than these ex-dervish comrades of theirs. The ex-dervish had, until the last few years, led a hand-to-mouth existence under the Khalifa rule at Omdurman, and, one would naturally have supposed, was capable of greater endurance from the rough fare he must formerly have subsisted on. Both bodies of men were rationed on identically the

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same scale now, yet whereas the disciplined troops were conducting themselves like men, the undisciplined had sunk to the level of vultures.

As I have said, most stringent orders had repeatedly been issued that no man was ever to leave camp without his rifle to look for fuel, nor were they to absent themselves beyond view of those in camp, as far as possible. Some time before halting on the march a donkey had to be abandoned. After camp was pitched three of the Jehadia, who conducted the mules on the march, were found to have absented themselves after depositing their loads and turning the animals out to graze. They were caught on their return to camp, and brought up before me, when they admitted—in truth they could not deny it, for they had the meat with them—they had gone back some miles to cut up the abandoned donkey, the meat of which they had brought back. It was a mercy they had not been set upon by Turkana; but fortunately we had not seen one during the march. Stricter measures were enforced in this case, and they were flogged instead of fined. The following day we succeeded in making another nine miles, and reached open ground fairly easily after leaving camp, for some time marching through open glades under tall acacia-trees. Travelling generally south, we threaded our way through and round belts of thick bush until the halt. Just after starting again we saw a few doe impalah, one of which I was lucky enough to drop where she stood, with a bullet through the heart. She was dead when we

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reached her, and we were only delayed a quarter of an hour or so in getting the cleaned-out and halved body on to a donkey. Poor brute! we found she contained a live young one inside her, which would probably have been born in a few days' time, as it was fully developed, but under existing circumstances neither sex, age, nor species could be considered.

When ready we made for where I hoped the river was; but it took us an hour and a quarter getting to it, as we were repeatedly confronted with impenetrable bush. We eventually struck it in an awful place, the bank being covered with thick undergrowth midst tall acacia-trees. About half a mile up stream, through tall, rank vegetation, we found a suitable place for camping, surrounded on all sides by a dense matted growth of creepers and tropical forest-growths. Two more Jehadia succumbed on the march, as well as one mule and a donkey. Next morning, as anticipated, we had great difficulty in getting away, and after we had proceeded nearly a mile, found further progress barred by the growth ahead. We returned to the river, and made a suitable ramp down to the water, as I decided to continue that way. By the time we had made the usual halt it is doubtful if we had covered five miles, as we were constantly crossing and recrossing the stream from one sandspit to another. Fortunately the water was nowhere above knee-deep, and presented no insuperable difficulty to the progress of our animals; but it was very fatiguing work. In spite of numerous bends, our general

## THIEVES IN THE CAMP

direction was south, and the width of the river-bed varied from about 150 yards in places to about forty in others, both banks being almost continuously clothed in dense vegetation, whilst the stream in the broader reaches was split up into numerous small shallow channels, which enabled us to cross from one spit to another and take advantage of what dry sand there was. After the usual halt we pushed on another mile up the bed until we reached a clearing on the right bank, the country being open and consisting of gravel and thorn-bush, so we took to dry land again. We cut off a big bend, and striking a sandy khor leading to the river, reached it and camped on a pleasant open spot, near the site of an old deserted kraal. Unless we camped shortly after eleven, the tired men got no rest at all. As a rule the camp would not be settled until 12.30 P.M., when all the loads were stacked and the animals sent out to graze under guard. At 2.30 P.M. the bugle would go after they had fed, summoning the men for the construction of zeribas for the donkeys and round camp, which, with the few numbers available, would occupy the men until dark, when they would be distributed around the face of camp to sleep on their posts, whilst sentries were stationed where considered necessary.

During the small hours of the morning a gross case of food-stealing took place, in which, I regret to state, one of the askari sentries was implicated. The other, a young villain of a Jehadia, who had been flogged a few days previously for going back



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for donkey-meat, was flogged again for the theft of grain, and lived to be shot a few days later for an outrage which I will mention in its turn. These two men between them had abstracted about two-thirds of a bag of grain from the ration-bags placed under charge every night of the askari sentries on duty. Part of the grain was discovered on them, when I was aroused to find them both tied hand and foot by the orders of that excellent man Mabruk Effendi. I decided to flog both men, each to receive twenty-five this day, and twenty-five stripes again the following day, in addition to being fined two months' pay. "If this does not put a stop to this stealing, I am afraid sterner measures will have to be adopted; but, with our numbers so reduced, I don't wish to reduce them still further unless absolutely and unavoidably necessary," is what I wrote in my diary on recording the circumstances. We had a longer day of it than usual on June 6, as at the end of the march we became involved in dreadful bush and dwarf-palm country in our endeavours to get down to the river, and it was 12.30 before all the animals were through, and we had reached a charming camping-ground in an open glade on the river-bank.

On leaving camp in the morning we had almost at once become involved in very broken ground, intersected by numerous khors, the more important of which had their origin in the low hills to the east, and were densely wooded. It was not easy to find a way across these for the caravan, owing to the

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thick undergrowth. We made the usual halt on the river-bank, which we had unexpectedly struck again after marching some six and a half miles, at a point where the right bank was quite open. Starting off again, we soon got into thick scrub and dwarf palm, but had little difficulty in piercing it in a southerly direction, as we availed ourselves of numerous elephant tracks which seemed to run right for us. When, however, I began to turn south-west with a view to striking the river again, then trouble began. In a short time we were confronted with tall rank grass, dwarf palm, and dense, trackless bush, so Mabruk Effendi and I forced our way where we could, leaving the animals behind, and at intervals fired and shouted to Bright and Garner to come on, as we found small open patches on which the caravan could be collected together. In this manner we gradually worked our way to the river; but it was such an anxious and weary business that I had quite made up my mind, rather than face that bush again, to continue along the bed of the river on our next march, unless the water was too deep. We indeed were fortunate in having Mabruk Effendi as our native officer of the escort. Although I have seldom mentioned his name, he was the grandest black man I have ever met. Time after time during the expedition I had reason to express personally to him my high appreciation of his services. He was absolutely indefatigable, always cheery and hopeful, never desponding, and by his bearing set his men a magnificent example of faith and reliance in our being able,

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with God's help, to extricate the column from the awful position we were in. The amount of work that he personally got out of the men was nothing less than surprising, considering their weak and debilitated state. He was just splendid, and I have a very soft corner in my heart for that fine fellow, who, though black outside, was a thoroughly white man within. Can I say more? He was ably seconded by little Bakhir, who had risen to the occasion in a manner that perhaps we had given him little credit for possessing when the real rub came. The Shawish Abdil Salam was another first-class man, as was also the other non-commissioned officer, Bakhit Ali, of the escort; whilst some half-dozen of the ultimate survivors of the escort were men such as I would be proud to be accompanied by anywhere on an expedition—sterling good fellows, and all made of the right stuff.

We remained halted on June 7 to rest men and animals. The askari Farag el Gak, who had been suffering from acute peritonitis ever since he had eaten those poisonous berries, but who had very pluckily ridden a donkey during the past week, succumbed in the morning. The poor fellow had for days past been in intense agony, so death must have been a happy release to him after all his pain in our wretched circumstances. Our numbers were reduced to thirty-four blacks all told now, as twenty-five had either died or been killed. On counting over the animals in the evening we found that two, a donkey and a sheep, were missing. Now one becomes a species of

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Father Abraham in time, after having had much to do with flocks and herds. One of the first things you learn is that a single goat or sheep will never allow himself to be lost. He is far too gregarious a creature for that, and will raise such a bleating, if separated from the rest of the flock, that it is any odds you will find him again. Two or three might get lost in a bunch, but you may take my word for it that a single goat or sheep practically never gets lost. I was of course only a simple white man and would not know this fact. Anyhow he was gone, as well as the donkey, so I had my suspicions of foul play. The Jehadia, who were on grazing-guard throughout the day were fallen in, therefore, and I harangued the rascals, and gave them to understand that we had brains and wits as well as they on the subject of flocks, and intimated to them pretty clearly I regarded the sheep as having been killed for food by one of them. Of course they repudiated the idea—they would rather die first from starvation. I warned them that if any case of tampering with the animals whilst grazing or otherwise was definitely brought home to any single man in the column, I would not hesitate to have him shot, as our very lives now depended on the safety of our animals, both as food and transport. The young ruffian of a Jehadia had absented himself the whole day from camp, and only returned in the evening from the direction of where the animals had been grazing, and we thought it not unlikely that he could tell us something about the lost sheep. A

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few private words of advice were addressed to him also ; but his reply was that he had been so run down by the flogging he had received that he had lain down under a tree, fallen asleep, and only woke again when the sun was setting. He always was a lovely liar !

In spite of my warning, that same night one of the most dastardly and daring outrages of the expedition was perpetrated on the donkeys after dark ; and, although these animals were pounded right in the centre of camp, it was carried out with such cunning and secretiveness, that not a sound was heard. It was not until 1 P.M., when the moon was well up, that the culprit was discovered and captured, and one side of the donkey zeriba was not three yards from our tents. Bakhir was the discoverer of the outrage. He had come out for some purpose about that time from under a blanket shelter, which he shared with Mabruk Effendi, and gave the alarm at once, as he saw one of the Jehadia skulking amongst the donkeys and trying to conceal himself. He also had seen that one of the donkeys had actually been killed—one of the finest beasts we had—and cut up, the fore part of the animal lying in the zeriba, whilst the entire body and hind quarters had been removed. All this had been done with a knife, without help of axe or billhook, and not a sound emitted, which must, I think, be pretty high butcher's art ! The culprit was soon captured, and proved to be young Abdul again, the scoundrel who had lately given so much trouble. He was covered with the blood of his victim, and his knife

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also was found amongst the donkeys, as he had thrown it from him on being detected. Of the donkey itself little remained beyond the head and shoulders, the meat having been cut off the other portions and handed over the thorn zeriba, apparently to accomplices ready to conceal it at once. A thorough search was made and a considerable amount of the meat recovered, hidden under the outer zeriba surrounding the camp. This sort of thing had now become intolerable, and it was necessary to put a stop to it if any discipline at all was to be maintained amongst the Jehadia; so the young ruffian was bound up, and I told him, then and there, that he would be shot in the morning. I must give the man credit for courage, for he never said a word—he could not very well question the justice of the sentence, for he had been caught red-handed, in spite of previous warnings—and showed the most absolute indifference on being informed of the fate in store for him. The “Rouse” went at 4 A.M. as usual, and when all the animals had been loaded up prior to marching, Abdul was blindfolded and bound to a neighbouring tree, whilst a firing party of six askaris was told off by Mabruk Effendi, and the whole of the men fallen in to witness the execution. A volley from twelve yards terminated the life of this young wretch, and I again harangued the men, and told them that we were well aware he must have had accomplices, of whom I was going to take no further immediate notice; but they might rest assured a similar fate awaited any man who, in our present straits, attempted the feat in which, unfor-

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tunately, the deceased had been only too successful. The men were impressed, as they scarcely realised before, perhaps, that we did really intend to proceed to extremes, if necessary, to put a stop to these outrages in connection with the food and animals. They were much sobered when we marched off, and this execution had a very steadying effect on the Jehadia for some time to come, which was what we had hoped for.

At once we descended into the river-bed, and proceeded up that, for we knew that the bush by which we were surrounded would cause much delay in our attempt to reach open ground. Our progress was necessarily slow, as the stream in places was knee-deep, and at times we had to wade for 200 or 300 yards at a stretch in the water without a sandspit to help us. It was very laborious work, so after the usual halt we climbed out on to the right bank at a clearing, and almost at once became involved in thick bush and dwarf palm. We struck the river again, however, some distance on, and camped in a horribly confined spot surrounded by dense, tall bush, where there was barely room for the cramped-up camp. Next morning we started wretchedly, getting out of the hateful bush, as progress along the river-bed we now voted rather too wearying a process to undertake, owing to the depth of water. Although we left camp before six, it is doubtful if we had covered two miles by 8 A.M., as during this time we were struggling with our animals to reach the more open ground. We then went better the next hour, until

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we encountered a broad expanse of bush bordering a series of overflow channels of a khor, through which we wormed our way with difficulty, and then halted. Starting again shortly before eleven, we made generally in a south-westerly direction towards the river, and continued without hitch for an hour until we struck a dry khor which delayed our donkeys; but fortune now smiled upon us, and a short distance on we came upon a big elephant-pool of fouled water, and camped, as the quantity was sufficient for our requirements, though the quality was bad; but one shied at any further effort to reach the river.

On taking observations that evening I found that we must be on the Doroto khor, quite close to one of our 1898 halting-places, when we had camped away from the Turkwel on pools. On the 10th June we made a very satisfactory march of about nine miles. We did not get off until six, but travelled almost without a hitch until 9 A.M., over fairly easy country some distance from the river, in thorn-bush springing from a gravelly soil. By the usual halt we had covered some seven miles, and, continuing still in a southerly direction, made gradually toward the belt of tall trees bordering the river. This belt proved far broader than anticipated, and when again by great good fortune, as we were becoming involved in tall rank grass and thick bush, we lighted upon a khor in the bed of which were several foul pools of water, the haunts of elephants, it was decided to camp, for the river still seemed to be a long way off.

For some time past one of our young askaris—



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the same youth who had so splendidly given the alarm the night we were attacked in Marle—had commenced a series of most weird performances. One can only imagine he was scarcely responsible, and that his mind had become unhinged by our terrible position. He had taken to prowling about at night, stealing rations and so forth, regardless of numerous hammerings he had received from his infuriated comrades. We were at length compelled to handcuff the extraordinary youth every night, and secure him under the guard. He stoutly refused to ever do a stroke of work in connection with the construction of the zeribas, or in driving animals, and we were absolutely powerless to make him, as he threw himself down on the ground, and no amount of persuasion on the part of Mabruk Effendi could obtain any results. He defeated the combined efforts of the whole camp, and became bitterly hated by the remainder of the askaris, on whom naturally extra work was thrown. Under similar circumstances, I should imagine more civilised troops could scarcely have restrained themselves from murdering such a comrade; but the Sudanese were more patient, and bore with him, although he was constantly attempting to steal their rations whilst they were at work, as he lay in idleness under a bush. The previous day on the march Ramatalla (that was his name) had slipped away into the bush unseen, and later we were not a little startled to hear a shot fired in our right rear. Thinking some one had lost himself, we fired in return to let him know

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where we were. He never rejoined us, but kept firing gaily away some little distance behind us throughout the march, to which we still replied, but at longer intervals. Eventually, after camp had been pitched, all the loads stacked, &c., prior to rations being issued, Ramatalla quietly strolled in—he never missed a meal. We asked him what the dickens he had been playing at on the march, firing away and wasting ammunition. Something was detected in his haversack and drawn out in triumph, and he fell down on his knees begging that it might be returned to him. The man had been pigeon, or rather, dove shooting! He had expended thirteen Martini-Henry cartridges, and had bagged one dove, which was blown to pieces. Now, if that youth was not slightly “touched,” I have never seen a man thus afflicted. He was informed that he had not been enlisted for the expedition as a professional hunter, and, in order to prevent further indulgence in his passion for sport, his rifle and ammunition were taken away from him. We could scarcely feel safe otherwise, if he was going to roam about in the bush blazing off his weapon, regardless of the position of the column in front or to one side of him. Again on this day, as we marched from camp, abandoning a dead mule, he was nowhere to be found, though men searched the bush for him. He had been released from the guard whilst loading-up operations were being carried out. He had gone absolutely, so we marched off without him. Just before dusk, at our new camp on the 10th, he had been seen by some of

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the men in the bush; but he slept out all night—wanted a night without handcuffs, I suppose—and only put in an appearance as we were about to march on the morning of the 11th, and accompanied us. He exhibited discrimination, for we were to reach the thickly populated parts of Ngaboto before we camped, and his life would not have been worth a moment's purchase had he followed unarmed by himself.

We made our most satisfactory march along the Turkwel, and covering a distance of about eleven miles in a southerly direction reached a spot near one of our old 1898 camps, some twelve miles distant from our former post in the Ngaboto district. This excellent progress was due to our fortunately alighting upon a native track, some little time after working east out of the bush we had been camped in the previous day. Following what I at first thought was merely a game track leading along the river, it soon became apparent that in reality it was a high road much used by natives, as it rapidly became better defined and more worn. After some five miles we came upon a large settlement of Turkana, who had placed considerable areas of the river bank under cultivation; but the standing crops were far from ripe, and quite unfit for food, which was another great disappointment to us, as we had hoped against hope that we might obtain grain at Ngaboto, with the chief of which district, Lomathimyai by name, I had formerly made blood-brotherhood in 1898. We pushed on well closed up, after a short

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halt, and for the next three miles the track passed through what was now a thickly inhabited district, where three years previously scarcely any natives were seen. We actually saw no kraals or villages, which are always concealed in bush; but numbers of natives watched us pass along, and we came upon tracts of cultivation at frequent intervals along the opposite bank of the river. Up to that point the skilfully chosen track was well defined and much worn, and led us south across several very thickly wooded khors and through thorn-bush; but during the last two miles of the march it was apparently little used, and I lost it several times before being able to pick it up again later. The previous evening I had fallen all the men in and addressed them, telling them that either that day or the following we should reach a thickly inhabited district. I again urged on them the necessity to be always on the alert, with their rifles handy, and cautioned them that any man caught stealing in a field of grain would be peremptorily dealt with, as he would certainly put an end to any chance of our being able to purchase food, and would not only probably be speared himself, but provoke the natives to attack our wretched column. In the latter case we should not have a dog's chance of getting through, and would inevitably be cut up, seeing that we had barely twenty-five rifles now, hampered as we were by ten to a dozen sick, who could scarcely sit on their donkeys. While my reputation for knowing the country was still further enhanced by our coming across these natives and

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crops, as I had predicted, the men were ill able to conceal their disappointment at the backward state of the grain, which we ourselves felt every bit as much as they. In spite of that, they all worked exceedingly well both on the march and in making the zeribas in the afternoon, which were completed in less than half the usual time, for the men had not yet lost hope that a little farther on we might obtain food, as I had told them to encourage them—referring to Marich in the Suk country. Mabruk Effendi was evidently so pleased at the way he had got this spurt out of the men that he came beaming up to me, when the day's work was completed, and asked me if I was satisfied at this day's progress. I replied that I was more than satisfied—that I was almost overwhelmed—and that if they would only keep it up for another few days—a week at the outside—I hoped we should be revelling in the midst of plenty. At the same time one could not be too hopeful of its lasting, for we had seen so much of sudden despair following disappointment amongst our followers, and that same evening I had written in my diary: "This is weary, weary work, amounting almost to slave-driving with respect to the remnants of the Jehadia, of whom there are only twelve left out of thirty-two. One longs at times to be comfortably settled down for a bit in a government post, where we can do the men and ourselves well, and enjoy some rest, free from worries and anxieties. If Marich fails us we shall indeed be in a terrible position, more especially if the Ribo post does not exist."

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Our progress on June 12 was less satisfactory than on the two previous days, as the track lost itself soon after we left camp, and we became involved in rough going. We were only able, in consequence, to reach a point about a mile distant from our old '98 post; but during the march we traversed another very thickly populated district, with large areas of green cultivation along the river bank. The natives were not actively hostile, as they pointed out the track to us—presumably to get us out of the country (which was also our desire)—but were regarded by us with considerable suspicion, as we well knew their treacherous character. Our small cavalcade now occupied a very short length on the march, and as I was in front, Garner in the centre, and Bright bringing up the rear, the presence of three white men, in spite of the sick riding, apparently gave a fictitious idea of strength to the column, and we were treated with a certain amount of respect accordingly. One realised, however, that it was merely a question of opportunity, and that should a chance be offered the treacherous natives would not be slow to avail themselves of it in this bush country.

We continued our march south next day, following now the Weiwei River, which some miles farther north joins the Turkwel. This stream issues out of a gorge through the Chemorongi mountains to the west, debouches into the Ngaboto plains, and is joined by the Weiwei just north of the second degree of north latitude, whence it starts on its northerly course towards Lake Rudolf. We had seen the last of the

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Turkwel, and were looking for a ford across the Weiwei prior to marching in a south-westerly direction to the foot of the Suk hills. We did not pass the site of our former Ngaboto post nor cross the river at the old ferry, in connection with which one recalled our happy meeting with Hanbury-Tracy in 1898, when the Rudolf Column, then completely out of food, were met by the Relief Column from Save at that spot. Unfortunately there was no Tracy now to come to our rescue, and after we had marched some five miles over difficult country we found the river again, where it was about forty yards wide and, fortunately, only about nine inches deep. When the approaches had been prepared the column crossed, and at once camped amidst a tall rank growth of grass, thankful that the river had proved a less serious obstacle than we had anticipated, and hoping that we had now seen the last of the Turkana, whose country terminates hereabouts.

## CHAPTER XIII

### NO MAN'S LAND

DURING our march of the 13th Ramatalla had disappeared, and as we never saw him again there is little doubt that his insufferable obstinacy had resulted in his being speared by the natives. Petros, the Abyssinian interpreter, who had been ailing for some time, and was got into camp with great difficulty in a comatose condition, died during the afternoon. The spirits of the men generally were not what they were a couple of days previously, whether from weariness or from disappointment at our failure to obtain food it is difficult to say. Hanna, my boy, was the only one of our personal servants capable of any work at all, as the other youth, Georgius, was in a state of collapse, and had been for some days past.

Another ghastly outrage on the part of the Turkana deprived us of the services of the best Jehadia left, Farjalla, who had been promoted donkey corporal in place of Abdalla Tahir, who was speared the first day we reached the Turkwel. This man, who also had been with us on the expedition the previous year, was now destined to meet with a similar fate. On the donkeys being pounded for the night and counted over, it was found that two were short, so Farjalla and the men on grazing guard were despatched to



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look in the grass round camp where these animals had been feeding all day. One donkey was found and was being brought in, when we suddenly heard most piercing, heart-rending screams of terror from the direction of the river-crossing. Dashing out with our rifles to ascertain the cause, we found Farjalla lying dead mid-stream, with four spear thrusts through him, any one of which would have been fatal. It appears that he thought the missing donkeys might be on the opposite bank, as they had been watered at the ford we had constructed, and he evidently had a fairly shrewd suspicion that they might have been carelessly allowed to wander across to the other side. He had therefore crossed the stream in search of them. Nothing, however, could have exceeded the monumental folly of this man. Not wishing to be encumbered he evidently had deliberately sat down on our bank, removed his sandals, and placed his rifle and belt of cartridges alongside, whilst he waded across with nothing in his hand but a small lash for driving donkeys. The very thing we had so unceasingly cautioned our men against occurred. Hidden natives were there lying in wait for such an opportunity, and as soon as he had ascended the bank he was promptly speared, and with shrieks of terror had succeeded in reaching the centre of the stream before falling down dead. Heavens! it nearly maddened me—this careless and unnecessary throwing away of useful lives. There he was lying dead in the stream, whilst at our feet were his rifle, ammunition, and sandals. The natives would never have

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ventured probably to attack him had they not watched him abandoning his only means of protection. As he was a powerfully built, heavy young fellow, four men were necessary to bring his body to the bank, and we filed off to bury him with Petros, whose grave had already been prepared. We had not gone more than twenty yards from the bank, however, before Mabruk Effendi and I, who were bringing up the rear, heard the sound of men, as I thought, wading across the ford. Beckoning to him to follow me we doubled back loading our rifles, hoping now to get a chance of knocking over some of these cursed Turkana. On reaching the landing-place on our bank a solitary donkey emerged from the river, brushed roughly past us, and continued by the now well-worn track to the camp! The grim and ridiculous are surely very near akin, and we could scarce restrain a smile as this innocent cause of a horrible tragedy, treating our presence with the utmost indifference, strolled to where his comrades were pounded for the night—and we had expected Turkana. My feelings at this time I put on paper in my diary, and I perhaps may be pardoned for quoting from it as follows: "The example shown by us three (Bright, Garner, and myself), who never even sit down to a meal in the centre of camp without our rifles and ammunition by our sides, appears utterly thrown away on these devil-may-care Sudanese, who perhaps regard it as a want of physical courage that we are always prepared for an emergency. I could go on writing all day on the subject of their carelessness



*A Galla princess, and her handmaiden, who rules over a sub-district of Buré.*

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about carrying arms, their one idea seeming to be to get rid of their nine-pound encumbrance of a rifle as soon as ever camp is reached; but the subject nauseates me, as nothing will teach these Jehadia the most ordinary caution. From this cause I have now to regret the very best man remaining amongst them. They are now reduced to eleven, of whom only one-half show the slightest likelihood of pulling through this show. It is small wonder, then, that, when the worries and anxieties regarding the folly of the men, the safety of the animals, and the difficulties of guiding the expedition through this hatefully thick bush country, are added to those with respect to food and the daily collapse of men, my life is becoming almost a nightmare to me. I have no rest nor mental ease from dawn to sundown, and it is only when gentle sleep takes me to its arms, and I become oblivious of our dreadful surroundings and desperate position, that I am nearly happy."

We made our usual weekly halt on June 14, and on going into the food question with Mabruk Effendi, found that all that remained was three pounds of flour and four pounds of rice, which he proposed should last for two days, supplemented by the usual donkey meat. There were thirty mouths to be fed! Fortunately we had kept reserved in one of the provision boxes some three or four pounds of rice, and perhaps four or five pounds of flour, and this was now added to the stock, and he was told to make the whole last for three days. When that was finished we hoped still to be able to allow a

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ration of four one-pound tins of porridge each day from the reserve we were carrying (we had twenty-seven tins in all) until we reached Marich; so the men were informed they would have at all events a little to go on with, which cheered them up a bit, as they had imagined everything now had been consumed. Four pounds of porridge amongst thirty men was poor fare; but what could we do? Another Jehadia died during the day's rest after fluctuating for the last three weeks and riding a donkey daily. Our numbers were now reduced to our three selves, Mabruk Effendi and Bakhir, 2 boys, 15 non-commissioned officers and askaris, and 10 Jehadia—total, 32 of the original 62. Our transport had dwindled to 76 donkeys and 5 mules, and we were still accompanied by 20 goats and sheep, which were being reserved for emergencies, such as bartering in exchange for grain, which we were so much counting on obtaining from the Suk, although hope deferred was making our hearts somewhat sick.

Before continuing south and definitely severing our connection with the Turkana, I should perhaps give some idea of these natives and their surroundings, and will attempt briefly to do so. The reader will have gathered from our lengthy journey through their territory that this powerful nation occupies a great stretch of country, extending almost as far north as the north end of Lake Rudolf, and in a southerly direction to south of the second degree of north latitude, to the termination of the Ngaboto district, where we now were. Speaking generally, the whole

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of that country is a barren arid desert, and quite incapable of producing any grain foods except in rare patches of alluvial soil along the shores of Lake Rudolf. Near the mouth of some of the watercourses, which in times of flood deposit small areas of fertile soil on meeting the lake, such patches will be found occasionally. In addition to the lake the two most important streams, on which the Turkana rely for their water supply, are the Kerio and Turkwel. Our journey along the latter has already been described, and the reader may remember that with the exception of small patches on the river bank, where we first struck it on leaving Lake Rudolf, no cultivation had been seen along the stream until we reached the Ngaboto district.

The country bordering the Kerio River to the east in Turkana territory is also nothing better than inhospitable barren desert. The arid soil of their country therefore offers few facilities to its inhabitants to exist as agriculturists, and they may be classed accordingly as a pastoral race of nomads. With the exception of the few settlements in and about Ngaboto, the Turkana would appear to possess no fixed abodes unless such exist near the mouth of the Kerio, which I believe is inhabited very much in the same way as the mouth of the Turkwel. Along the lake shores, and during the course of the river we had followed from the east, before turning south, we had seen numerous traces of natives and their flocks; but the latter were studiously kept out of our way, which was no difficult matter, having regard

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to the generally inclosed nature of the country along the Turkwel; whilst the low coast hills bordering the western margin of Rudolf afforded equally favourable places of concealment. These natives possess large numbers of camels, donkeys, cattle, goats and sheep, with which they move about from place to place, as the grazing gives out, in search for pastures new. Their kraals therefore, it may be imagined, are little more than rough sun shelters. No huts are erected, and thorn branches are merely thrown up in the shape of a primitive arbour, under which the men sleep and feed, whilst the animals round them are pounded in a series of thorn enclosures separating the different flocks; the cows are probably picketed to pegs, which will be seen driven into the ground at intervals. Grain is not greatly eaten by the more pastoral sections of the tribe; for instance, the Lake Rudolf and Ngamatak Turkana would appear to subsist to a large extent on their animals, such as camels, donkeys, and goats and sheep. The females are reserved for breeding purposes, and for their milk, which is very generally consumed by these natives, whilst the males provide the meat which must form the major portion of their diet.

A species of red flour is made from the fruit of the numerous palms which grow along the lake shore, but our Swahilis in 1898 used to say that it was not good eating, as it produced violent pains in the internal regions. I should imagine the Turkana are an extremely abstemious race, and possess great powers of endurance on little else than



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milk. It is doubtful whether they are in the habit of eating a great deal, and probably are capable of remaining a whole day, if not two, very comfortably without food or drink. Like many savages possibly one really good hearty gorge will keep them going for several days at a time, as I have no recollection of ever seeing a Turkana on the trail carrying food with him for his journey. On the other hand, as they are accustomed to travelling about forty miles a day without much effort, the question of commissariat perhaps need not enter into their calculations. Their passion for tobacco amounts to a mania, and a good supply of strong pungent country tobacco will purchase almost anything if given in sufficient quantities, as young and old of both sexes are addicted, in an astonishing degree, to the habit of chewing.

These gigantic natives are warlike and treacherous, and are the terror of the surrounding tribes, with the exception of the powerful Karamojo tribe to the west, who are possibly the finest specimens of manhood on the African continent, and more than a match for their easterly cousins. Dogs accompany the warriors on the warpath, and are of the greatest use for watch purposes at night-time. Every kraal and every settlement has its own watch-dogs, which are of a small species not unlike the Indian bazaar pi-dog in general build and bearing. Where there are cultivated districts, such as at Ngaboto, the natives place their granaries up in the forked branches of high trees, whilst on other trees will be seen the usual East African receptacle for honey, consisting

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of a hollowed-out log, in which the bees make their homes and deposit their sweet stores. The more northern salutation of "Na," to which the reply is "Faya," both repeated *ad infinitum*, gives place to "Mātā, mātā," which is the form adopted by the Turkana. Physically the Turkana are an athletic-looking race of men, with hard, firm muscles, most of them standing nearly six feet in height, and many are much taller than that. Taking them all round they have extremely fine faces and a commanding presence, more especially the younger men. They are all quite naked, and do not wear a great deal in the way of ornaments, beyond a few beads round the neck, whilst some wear a seemingly solid necklet, fitting close to the throat, formed by about half-a-dozen coils of iron wire, with bracelets of the same material, in addition to the circular wrist knife I have previously alluded to as in use among the Karuno tribe.

Round their waist (according to the district one is in) they will frequently be seen wearing a species of skin apron four to six inches wide behind, and fastening in front across the stomach, where it is not more than two inches wide. This is often embroidered with vari-coloured beads, and the edges adorned with small iron beads of native manufacture. Through the nose and ears brass ornaments will be sometimes seen hanging from the orifices to which they are attached. The former, long, flat, oval-shaped discs, in some cases hang completely over the mouth. The head-dress perhaps is the most striking feature of the men.

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This, amongst the more elderly ones, consists of a long, pendent, bag-shaped arrangement of matted or woven hair, almost of the consistency of felt, so closely worked is it, which is attached to the natural hair of the wearer, and in some instances hangs almost down to the waist. It is provided on the inner side near its base with a form of pocket, in which are carried various little odds and ends such as snuff and tobacco. To the end is attached a kind of curved piece of lance-wood, not unlike the top joint of a fishing-rod, or it may frequently be of thin brass or copper wire, which curls upwards and has a blob of wool perhaps secured to the free end. Fluffy ostrich feathers of different colours distributed at intervals along the outside surface complete this striking and handsome head-dress. Some of the more important chiefs, or sub-chiefs, wear a skull cap of cowrie shells on their heads in addition, the effect being rather *outré*, it seemed to us. The younger bloods do not wear the long, bag-shaped arrangement of the elders, their chignons being more of a bun-shape, scarcely pendent at all, into which are stuck ostrich feathers of different hues. They not uncommonly dye their faces with clay a pinkish colour, apparently to increase their ferocity of mien.

Their weapons consist of long-handled spears with small blades; either hide or wicker shields, oblong-shaped, but sloping away on both sides from the centre; and very occasionally bows and arrows. A small low, curved stool, cut out of wood, about six inches in height, which also serves the purpose of a

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pillow by being placed under the neck, and a small horn snuff-box, complete the travelling outfit of these natives. The women, more especially the younger ones, are not uncomely; but much smaller than the men. They apply cow's fat liberally to the upper portions of their bodies, which gives them a very glistening appearance in the sunlight. They work their hair into small straight ringlets, falling all round the head, which are oiled generously. They are all decently clad in a skin, which is secured round the waist, and cut in the form of a long apron, short in front and at the sides to give their legs free play in walking, but hanging almost down to the ground behind. This is embroidered in a similar way to that of the men, but more elaborately. Beads are worn in great profusion from the neck, a very usual species being of home manufacture, made from the shells of ostrich eggs, whilst brass and iron bracelets and earrings are also common. Such are some of the most striking characteristics of this hostile race.

In spite of the day's rest and the extra food issued to the men the previous day, our march of June 15 was the most disastrous of the journey. We had anticipated considerable trouble in extricating ourselves from the coarse grass and thick bush by which we were surrounded, but the undertaking proved easier than we expected, for after struggling through about three-quarters of a mile of grass, we reached an open space, where we were able to collect again before proceeding. Here we came upon a recent track, not more than two days old, which, I think,

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must have been that of a Swahili trading caravan on its way to Turkana country from Save on Mount Elgon. It was evidently accompanied by cattle and large numbers of donkeys and goats and sheep, so it was most crushing fortune that we had not fallen in with the caravan, who must have passed within a mile of us when we were camped two days previously. Had we done so I have little doubt but that we should have obtained assistance from them in the way of food; but it was too late now. We only hoped that traces of flour we came across, spilt here and there, had been procured from Marich, so followed up the track towards the foot of the Suk Hills, and adhered to it throughout the march.

The going was perfectly flat and easy, and the track skilfully wound its way through thick wait-a-bit thorn, on which we once or twice found small pieces of cloth, evidently torn off the backs of the traders as they drove their animals through this, and around clumps of aloes. Still our progress was funereal in the extreme, owing to delays caused by the mounted sick. Bright's boy, Georgius, collapsed before the halt, and before we at length reached a running stream issuing from the mountains four more Jehadia and one of the askaris, Almas, had succumbed; so here on this short march of six and a half or seven miles by an easy grade our numbers were decreased by six; and another askari was carried up from the stream we had crossed to camp in a comatose state, and died next morning before we marched.

We now found that the tracks of the Swahili

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traders issued from this valley in an easterly direction, so that they had evidently come from Save, crossed the Chemorongi mountains, and gone on to Ngaboto, much as Bright and I had done in 1898. We had no longer, therefore, the advantage of their track in a southerly direction now to Marich, as we had hoped. The result of the march was most dispiriting, as such a collapse we never imagined for a moment, although we hardly expected Georgius and one or two others to pull through. The only remaining servant, Hanna, was sick, and from this date all our cooking was carried out by Garner, who worked like a brick at the job for the remainder of the expedition, and provided Bright and me with our meals until Baringo was reached, whilst we washed up the things and so forth. To say we were disappointed at the result of the day's march is nothing—we were absolutely disheartened. Shortly after camp had been pitched Bright's orderly swarmed up to a nest in a tree in camp, and returned very pleased with himself at having obtained a young hawk, or owl, or something. It may have been a young vulture, for two of these were hovering about and annoying us in our not then sweet moods, so I shot them both. To my astonishment there was a rush for these loathsome carrion, who quickly had their throats cut, whilst the men proceeded to pluck and boil, and shortly after devour them! If a man will eat a vulture he would eat anything.

Next day we continued our march—now in a southerly direction—along the lower slopes of the Suk mountains, and made most wretched progress.

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We only covered about six miles, as on leaving camp we were at once involved in broken, thorny ground, through which it was difficult to find any way, in spite of a considerable amount of cutting to admit of the passage of the animals. It is doubtful if in the first two hours we made as many miles. The country then became a little more open, and we covered perhaps another two miles before we reached the outskirts of a densely wooded khor, through which we struggled for about half-an-hour, when we reached its banks only to find the bed quite dry. Here we made our usual halt, and pushed on again, crossing the khor by means of an elephant track, which we followed beyond through open glades of tall acacia trees until entering gravelly and thorn-bush country again. A little farther on we passed a pool of liquid mud green with slime, and continued to another khor, where I hoped to find water as in 1898, but failed. I now realised that as this was dry we should obtain no more water for perhaps twelve or fourteen miles, until we reached a mountain torrent near the Sekere district, issuing from a gorge in the hills. It was decided to camp, therefore, and as we had no water, a party were despatched with donkeys and skins to draw it from the river Weiwei, which I hoped would only be a mile or so to the east of us. At a quarter to six in the evening the party returned with eighteen skins full, which they had no difficulty in obtaining, as they easily reached the river, along which they reported a fine track running in a southerly direction. The men who had gone were all supplied with cocoa

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to compensate them for their extra labours. Twelve water skins were issued for cooking and filling the men's water bottles; but the remaining six were reserved for the morrow, as we expected a hard day.

The march was a long one, as anticipated, and we did not reach the torrent referred to above until 4.30 P.M. This was entirely due to the collapse of the men, four of whom succumbed on the road, whereas the donkeys which had been forty-eight hours without water travelled excellently when they got a chance of doing so. Water was reached when the column was in such an exhausted condition that a halt was essential for the following day to allow the men to pick up a bit. We were out of camp before six, and progress for the first two hours, in spite of the existence of thick thorn and numerous khors, was satisfactory though slow. The rear-guard with some animals had lost the track of the column then, and we in front were halted about an hour, bugling away in this thick country, before we were ultimately joined by those who had gone astray. During this interval, leaving Garner with the halted animals in front, I went on with my orderly to hunt for a track which should have existed along these slopes, from my recollection of the country in 1898. After some time we came upon it—a beaten native track running south towards the Suk settlement—so hoped progress would now improve. We were not disappointed, and travelled well until we made the usual halt. Starting again at ten, we got along capitally until mid-day,



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when three men collapsed. We now remained halted for an hour to give the men a rest, and pushed on again, for the water we knew to be still some miles distant. During the remainder of the march the track took us across several deep rocky khors, with villainous descents and ascents which delayed us greatly. Owing to the collapses amongst our men, Mabruk Effendi was leading three of the mules immediately behind me, whilst Bakhir followed with the other two, and then came Garner driving a drove of donkeys in front of him; after which followed the askaris with other droves, and Bright bringing up the rear with the rear-guard, trying to help on the mounted sick. It was a cheerful procession. Slowly we went plodding along, and it seemed as though we should never reach the water before nightfall.

After a time the donkeys pricked up their ears, began to sniff, and put on a great spurt, so Garner shouted out to me in front, "The mokes have scented water; we ought to be close now." It was another mile and a half, however, and 4 P.M. before the sweetest sound that ever greeted our ears broke on the stillness of the air—the distant murmur of a mountain torrent rushing through a ravine, and we felt happier then. To tell the truth, I was becoming not a little anxious, for so large and so deep had been many of the rocky khors we had crossed, all of which were as dry as a bone, that one began almost to fear the stream I was relying on might also be dry. At 4.30 we reach the small enclosed open space on the bank of the torrent, where Bright and I had camped in

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1898, and I fired off a gun to let those in rear know we had arrived. After Garner came in with his donkeys there was a long gap, as the others in rear were hung up in a khor a short distance back. For some time, therefore, Mabruk Effendi and Bakhir, Garner and his orderly, two other men, and I and my orderly, were all that had arrived, so we commenced to unload the animals, who were fairly fighting to get down to the water with their burdens on. To do so they had to descend by a bad, rocky slope, a series of great boulders and steps, down which they could never possibly pass encumbered with their saddles and loads. Whilst the unloading was going on, armed with a stout stick, I had to defend the pass to the water, and a lively time I had of it with the donkeys just frantic to get down and have a drink. They tried to circumvent me by all sorts of dodges, poor little brutes, and apparently regarded a blow on the muzzle with absolute indifference. At length they were all unloaded and free to go down to enjoy that lovely ice-cold water of which they were so dreadfully in need after two days' deprivation in this great heat.

When Bright turned up with the sick about 5 P.M. I have seldom seen such a wretched spectacle as they all presented—absolute despair was written on all their faces. They had made up their minds they were going to die, and seemed incapable of any effort. Our numbers, since marching from the Weiwei only two days before, had already been reduced by eleven more deaths, and we now only numbered twenty-one all



*Swahili maidens at Mombasa.*

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told of the original sixty-two. It was difficult to feel hopeful, and if Marich and the Suk country failed us, I feared that half-a-dozen men besides our three selves would be the only remnants of the expedition that could possibly struggle through. We had now passed the uninhabited stretch of country between the Turkana and Suk, and reached the most northerly settlements of the latter tribe. We saw a few of their huts high up on the hillsides, on the precipitous slopes overlooking the gorge from which this powerful stream issued. The scenery was magnificent towards the lofty rocky bluffs which towered so high above us, and yet in our dreadful position how could one appreciate the glories of nature? We were too weary and sick at heart when we recalled all the losses we had suffered. Merely to look round the camp on that 18th of June whilst we remained halted, was enough to drive away all cheerful thoughts. Of the four remaining Jehadia, three were lying down in a state of utter exhaustion, and one only was capable of doing any work with the grazing guard; the askaris, from that date, had this further duty added to their already heavy work. "Shortly before eleven a party of eight or ten Suk arrived in camp from the direction of Marich, and we tried by signs to glean some information from them, but could learn nothing beyond the name of their district, except that they gave us to understand no food was procurable at Marich, although some might perhaps be obtainable at Weiwei. As regards Europeans, Swahilis, a

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post, or anything else, we are as wise now as we were before, but less hopeful, for they wore very few beads and appeared not to know or understand what a 'Mzungu' (European) meant, which does not show much intercourse with a post. However, they seemed friendly enough, and after a short pow-wow returned in the direction whence they had come." (Diary.)

On counting over the goats and sheep in the evening two were missing. We feared they were lost, but Bakhir again proved the Sherlock Holmes of the expedition, and discovered the head and skin of one sheep in the bush, and although we could find no traces of the other, we eventually brought home the crime of slaughtering one at least to Amber, the man I had promoted head man of the Jehadia on Bilal's death. He had done excellently for some time, but latterly, like so many other men who, under happier circumstances, had worked with great zeal and energy, he had sunk and sunk until he had reached the level of the others. The meat was found in his haversack, and he confessed his guilt. He deserved to be shot, as he had throughout the day simulated great exhaustion after the previous day's march, during the whole of which he had ridden a donkey. He remained prostrate in camp all the morning; but later appears to have gone off into the bush and grass where the animals were grazing, and, probably with the collusion of one man of the guard (who formerly had been my orderly,

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but was subsequently dismissed from that post for untrustworthiness), made away with the two animals. However, we could bring no absolute proof against the latter, beyond the fact that to have allowed Amber to slaughter two sheep unknown to him showed gross neglect of duty on his part, at the very least. Again all the men were harangued in the evening, and they were implored to keep up stout hearts and not give way to despair—that with God's help we should in two or three days be able to obtain flour; and that even if we failed, we should yet be able to reach a government post before all our resources were exhausted, if they would only face the situation with courage. The askaris replied bravely, and told me that it was not starvation they feared so much as the fatal sickness which had carried off so many of the men. As long as God gave them health and strength I need have no fear of their losing heart.

Early on this same day I had observed on my legs an extraordinary number of purple spots, such as I had never before seen, and was much surprised, thinking it must be some kind of heat rash, for I had been well and strong for the last month since my illness on Lake Rudolf, and was now quite capable of great exertion. I showed them to Garner, who made light of them in order apparently not to cause me any further anxieties, and told me that I was not to carry my gun or rifle any more on the march, and to save myself as much exertion as possible. I little understood then what all this meant; it was perhaps as

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well, for I rapidly developed scurvy of a most virulent type, and before the month of June closed had become physically a complete wreck from excessive loss of blood from all my mucous membranes. Our journey through the Suk country I must reserve for another chapter.



## CHAPTER XIV

### A TREACHEROUS GUIDE

DURING our halt we had constructed a side track down to the mountain torrent, as the ordinary native track was impossible for loaded animals. The following morning, when the donkeys had been got down with their loads to the water, they stoutly refused for a long time to wade across this rushing stream, and delayed the column fearfully. At length we made a long, steep ascent the far side over a neck of an advanced hill, and continued towards the Sekere stream, which we reached in about two miles. Again here we had infinite trouble with the donkeys, who appeared to view swiftly flowing water over a rough, rocky bed with the very gravest suspicion, and nearly maddened us with their stubbornness. By the time we had forced the animals over, the men were so fatigued by their exertions in their then weak condition that I felt we could not reach Marich as we had hoped; so we camped on the bank of this stream.

Above us towered a grand rocky crag, from one side of which a fine waterfall dashed down a perpendicular cliff many hundred feet above our camp before its waters washed down the steep slopes to the gentler ones on which we had pitched our two

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remaining tents. Bright had a slight turn of fever during the day; but as it was taken well in time, he had shaken it off again by evening. "The poorness of our living has brought purpura out on me, and I am covered from head to foot with small purple spots like dried blood just under my skin. My mouth also is much excoriated—the inside of my gums and tip of tongue feeling as though covered with gum-boils—although they also are all purple like mulberries. Jolly life!" (Diary.)

On June 20 we really did reach Marich; but in spite of having an excellent track to follow and getting off before six, it was noon when we had covered the eight miles, crossed the Muroi River, and reached a spot where we could camp, some two hundred yards distant, on a small high mound overshadowed by trees. We had been greatly disappointed to find no cultivation at all now in this spot, which was so familiar to Bright and me from our previous visits in 1897 and 1898. The smiling fields of grain we so well remembered had all disappeared, and their place was taken by a tall, rank growth of grass on the banks of the river. At the mound we were met by a few Wa-Suk men, seated under the trees, amongst whom was a nice bright youth of fourteen to sixteen who had a slight smattering of Ki-Swahili. He told us that there was no grain here—this was obvious—but he thought we might be able to purchase a little at Weiwei. Five days' march beyond that place was a government post, he told us, occupied by Europeans, Sudanese, and Swahilis, who possessed

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large numbers of cattle, donkeys, and goats, and sheep. The garrison, we gathered from him, numbered about one hundred and forty men.

This indeed was glorious news, and I quickly allowed it to spread amongst the men, who were dispirited at finding no food at the place where they had always been told we should revel in plenty. The youth agreed to guide us to the post in return for three goats—one to be given to him here, and two on arrival at the post. At the same time, I tried to arrange with the boy to get some friends to carry on a letter for me to the post as rapidly as possible, acquainting the European in charge of our dreadful position, and asking him to send men to our relief. The letter was written and handed to that youth, who replied, “unfortunately he was the only Suk who had visited the post, and was known there.” This was a bit fishy; but we wanted him with us, and could not on that account spare him to take on the note. Garner and Bright were both touched with fever during the day, and retired to bed early in the evening.

Full of renewed hope, we made for Weiwei the following day, a distance of about eight miles, and crossing the river, which was about thirty yards wide and knee deep, camped on the opposite bank. Our progress for the first three miles was wretchedly slow, owing to the difficult nature of the track, which in many places tunnelled its way through dense euphorbia growths which met close overhead; whilst in others dead branches had fallen athwart the path,

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and blocked it until cut away and cleared. Later we were confronted by a deep khor, the ascent from the bottom of which, on the opposite side, was atrociously rocky and steep, and here we were delayed for over an hour getting the few loaded animals we had across. The finish of the march was easier, and we proceeded better, skirting large areas of cultivation as we entered the Weiwei district, none of which, however, were nearly ripe. After camping we sent off a small party of men with the Suk youth, carrying beads and empty bags, to purchase grain if possible from the natives. They returned shortly before 5 P.M. with nothing, for though the natives were friendly enough they insisted they had no grain for sale, as they themselves were, and would continue to be, very short of food until the harvest was gathered in.

On reference to my diary, I see the next page headed, "Officers' poor bill of health," and read below, "From want of tone all my mucous membranes are bleeding—my tongue is in a beastly mulberry-coloured state and very painful, whilst my nose is in a similar condition and bleeding constantly. I am taking lime juice for it; but it does not appear to do much good. The slightest scratch from a thorn on my hand bleeds profusely, and by next day a purple rim is formed round the scab over the wound, so my hands are in a charming condition. Bright and Garner are also unfortunately a good deal off colour from fever, whilst for the last two or three days Bakhir has been suffering with a bubonic swelling under the

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left arm, which has knocked him out completely, and to-night he is in a very low, depressed state." A bright look-out surely, with the leaders in that condition. The reserve supply of porridge and Benger's food, and self-raising flour, on the scale of four pounds a day, could only last a further six days, and then there was an end to our carbo-hydrate food for the men.

We remained halted on the 22nd to readjust and abandon what loads were not absolutely essential, until such time as men could be sent back from the government post, which we hoped to reach within the next week. It had receded in point of distance, although we had made one march towards it, from what we were now able to learn from our Suk youth, and we began to think he was a bit shaky as to its exact locality. We constructed a raised platform under a spreading shady tree on the river bank, on to which we piled some fifteen to twenty donkey loads of gear with their saddles, &c.—amongst other things, we had to abandon £50 worth of brand new Maria Theresa dollars!—and covered the whole with a large tarpaulin, which we secured in position with rope. We now only had thirty to thirty-five loaded donkeys, and started off the following day to Chemtulell, a distance of about ten miles. We got the donkeys along with difficulty in the early morning, as the little brutes would keep stopping to feed on the grass through which the track passed, and caused a good many cuss words to fly. *They* were now becoming demoralised seemingly, and we had only marched about four and a half miles by the usual halt.

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In spite of several bad khors with steep approaches, the track was generally a good one, and led us through alternate tracts of thorn, euphorbia, and open glades, passing near the foot of a magnificent rocky bluff, which attains an altitude of about 7000 feet, slightly to the south-east of which we camped on the bank of the Chemtulell stream. A couple of miles before reaching this spot we crossed another small running stream, and then came upon large tracts of cultivation, which, as usual, were absolutely green. These we had to skirt, with the result that we were now at a point where it was quite impossible to cross the river in front before camping, owing to the tall, rank grass. On our approach the natives indulged in a considerable amount of shouting on the hillsides, and drove off their flocks, the explanation for which, our young guide said, was that the Suk had recently been punished by the government post for misbehaviour. We had also picked up another Suk boy, seven or eight years old, who was a "nailer" for geography, and knew the bye-paths better than his older companion. He took on the job of driving our few remaining goats and sheep on the march for us, which he did just in front of me, and constantly kept shouting out to the other on ahead when the latter took a wrong path, to set him right. What that infant didn't know about getting flocks along wasn't worth learning, and he used his abilities to the best advantage—his, not ours—a few days later.

We ought to have reached Kivas on June 24,



*Our tents in the bed of the Baro in the dry season. A few months later we steamed over the spot in a gumboat.*

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but only made a point some miles short of it, as we had sickening experiences, and only covered some five miles between 6 A.M. and noon. The men were done by that time, and two of our mules had broken down, so we camped near a small running stream. Troubles began before leaving camp even—from a personal point of view. Amber, against orders, had some of his kit secreted on a mule, in addition to what was being carried for him on a donkey, so I ordered a small leather bag containing a few odds and ends to be thrown in the fire, and stood by to see it destroyed. Suddenly an explosion occurred, and, before I realised quite what had happened, I was struck with considerable force on the chin by something, which laid it open to the bone, the blood streaming from the wound. It was a cartridge, of course, that the idiot had put amongst these things, instead of carrying his ammunition on his person. In my then state, suffering from scurvy, nothing would stop the flow of blood, although Garner tried, so for the greater part of the march I was in the miserable condition of bleeding not only from my nose and mouth, as previously, but from this fresh wound as well. I had already lost much blood since leaving Sekere, and this extra drain on my already much weakened system by no means improved matters.

We had considerable bother in getting through the long grass to the river on leaving camp; but still more in negotiating the steep, rocky ascent on the far bank. It was not the road we had followed in 1897, and I more than once pointed out this fact

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to the Suk youth. This obstacle overcome, we were confronted with several irrigation channels, conveying water from the hills to the fields, which the donkeys would not face. Progress was desperate in consequence, and by the usual halt, which I did not make until a quarter to ten, we had not marched more than two miles. We started off again half-an-hour later, and by noon had possibly covered another three miles, and reached the small stream. We were now amongst a good number of Wa-Suk, and whilst the loads were being stacked a perfect uproar arose amongst a body of them, who had congregated about camp, so I went out to investigate the cause, and was conducted by these men to where one of their sheep had been killed by two of our Jehadia. The animal was lying with its throat cut, disembowelled, and part of its fat tail cut off. I was furious, as we had no desire at this stage of proceedings to raise a hornet's nest about our ears, and with great difficulty managed to pacify the excited mob of natives by handing over one of our live sheep in exchange for the carcass, after which they dispersed. The men were becoming quite impossible, and in my then infuriated state I vowed that once we got through and reached the post, and the culprits had regained strength, I would make them smart for the worries they had caused me. I never did, of course, for once safety was reached, in our great thankfulness all offences were condoned, and we did everything we could to make up to the men for all they had suffered during this shocking period.

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Next day we only made a short march of about four miles in a south-easterly direction along the foot of the hills, as the young guide led us a dance for about a mile in a wrong direction, and we were compelled to retrace our steps. During the early part of the march we did fairly well, until we reached a large, sandy-bedded khor, the one we had camped on in October 1897. The guide here took us astray, and when we got back again, we went along its bank by a rough track until we came upon a fine patch of nearly-ripe grain, irrigated by a little stream from the hills, so we decided to remain here, on the chance of being able to obtain some of it from the natives. Whilst camp was being pitched fifteen or twenty Wa-Suk collected round about, to whom, by means of our guide, we explained that we wished to purchase grain. The natives wanted ostrich feathers, which, fortunately, some of our men possessed, so we started a market. The natives brought in small quantities of freshly-cut heads of grain, for two ears of which we had to pay the absurd price of one feather—food is gold in that country. However, we were thankful to get anything at all, and though exorbitant prices were paid in feathers and white beads, we only procured from fifteen to twenty pounds of grain. I had a wretched night, for immediately after dinner my other nostril commenced bleeding, and did so steadily throughout the night, and was still going strong when we marched off next morning.

Amber at this stage threw up the sponge, and

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slunk off, whilst the animals were being loaded, to die in the bush, for we could find no traces of him. We only made another short stage of about five miles in a south-easterly direction along the foot of the hills, the track being generally flat and good, though much overgrown by long, coarse grass. We crossed a powerful stream at the end of the march, but had to go some three hundred yards farther on before we could find a suitable camping-ground on account of the dense, tall growth of grass bordering the banks.

Our young Suk had been getting considerably above himself during the last few days, and seemed to imagine the men were going to provide him with water, cooking pots, firewood, and so on, so I had occasion to snub him once or twice, and was inclined to mistrust the existence of the Ribo post, for his replies regarding its position were becoming more vague, as we should have been approaching it. Where he had now landed us was an atrocious bit of country, and the track we had followed terminated in some old plots of cultivation a few yards beyond camp, so I was beginning to wonder how he intended taking us through all the thick vegetation on ahead. He and the small boy were supposed to be watching our flocks grazing with the donkeys near camp, and at intervals during the afternoon we had shouted out to the grazing guard to see if these animals were all right, and had been assured that all was well. We could not see for ourselves owing to the close nature of the country. Eventually the animals were all brought in for the night to be

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counted and pounded, when it was found that seven goats were missing, including all our milch ones, and no traces of the two Suk boys could be discovered. The grazing guard were entirely responsible for this serious loss, so several of them were sent off in search, but, of course, could find no signs of any of the missing goats, which had, doubtless, been rapidly driven off by these two young rascals, when they found their movements were paid little attention to. Some day, perhaps, the elder of those two youths may run foul of me, and by the time he has been finished with, his own mother possibly won't recognise her hopeful sprig—she will be a clever woman if she does.

We were dead out of luck, that was evident, for we were landed in a regular *cul-de-sac*, and even if the Ribo post did exist, it was any odds we should never find it, for we might very easily, in this sort of country, pass within a mile of it without being aware of the fact. The natives appeared too unsociable to have had any intercourse worth mentioning with Europeans, and this fact alone made us now gravely doubt the existence of any post nearer than the Ravine station. How we were to struggle on to that it was not very easy to see, considering our wretched condition, and that our grain was all but exhausted, and we were already out of the Suk country. We at once became involved in most difficult country on leaving camp on the morning of June 27, as the track disappeared almost at once in old deserted fields. For the next two hours we struggled through long, coarse

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grass and undergrowth in our endeavours to cross a mountain torrent flowing between precipitous banks. When I had forced my way through with my orderly, I was so done up in my then weak state that I had to lie down in the long grass whilst Bright, Garner, and Mabruk Effendi were getting a track made for the animals. I was utterly exhausted from my recent heavy losses of blood, and my heart was pumping so violently as almost to alarm me. When the animals at length were over, and after we had again struggled on in a southerly direction for some time, I alighted on a track which led to the Ndao district, at the foot of fine mountains, high up on the sides of which were dotted huts and hamlets. Although the track was lost again once or twice, we fortunately were on it when crossing a second stream, so we experienced less difficulty than before, and ascended over a spur, along which a fine little irrigation channel was carried by the natives to their fields.

We camped a short distance on, but during the afternoon the natives cut off our water supply, which caused us much inconvenience. I was feeling much dispirited at the sickness which had overtaken me in our present position, and closed my diary for that day with: "Beastly weak, and lying on my bed all the afternoon. God grant me strength, and guide me through this awful country to the post! The few that remain now are dependent on me."

For some time past we had saved our men as much labour as possible by not having our two

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remaining tents pitched for us on arrival in camp. On the night of the 27th, whilst lying out on our camp beds, we were visited by a heavy downpour of rain which lasted for about two hours, and very effectually soaked us. All night we tried to obtain such sleep as was possible, shivering and wretched to a degree. We were all more or less paralysed when morning dawned, and for a long time we could not even get a fire lighted. It was 6.30 before we made a start from camp, and we were at once confronted in the valley before us with a deep khor, the banks of which were excessively steep and brought our animals to grief. A short distance farther on we had to cross a running stream, the approaches to which passed through tall, rank grass and vegetation. Fortunately we here came upon a native, who guided us to high ground beyond, where he left us and disappeared into the bush. We were now in the vicinity of two low, isolated hills, detached from the main range along the slopes of which we had been proceeding. As the main track we were on skirted the nearer of these hills—on the summit of which natives were perched watching our movements, like so many crows—and ran in an easterly direction towards the Kerio, I decided to follow that, but it soon drew us into fields of standing corn, generously irrigated by channels, and we at once became bogged with our animals. We could not get them along, and spent a dreadful morning conveying the loads across to a dry patch on the margin of the cultivation, outside a thick belt of trees. The loads had to be

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carried over by our exhausted men, which kept them employed until noon, so we camped at the foot of this isolated hill.

After much persuasion, we at length induced the natives to approach us, and succeeded in purchasing some seven pounds of nearly-ripe heads of grain in exchange for ostrich feathers. They would not look at beads, and wanted meat, but regarded with scorn the donkey flesh that was offered in exchange for their grain. These savages, then, had not sunk so low as ourselves, who had lived on donkey now for the past month! The whole expedition was in such a state of collapse, and my condition caused Garner so much anxiety, that he and Bright begged me to remain halted to recover strength, as if I succumbed to further exertions they considered they would be unable to extricate the column, for they knew not how to proceed with a view to reaching Njemps. I gave in to their earnest representations, and for the next ten days we remained at this secluded spot. We had given up all belief in the existence of the Ribo post; but every morning at dawn and every night after the last bugle, shots were fired by Mabruk Effendi, when all was still, in the faint hope that the echo which reverberated through the hills might be carried to acquaint some helping hand of our whereabouts. We imagined it just possible that such a lengthy absence of news from us might by this time have caused anxiety, and that perhaps parties had been despatched to obtain intelligence of the column.

It may be well here to say something about the



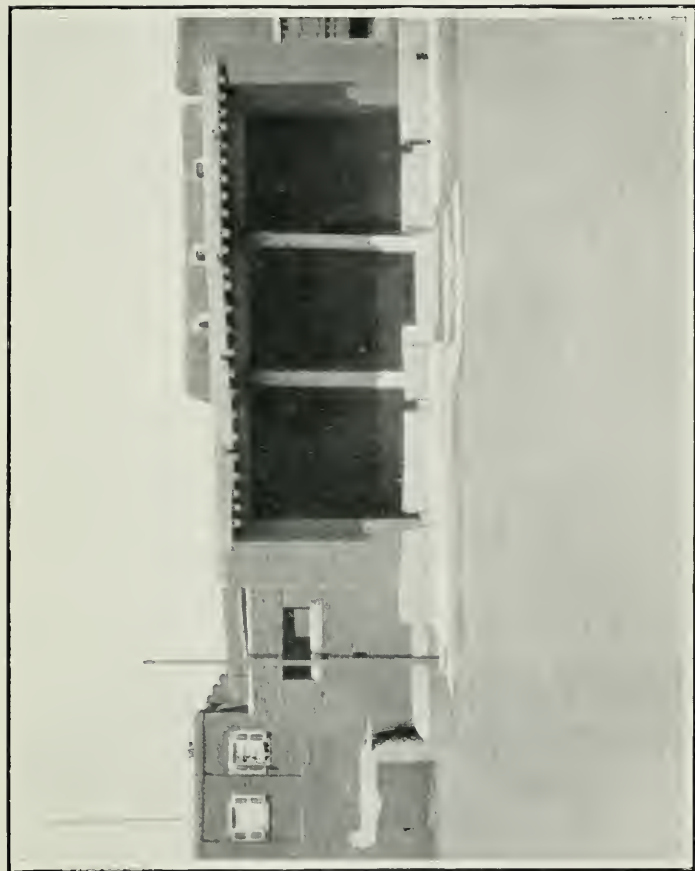
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Suk, a portion of whose country we had just traversed. The great Suk nation is divided into two principal factions, consisting of the Agricultural and Nomad or Pastoral Suk. The latter closely resemble the Turkana in general characteristics and appearance, and, like their more northerly neighbours, have no fixed abodes, but roam the Suk plains, the valley of the Karuan, and in a southerly direction almost to the northern limits of Lake Baringo. How far east they spread it is difficult to say, as barren waterless desert is entered when the ranges of hills, such as the Yiate and Ribo hills (which enclose the Suk plains to the east), are crossed. Generally speaking, they would appear, like the Turkana, to confine their movements principally over the plains, and to the low irregular hills bordering the valley of the Karuan stream. They are rich in herds of cattle, donkeys, and goats and sheep; but the camel is not commonly, if ever, seen south of Turkana. The upper waters of the Kerio are to them what the Turkwel is to their northerly neighbours. They would seem to have little intercourse with the Agricultural Suk, and might almost be regarded as a separate tribe, except that their language is, I believe, the same, whereas Turkana is a different dialect. On the authority of Mr. Hyde Baker, until recently Collector of the Baringo district, some of the more northerly sections of the Agricultural Suk have thrown in their lot with the Turkana of the Kerio, with whom formerly they were at enmity, and are now settled down among that tribe.

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The Agricultural Suk, whose country we had lately traversed, are a hardy type of mountaineers, who, for security against attack, build their huts and small hamlets up on the hillsides, along the foot of which we had travelled. Between Sekere and Kivas we had seen numbers of these habitations, some of which are perched on the summits of almost inaccessible precipices and crags. Many beautiful streams issue from these hills, and finding their way into the plains below, either join the Kerio, or eventually, by means of the Weiwei, unite with the Turkwel river, their waters in both cases being borne north towards the great Lake Rudolf reservoir. The Agricultural Suk utilise these streams, by means of carefully constructed irrigation channels, to water their crops on the lower slopes of the hills, where at times large areas of grain are seen under cultivation. In 1897 and 1898, when exploring the valley of the Muroi river (from Marich to Mount Elgon), over very difficult hilly country, we had seen some of these channels carried along the face of almost perpendicular rocks on retaining walls constructed of logs and stones, very much in the same way as is done by Pathans across the Indian frontier.

It will have been gathered that the foot of the hills is densely covered with bush, whilst in places open grassy glades are met with. Here their flocks and herds are grazed during the day-time, as well as along the many streams whose banks are clothed with such luxuriant vegetation. The following descrip-



*The late Khalifa's quarters at Omdurman.*

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tion of the personal appearance of the Suk is intended to indicate that of a general type, for of course details differ in individuals. I quote from one of my old 1897 diaries: "The young men are smart-looking fellows, with their hair done up in a quaint form of chignon behind, fitting close to the head and well plastered down with what appears to be grey clay, which has been baked hard by the sun. Into this they have generally an ostrich feather or two stuck, and also a long, thin, curved piece of brass wire, with a white blob of wool at the end, which bobs backwards and forwards over their heads as they walk. In addition, they have a small frontal sort of eminence on the top of their heads similarly plastered, into which smaller ostrich feathers are inserted. They do not distend their ear-lobes to any extent like the Masai, Wa Kikuyu, and other similar tribes, contenting themselves with numbers of small brass rings and ornaments in the rims of their ears, which are pierced to receive them. The lower lip is also pierced, and into this is inserted either a quill or a long, thin, flat piece of brass, with perhaps a bead or two attached to the end, the whole hanging perpendicular from the lip. Fresh air is the only garment in which the men are clothed, whilst a string or two of beads round the neck, or perhaps a collar of iron wire, and a bracelet of ivory, iron, or brass wire, complete the outfit. The older men present a more sober aspect, the most striking part about them being their head-dress, similar to

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that of the Turkana elders. It consists of a long, flat bag, so to speak, of hair, which is woven closely into a felt-like material, and attached to their own hair. This is the hair of their forefathers, and in a man of pedigree hangs, in some cases, from the top of the head almost down to the waist. On the inner side of this is an opening into the bag, and the Suk uses it as a receptacle for carrying his tobacco, snuff, and other small things. The exterior of the bag is frequently adorned with small ostrich feathers, and blobs of wool, and the curved wire as well. The men are certainly more winning in their ways than most natives, the young men possessing pleasant, cheery, laughing faces. Their weapons consist of inferior spears with long handles and short blades, bows and poisoned arrows, and an oblong-shaped shield, either made of thick hide or cane wicker-work.

“The women are decently clad in skins, one being fastened round the waist, whilst another is thrown over the shoulder. The younger girls work their hair into a series of twisted threads, which hang down straight all round the head, to which it gives an appearance not unlike a well-oiled mop. The old ladies have their hair dry, fizzled up and standing on end—sweet creatures! Large masses of beads are worn by the younger women round the neck, whilst bracelets and armllets of iron or brass wire complete their adornments.”

In former days the Masai warriors were in the

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habit of raiding the Suk with the object of replenishing their stock of cattle and flocks; but they were by no means universally successful, as in their own country the Suk fought to better advantage than the Masai, accustomed to open plains.

## CHAPTER XV

### DISEASE AND DEATH

DURING the two last days of June 1901 our efforts to trade with the natives of the Ndao district were attended with the very poorest of results, and it was not until the advent of the new month of July that our luck underwent a change. We had still five sheep left, and by slaughtering these and bartering their meat in exchange for nearly-ripe heads of grain, we purchased slowly but steadily from the natives, who had now gained confidence, thanks to the friendly way in which that excellent man, Mabruk Effendi, conducted the market. When our animals were finished trade ceased; but after we had dried and winnowed all that had been obtained, we found ourselves possessed of six and a half bags of grain wherewith to face the remainder of the journey to the Ravine station, and were now in a better position than we had ever been as regards food since we had commenced our horrible journey south along Lake Rudolf.

The natives we were now amongst were not the Wa-Suk, and I don't think they exactly knew who they were themselves, as all our efforts to obtain information on this point were unproductive. They were a mountain race, and the high hill slopes



## DISEASE AND DEATH

overlooking the valley of the Kerio were thickly dotted with clusters of their huts, whilst on the lower slopes were their fields of grain, irrigated by channels of water conveyed from the mountain streams. We saw no long, pendent, bag-shaped head-dresses amongst them; but the squat chignon was common, and bows and poisoned arrows seemed to be more generally carried than spears. They are possibly an offshoot of the Wa-Elgeyo, and we subsequently heard from Hyde-Baker that they were treacherous and hostile. He had some months previously occupied a post only five or six miles distant from the spot, where we had rested for so long; but owing to his inability to obtain food, and his having some forty Sudanese killed, whilst he himself with the few remaining men of the garrison were besieged until succoured by the natives of Njemps coming to his assistance, the post was ultimately withdrawn. We were, of course, quite in ignorance of this fact until long after, and seeing that we had only seventeen men left, one can but marvel that the natives did not take advantage of our miserable condition and annihilate us.

We had experienced considerable ill-fortune; but the hand of Providence had watched over us through it all, and we could regard our peaceful existence in this quiet secluded spot as the most soothing experience we had enjoyed since leaving the Omo. The details of our dreadful journey we looked back upon as a hideous nightmare, and devoutly prayed that if ever we reached safety we should never again have

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the misfortune to be placed in so great a quandary. We were satisfied by this improvement and the benefit we had all derived, and hoped, now that we could afford to increase the men's rations for the remainder of the journey, that we should have no repetition of the collapses which had been so horrible a feature of the previous two months. The want of flour with our meals was a deprivation that those only can realise who for a period of over three months have been restricted almost entirely to a meat diet without vegetables, except of the compressed tin sort we had in our provision boxes. The beneficial salts of such vegetables would appear to be destroyed on drying, and the yearnings we all experienced for just one good slab of bread and butter, or even a "chuppatti," cannot be understood but by those who have been similarly situated.

My personal convalescence had been very slow, owing to repeated nasal hæmorrhage, which weakened me terribly, whilst my throat and tonsils became affected similarly to my gums, and a further hæmorrhage one night in the retina of my right eye so blurred the vision of that as to render it for a time almost useless; to this day it has never wholly recovered from the effects. During July 9 we made our final preparations for another move forward, and in the evening the men were fallen in, and I addressed them, telling them that we were now about to undertake the last stage of our journey. If we were fortunate we might come upon a government post before long; but if not, it was of no very great consequence, for we

## DISEASE AND DEATH

had food enough—allowing them half a pound of grain per diem—to see us down to the Uganda railway, provided we travelled well; and that in any case our troubles should be over before another month had passed. The men were now perfectly hopeful, and replied through Mabruk Effendi that their only anxiety was regarding my health. “So long as you are well and strong, effendi, we have no fear.”

Next morning we once more took the road, and the start and march, after our long halt, exceeded our best hopes, as, getting off shortly before six, we travelled steadily along difficult country in an easterly direction for a distance of about five miles, when we came upon the Kerio river. For the first two miles we had been able to follow a native track, which then disappeared into old fields, so from that point on I had to take a line through tall, coarse grass and thorn bush. Much exhausted by the time we reached the river, I had to leave Garner and Bright to hunt along the banks for a suitable crossing-place, as the banks were high and steep. After some trouble this was found, and when prepared was fit for the donkeys to cross with their loads, as the stream was nowhere above knee deep and from forty to fifty yards wide, flowing over a firm sandy bottom. We camped on the opposite bank amidst tall grass and numerous acacia trees. We were more than satisfied with the day's march, as we had been extremely fortunate not to find the river in flood, in which case it would have been impassable. In 1892 Captain (now Major) Pringle, R.E., and I had been detained for two days

## DISEASE AND DEATH

constructing a hundred-foot bridge across this stream for our porters, between the Elgeyo and Kamasia mountains, many miles nearer its source.

The men had all worked very well, and there were only two mounted—Bakhir, who had for some time been much run down by the bubo, which Garner had opened under his arm, and one of the askaris. The march had again brought on me a relapse of nasal hæmorrhage during the night, so I felt weak when we continued the following morning. We again got off excellently, and marched out of camp well before the sun appeared. For a short distance we had to wade through tall, rank grass; but striking east towards the Ribo hills, we were soon on stony ground, covered with short herbage and thorn trees. Throughout the remainder of the march we pursued our course in a south-easterly direction, towards two small isolated hills in the plains—a familiar landmark four years back. Men and animals travelled and worked capitally, so when we reached a khor with a large pool of water in it, a mile or so short of the larger of the two hills, I decided to camp, as the prospect of obtaining water on this burnt-up plain was not too promising. As a precautionary measure we had left the Kerio with six of the donkeys carrying full water skins. Shortly before reaching the pool I had put up a rhino lying under a tree. He got up with a snort and bolted like a hare in the opposite direction, at which I was relieved; for, in my semi-blind condition, I doubt if I should have been able to dodge

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him if he had come at me and the advance guard ; indeed, for some few seconds I could not make out whether he was charging or fleeing.

Just as we struck camp on the 12th I was utterly prostrated by more hæmorrhages, and Garner insisted on a halt that day and the next. My feelings at this time are evidently recorded in my diary on the 13th, where it is written : " Halted two days on the rhino pool on my account, as I have again been attacked by nasal hæmorrhages, which utterly prostrated me. I am sick of the sight, taste, and smell of blood, from which I have never been free for over three weeks, as even my saliva has been turned to it, and am almost beginning to feel callous whether I peg out with this loathsome disease or not. The prospect of a long march to the Ravine station in my present state of health is not enticing, and if these awful bleedings and relapses do not shortly cease I haven't a dog's chance of maintaining sufficient strength, on our present food, to be able to last the journey."

Garner had gone out the previous day and ascended the nearer of the two hills to obtain a bird's-eye view over the plain, in the faint hope of being able to discern the longed-for Ribo post, but, of course, saw no signs of it, so we plodded on again on July 14. We made a satisfactory march of about seven miles in a south-easterly direction across the plain, skirting to the east of the two hills and passing the site of one of our old 1897 camps ; but the pool we had formerly obtained

## DISEASE AND DEATH

water from was dry. There was not a vestige of a track anywhere ; but the country was more open and free of thorn, though the grass in places was very tiring to tramp across, being much cut up by elephants' spoor. Crossing two dry khors, we eventually reached the Kason, which I remembered as a small running stream. It was dry now, which augured ill for our finding water in the valley of the Karuan on ahead ; but after some time we obtained a little water by digging, and camped. Another relapse of hæmorrhage attacked me that night, my nose continuing to bleed during the entire march. I rode a donkey, therefore, in front, and led the way to the Chemkarat khor, the banks of which were densely wooded, whilst traces of elephants existed on all sides. That also was dry ; but we obtained water by following it up for some distance and digging in a likely place, so camped. On marching in the early morning, two of the askaris, who had ridden donkeys for some time previous to our arrival at Ndao, and who again rode after we reached the Kerio river, had refused to make any further effort to reach safety. They would not mount donkeys brought up for them, and when hauled up on to their feet they insisted on throwing themselves down, said they were incapable of further exertion, and begged us to leave them to their fate. For some time we endeavoured to mount them, but it was of no avail. As the safety of all could not be risked for two obstinate men, who had thus given up all hope, and strenu-



*A wash-out on the Sudan Military Railway, a few miles north  
of Khartoum.*

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ously objected to further efforts, I was compelled to abandon them; and, as there seemed little prospect of their living beyond a few hours, took away their rifles and ammunition to prevent these falling into the hands of any stray natives who might in course of time find their way to the spot. The subsequent experience of one of these men, Fadlmulla Said by name, was so extraordinary that I must refer to it again later on, and continue meanwhile with my story. On July 16 we remained halted on the Chemkarat, some five miles from where these men had been abandoned, owing to my exhausted condition after the previous day's hæmorrhages. We had reached a critical point in our journey, for we had practically traversed the plain with the object of hitting off a pass in the low hills to the south, at the head of the valley of the Karuan. Bright went off next morning, therefore, with a few men, following up the Chemkarat khor with a view to observing if he could detect the pass on the hills some five miles to the south of us, which was hidden from our present camp by an outlying hill, near the foot of the main range. Proceeding some miles east up the khor he drew diagrams of the different changes he noticed in the appearance of the hills to the south, which he brought back to me, and I was able to form some sort of conclusion; but could only definitely decide on absolute investigation being carried out, as the country unfolded itself to view when we marched towards the hills next day.

## DISEASE AND DEATH

We were more successful than we could have possibly hoped for. On leaving camp we proceeded in a direction slightly to the east of south over grass land and thorn, for the first hour, until we reached a point near a low advanced knoll. I was now sure of my ground again, and knew where the pass should be. Presently a well-defined track was come upon, and hoping that the ascent would prove easier we followed it. For the next three miles or so we gradually climbed up along the side of the hills, generally along the track which took us cleverly round spurs and across small valleys, so that by 9 A.M. we were on the top of the pass and much pleased at our success. The only anxious point now was whether we should find water in the valley beyond. We halted on the summit, and then commenced the descent; this at first was far more steep than the ascent, which had been comparatively easy, as the track ran down a stony spur between two small valleys. These two subsequently joined, and a little farther on we struck a pool of water. I could scarce forbear a cheer, and shouted out the good news to Bright and Garner, who were following up with the animals. Here was plenty for our transport, and a few hundred yards farther on was one of our old 1897 camps on a level spot, with small springs of water in the bed below. Recent kraals had existed here, but all were burnt, and the ground was in a filthy state in consequence; but we cared not and camped, delighted at having now a fresh kicking-off place on this side of the hills with plenty of water.

## DISEASE AND DEATH

Shortly before mid-day a couple of native youths drove a fine flock of some 200 goats and sheep through the camp, coming up the valley, so we hoped to have the benefit of a track along the bank, and were not disappointed. We made a fairly satisfactory march of about six miles in a southerly direction down the valley next day, and during the greater part of the way were able to follow native cattle tracks, as many Nomad Wa-Suk were apparently settled here now, their kraals being erected on the low hill-tops enclosing the valley and concealed from our view. The stony river-bed, which was a small running stream in October 1897, was now quite dry, and the water question caused no little anxiety. At the end of the march we came upon an old disused and partially filled-in native well, excavated in the sand at the foot of a curious rock. After we had cleared this out again, and shored up the sides in order to admit of further excavation, we came upon a little water, some four or five feet below the surface, which proved sufficient for all but the animals.

During the march our last servant, Hanna, had collapsed, after becoming weaker every day since we had marched from our halting-place at Ndao. He had latterly done practically no work, as he was too weak, and we saw that he was not long for this world. He had accompanied me as my personal servant the previous year to Abyssinia, and until within the last few days I had hoped he would survive to reach safety. Our numbers were now

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reduced to fourteen blacks, all of whom were askaris, with the exception of Bakhir and two Jehadia; and I am happy to say that after this date no further loss of human life occurred. Forty-five gone out of a total of fifty-nine black men was truly an awful and dreadful loss, and these figures alone speak far more eloquently than any amount of writing on my part, in this attempt to depict the sufferings and horrible experiences we all underwent. During that afternoon the grazing guard succeeded in losing three of our donkeys, our transport now being reduced to forty-eight donkeys and three mules, so I had to depute Bright to give the men a good cursing for their carelessness, as Garner refused to allow me to work myself into a passion over them. Bright's oratorical effort left nothing to be desired, and Garner and I congratulated him when he rejoined us on his scathing remarks, which we hoped would bear fruit! In consequence of these losses we had to destroy more kit, in order to have a sufficiency of spare donkeys to provide food, and in case of breakdowns on the road, before we marched next morning.

We still continued down the Karuan, and again availed ourselves almost throughout the march of excellent cattle tracks, so were able to travel without a hitch from 5.45 until the usual halt at nine. We were now approaching the point where we should have to leave this stream and strike across to Kisite, as the conical hill which acquainted me of this fact was looming large now, only a mile or two to the

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south. I therefore sent Mabruk Effendi down stream, and my orderly up stream, to see if they could find water, for we had shortly before seen water birds. Both were successful in coming upon pools only a few hundred yards or so on either side of where we were halted, so we continued a little farther down stream, and camped under a small grove of trees close to Mabruk Effendi's pool, whilst the one found by my orderly was reserved for the animals. So far we had been most fortunate with regard to water, and if on the morrow we could find pools at the mouth of the Kisite gorge, we were almost as good as at Lake Baringo, for there was only one not difficult pass to find, to take us out of the hills by which we were surrounded, and then the rest would be plain sailing as far as Njemps.

On July 20 we almost at once left the Karuan, and striking up a branch khor, swung in a southerly direction round the conical hill and skirted for some distance the foot of lofty precipitous cliffs, having a thick belt of tall trees and dense undergrowth on our right. For some little time we became involved in a much broken and very thorny path before I came upon a track in the direction we desired. This we followed up a familiar narrow valley, passing an unoccupied zeriba near the bank of a large khor which crossed our route. We could find no water in this, so we made for a narrow pass up a rocky nullah bed between low ridges. Three miles farther on we struck the dry bed of the Kisite khor. It

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was formerly a running stream; but we could find no water until we pursued our course up it for about half a mile to the mouth of the gorge, where there were still the old-remembered pools, and we camped on the opposite bank, on the identical spot we occupied in 1897. The good fortune which had attended our efforts so far since leaving the Kerio, with regard to water and the road, was highly appreciated by us as we discussed our frugal dinner followed by pipes that night outside the fly of the tent we three had lately been sharing. There was plenty of water here, and there was one long and difficult march yet ahead of us before we would reach water again, at the base of a rocky ravine, some seven miles short of Lake Baringo; and thence to Njemps was as simple almost as a stroll along Piccadilly to those who had previously traversed the route. We would rest, therefore, here next day, which was Sunday, and the following Sunday we should be amongst friendly natives, who would render us assistance in reaching the Ravine station and supply us with more food. This we all arranged to our entire satisfaction, and I was already talking of being quite well again, if I could only obtain a few days' respite from hæmorrhages, and of stumping in at the head of our survivors to the railway.

We slept well and peacefully that night; but next morning I felt feverish and unwell again, and as my temperature ran up, knew I was in for a relapse. I rapidly became worse, and suffered agonies from my right shoulder and other portions of my body. My

## DISEASE AND DEATH

face became puffed up and bloated with fresh exacerbation of hæmorrhages into the cellular tissues. My vision was almost useless, and I became nearly stone deaf. The misery of it all I cannot attempt to describe. With difficulty I resumed again my diary on July 28—the day we expected to be at Njemps, and here we were still at Kisite. After describing my dreadful relapse the diary goes on to say: “Altogether the Almighty has been pleased to shower down on me such a complication of afflictions that I feel utterly broken down physically. Saturday week we were all so full of hope and looking forward to spending this Sunday (28th) at Njemps, and yet here we are, still at Kisite, and I in a worse and more helpless condition than I have been before. At times I utterly despair of being able to pull through, as no sooner do I begin to get stronger than I am suddenly overtaken again by some sort of relapse. I have been very worried about the guiding—for the next twenty-two miles the country is a bit complicated, there is no water for fourteen miles, and my eyesight has now become very blurred.”

On the 27th I had been carried on a donkey a short distance out of camp, and indicated to Bright where I thought the pass over the hills should exist, between two conical peaks. He had investigated it the next morning and found the ascent easy for animals, so that was a load off my mind. Many Wa-Suk daily brought their flocks and herds to be watered at the pools near camp, and were very friendly. Shortly before I was well enough to con-

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tinue the journey a Suk youth had arrived who possessed a fair knowledge of Ki-Swahili, and from him we learnt (though we did not believe it at the time) of the existence of a post on Lake Baringo under charge of Europeans. He was very persistent on this point; but so was another Suk youth, we had not forgotten, regarding the Ribo post. However, he consented to guide us to the post, and we were glad of his services in that capacity, as it is easier to follow one who is thoroughly conversant with a track than to hunt about for it, especially when you have only once passed along the rough trail before, and that four years previously; and then in the opposite direction, which makes all the difference.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SAFE AT LAST!

ONCE more on July 29 we made a fresh forward move, and, knowing water to be some fourteen miles distant, loaded up seven donkeys with water skins, as we intended to make two marches to the Mugur pools. The Suk youth was accompanied by a friend, and they led us by the easy pass over the hills enclosing the Kisite valley, down into another valley beyond, where we crossed a large, stony-bedded khor, and made our first halt. Steering our course generally, as before, in a south-easterly direction, we worked across this narrow valley, and climbed out of it by an awkward steep ascent over stones on to a flat plateau, where we camped for the day, utilising the water we had carried. Garner, unfortunately, now fell ill with fever, but very pluckily marched throughout, driving donkeys in front of him as usual, and cooking the food for us three, as he had always done for the past six weeks and more, on arrival in camp. We had marched about nine miles, so starting off again the following day shortly after 5.30, we were not long covering the remaining five miles to the Mugur pool.

We camped on the bank of this rocky ravine amidst thorn and great boulders of black rock, the

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pool being some fifty to sixty feet below, and only approached by a villainous descent. The country traversed was an easy one, gently undulating, and covered with thorn and grass, which concealed rocks and stones. Riding a donkey in my then unhappy state was most painful, and it was always a great relief to get off my steed, and lie down until the camp bed had been prepared, and the tent was up to shield us from the hot sun. We now knew that the next march would bring us to Lake Baringo; but in the early morning, when we started, the Suk youth wished us to cross the ravine, and to proceed by the route most familiar to him, with the result that when we were at the bottom we found it quite impossible to manage more than two-thirds of the ascent on the opposite side, and after a most vexatious delay we were compelled to clamber out again to our original camp, and then strike south along the bank of the ravine, as I had wished to do at first.

A march of seven or eight miles over undulating grass land thickly sprinkled with thorn brought us eventually to the north-west corner of Lake Baringo, where we were confronted with a steep, rocky ascent out of the lake depression to the summit of a low, precipitous escarpment, which hereabouts confines the waters on the western shores. We saw a few natives there, and obtained a camping-ground overlooking that beautiful sheet of water towards which we had been marching for so long, and began to feel more hopeful regarding the future, provided we could obtain food at Njemps. The Suk youth now asked permis-

## SAFE AT LAST!

sion to leave us—he had tired of donkey meat in two days, so there must be something against it. When we reached the north end of the lake he had desired to take us by a route along the eastern shores to the post, and the boy was right. We, however, decided to proceed along the western shores as being the most direct route to Njemps, for after all our disappointments we could not help being sceptical as to the existence of the post. He readily agreed to take a note from us to the post, and this Bright provided him with, recording our desperate position, and asking any European whose hands it might reach to send us help, adding that meanwhile we would continue along the western shores of the lake towards Njemps.

On August 1, then, we pursued our course along the western shores of the lake, and for the first four or five miles travelled south at some distance from its margin, which was concealed from view by a low, rocky ridge on our left. We traversed an easy grassy plain until we came to a small break in the ridge, through which we reached the summit of an execrable stony slope, which led down to the lake depression, and up which we had had to take camels in 1897. Our descent was not quite so difficult as our ascent then had been; but still we were occupied for close on an hour getting even the few loaded animals we had down. For the next two hours or so we kept close to the lake shore, which was very stony and rough, and caused me to vituperate my poor little moke, who, in his efforts to keep his footing, stumbled

## SAFE AT LAST!

a good deal and made me suffer anguish. Later on we reached a tract of thick thorn as well as boulders of a volcanic nature, and eventually camped on a low cliff overlooking the lake, from whence we obtained an uninterrupted view across its waters to the islands in the near foreground.

Pushing on again next day at 5.30 A.M. along the lake shore, about an hour after starting we reached the side of a deserted post on an open, grassy plain. It was evidently a government post until recently, for the grass houses were still standing, and a bit of one of this year's *Spheres* was picked up. I can't recall the date, but it was not more than five or six months old, and so absolutely modern to us, whose last news dated back to the end of the previous December! We now struck a well-defined track running south over open, grassy, and somewhat swampy areas, where in course of time it gradually lost itself. When we made the usual halt we were some distance from the lake shore, but hoping to obtain water in the bed of the Ndo stream, we still pushed south and soon entered a thickly wooded belt of thorn before we finally came upon the river-bed. To our disgust we found it absolutely dry. It was already ten, and the lake shores were some miles to the east of us. Before continuing down the river-bed towards the lake, we decided to have a short rest, so we seated ourselves under the shade of friendly trees for a bit.

Meanwhile one or two men were sent to see if they could find any pools of water in the bed, and presently came doubling back with the news that



*Mr. Harold Hyde Baker, Collector of the Baringo District.*

*[To face page 306.]*



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there was a white man mounted on a pony, and accompanied by men carrying small bags of flour on their heads approaching us! The news appeared too good to be true, for we had thought little more of the note that had been handed over to the Suk youth, and could scarcely realise that it had borne fruit. However, here he was in person, and none other than the Collector of the Baringo district, Mr. Harold Hyde-Baker, whilst Sudanese askaris, carrying small bags of flour, were also with him. Safe at last! Try and realise what those three simple little words meant to all of us, who had undergone such bitter trials. We could barely do so, so perhaps you cannot. I find it difficult to express in words the change that our feelings underwent when we had at length realised that now at last, after three months of the most horrible experiences, we had really reached—or would very shortly gain—a haven of rest and safety. For weeks past we had seen the worst and most bestial side of human nature. Death and starvation were constantly before us, whilst only gloom and despondency were written on the faces of our blacks. Not fully understanding whither they were bound, nor what was yet before them, they not unnaturally seemed to expect ultimately to share the fate which had overtaken so many of their comrades. Now all was changed. The first new white face they had seen since they commenced their long land journey from Nasser seemed to infuse new life into them, and they were soon grasping by the hand those Sudanese askaris who had come to meet them

## SAFE AT LAST!

carrying food for their salvation. It was a memorable meeting to us, that with Hyde-Baker on the bank of the dry Ndo stream, 'midst thick bush. When we are all old and grey we shall recall it, and time will scarce dim the memory of that happy hour.

His men behind were bringing food for us, he told us, so we sat down again under those trees and plied him with questions until he must have felt almost bewildered. We learnt that the previous day, about noon, he received our letter at the south end of the lake. An hour and a half later he was off with eighteen men to our rescue. All that day he marched north along the western shores of Baringo, until he reached the north-west corner, where we had camped. He had seen our recently evacuated donkey zeriba and knew he must have missed us. He slept out in the open that night with his weary men, was off again at dawn the following morning, came upon our tracks, and had literally hunted us down until he ran us to earth on the banks of the Ndo. His extraordinary energy and dogged perseverance had rescued us from a most desperate position, and the debt of gratitude that we all owe to him will not readily be forgotten.

Then we asked for news nearer home. "No, nothing special has occurred in Europe," he replied to one of our queries, "since the dear old Queen died." "The Queen dead?" That was indeed news to us, for when we left Omdurman she had not been even unwell, and she had now been dead for close on seven months, and we unaware of the fact! After



## SAFE AT LAST!

expressing our sorrow, we inquired about De Wet and affairs in South Africa, hoping that the war had long since been brought to a successful termination. We were told, however, that De Wet was still going strong, and the war nothing like over. Presently the men plodding along in rear with the luncheon basket and viands for the repast, so thoughtfully arranged for by Hyde-Baker, arrived, and we were invited to fall to, whilst our genial host did the honours.

'Twas a feast for the gods. First of all there were tinned sausages, which we ate on hunks of bread—bread, mark you, for which we had so longed for more than three months. Then followed tinned pears—they were sublime. We concluded with Genoa cake, the top one mass of almonds! It was cut in two, and half given to our most excellent Mabruk Effendi and Bakhir. All this was washed down with champagne and sparklet soda. Contrast such a meal with donkey and ginger-bread biscuits!

We were still a long way from the Baringo post, so after a little time Hyde-Baker suggested that we ought to be moving on to get in before dark. He had brought a hammock for me, and a spare riding mule besides, which Garner mounted and accompanied me, whilst Bright went with the donkeys and our men. We started at 11.30, and after the first couple of miles entered difficult country, overgrown by very thick vegetation and tall, rank grass, through which progress was slow. Two hours and a half later we reached a running stream which had to be crossed, and here all the men and animals had a

## SAFE AT LAST!

hearty drink, of which they were much in need, for the poor beasts had not tasted water for forty-eight hours, as we could not water them at our previous camp on the lake. After crossing the stream we had to traverse a very bad area of long, coarse, swampy grass and vegetation, and progress was very laboured until we struck the track leading to the post, and a short distance farther a swampy stream, over which it was impossible to get the loaded animals. Their burdens had to be carried over by Hyde-Baker's men and our askaris. Leaving Bright to superintend the crossing and march the caravan in, the men carrying me proceeded almost at a trot, and Garner followed quietly on his mule.

About half a mile before reaching the post, which was on an isolated hill overlooking the south end of Baringo, Hyde-Baker's house on the summit being a landmark for a great distance, we crossed another stream which provided the water supply to the post. We soon commenced the ascent by a well-cleared track, and at 4.30 P.M. I was deposited in the veranda of Hyde-Baker's house, he himself meeting me there, as he had ridden on in advance. Garner arrived presently, and we were both regaled on fresh milk, and welcomed by another Englishman, Mr. Vincent, a trader, whose little camp was pitched at the foot of the hill. Bright did not get in until close on 6 P.M., as the crossing of the swampy stream delayed the column greatly. To show how the men had been influenced by the turn of affairs I may say they had cheerfully trudged from eighteen to twenty

## SAFE AT LAST!

miles that day, and were some twelve hours on the road, driving donkeys before them and leading our three last remaining mules. A fat ox was slaughtered for them, and the poor fellows enjoyed such a meal that night as they had not tasted for many a weary day. It would never be necessary now again to kill a wretched donkey for food, as Hyde-Baker could supply rations of a more congenial nature.

For the next twelve days we enjoyed a most peaceful and contented existence in Hyde-Baker's house on the summit of this rocky hill, whence an extensive view of valley, lake, and mountain spread in every direction. The first morning it appeared so strange to wake up and find a lofty roof of saplings and grass overhead, with mud walls around; and not to hear that awful 4 A.M. bugle summoning us to face another dismal day, and to trudge wearily along in a lifeless, listless way. I gradually gained strength during this period, although Garner had to operate on me twice to relieve me of much suffering, after which I steadily but slowly recovered ground. He, poor fellow, now broke down after all the hard work that had fallen upon him in camp, and almost from the first day after we reached safety, until we left Mombasa, more than a month later, suffered a great deal from liver and fever.

During all the time we remained at Baringo we enjoyed the greatest possible hospitality from Hyde-Baker, who did everything to make us comfortable, and fed us up on all sorts of luxuries. Three hungry wolves like ourselves must have severely taxed

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his resources, for he was seventy-five miles from the railway, and things were not easy to get up, so we could not help feeling that we were a heavy drain on his stores. Milk, bread, potatoes, onions, and eggs he provided for us, whilst from the delightful spot he had selected for his post he merely had to go off in the afternoon on his pony, shoot venison, and be back in his bungalow before dusk, whilst guinea-fowl were there in hundreds on the plains below. The post was not yet completed, and additional houses and stores were being actively and quickly run up by his men during our stay. The working parties disturbed a cluster of bees on the rocks near the house, and for several days these vicious insects almost terrorised the occupants of the hill-top. Hyde-Baker had four quaint little monkeys, to whom he was much attached, and these were secured to four posts just outside the house. On one occasion the bees swarmed on these poor little creatures, who had no means of escape, and attacked them with great fury. Hyde-Baker made a gallant attempt to rescue his pets enveloped in a mosquito curtain, but could only save two, the others being killed. He returned, stung very badly about the face and head, which became much swollen, and was extremely painful for several days, as his lips and eyes were greatly inflamed.

Our men, by the time we were ready to make a forward move to the railway at Lake Nakuru, had grown wondrous stout during their long rest and the good living they had enjoyed. Mutton or beef every

## SAFE AT LAST!

day, added to flour, rice, potatoes, and ghi, soon began to fill up the hollows in their cheeks and limbs. In order to keep them in training, and in preparation for the further march to the railway, Mabruk Effendi used to have them out every day for drill after the first day or two, and march and double them about until they quite got back the use of their legs as of yore. Hyde-Baker took over our three remaining mules and forty-four donkeys, as well as such expedition equipment as was not necessary for the week's journey to the railway. He then fitted us out with a complete new caravan of thirty-five of his fresh, strong donkeys, and provided us with twenty-one of his Sudanese, and seven Swahilis, to drive the animals, and carry me. He also sent with us his own cook and orderly to prepare our meals, and lent us three cows and two calves to supply us with milk to Nakuru, and some goats and sheep. Before we left we were able to purchase from Mr. Vincent a little rice, flour, porridge, potatoes, and onions, so travelling was now going to be a luxurious business. Walking was still quite out of the question for me, and the hammock was provided, whilst Garner had Hyde-Baker's riding mule placed at his disposal. We left Baringo finally on August 14, 1901.

Before I close this chapter let me recount briefly Fadlmulla Said's experience. It will be remembered that this man was abandoned, together with his comrade, Farag Hamid, on July 15—nearly a month previously. We had thought little more of these two men, naturally supposing that they had long

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since died. After our return to England, however, we heard, about the end of October, that one of our men, who gave the name of Fadlmulla Said, had arrived at Mombasa! I asked that the man should be shipped at once to Cairo, and also inquired for some details as to his extraordinary resurrection. All that I have hitherto been able to glean is that three days after we left his comrade had died, and some Nomad Wa-Suk arrived upon the scene, supplied Fadlmulla with milk, and conveyed him to their kraal. Subsequently, when he recovered health and strength, they conducted him to Baringo post, some time after we had left, and Hyde-Baker, in due course, forwarded him on to Mombasa. The man eventually was shipped to Cairo, and rejoined his regiment at Assuan, and I have since heard from his commanding officer that "he looks little the worse for his experiences." I have much pleasure in presenting my readers with a portrait group of the survivors of the escort of the 10th Sudanese, in which Fadlmulla Said will be seen to figure standing up at the back, on the reader's extreme right. He never was a professional beauty.



*Mabruk Effendi (in centre) and the survivors of the 11th Sudanese Battalion, who formed our escort.*

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## CHAPTER XVII

### FRIENDLY FACES

OUR little cavalcade on August 14 filed out of Baringo, where we had spent such a happy time and gained a new lease of life. We were accompanied during the early morning by both Hyde-Baker and Vincent, until we had reached a point on the road opposite the larger of the two Njemps villages, where we paid our final adieux, with thanks to them for all they had done for us. We made a longish march of about fourteen miles, and camped on the edge of a swamp at the foot of a stony hill; but our progress was quite different to what it had been before, on account of the fresh blood added to our numbers. The Sudanese police from Baringo were not entirely unknown to us, as we had dealt with some of them in 1897, and there was now a bustle and move about this energetic body of men and the few Swahilis that was refreshing to see, and carried us back to the earlier days of the expedition.

We were unable to traverse this swamp, so next morning we had to work round the other side of the hill by a circuitous route, after which we crossed a narrow ridge by an easy ascent, with a very stony, difficult drop down to a flat plain below at the

## FRIENDLY FACES

north of Lake Hannington. From the summit of the ridge we had obtained a fine view of this small mountain-locked sheet of water, which presented one of the most extraordinary sights any of us had ever gazed on. The whole of the shores were a seething mass of myriads of flamingoes and other water birds, whilst the air was pink with thousands of others, circling about incessantly over the lake, uttering their quaint cries. Deaf as I was, and though we were more than a mile from the margin, I could distinctly hear the noise created by these thousands. It was the first time I had seen the lake, for on the two previous occasions, in 1892 and 1897, when I had travelled between Njemps and Lake Nakuru, it had been concealed from view by the rocky ridge which encloses the valley of the Guas' Rongei stream to the east. When all the animals, after much trouble, had been got down, we struck across the plain to this stream, and camped on its left bank near the site of one of Hyde-Baker's old posts, which had been burnt down. On August 16 we moved up the valley of the Rongei, and only made another short march before camping on the margin of a swampy patch of hot water, known to the Swahilis as "Kampi ya maji moto" (camp of hot water). It was an uneventful stage, entirely up the narrow valley shut in by low ridges, through which the stream flows north towards Lake Baringo. Garner was very seedy, and suffering much from an enlarged spleen, the result of malaria, which made the journey most trying to him seated on his mule.

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Next day we at once ascended the ridge overlooking the camp, and throughout the march rose very rapidly by scaling stony escarpments, keeping for a time in a southerly course along a terrace at the foot of another escarpment, climbing that in turn, and so on. Altogether some four or five scarps had to be surmounted whilst advancing up the valley of the Rongei. We finally camped on a small plain bounded to the west by a low range of hills, beyond which flowed the Molo river on its northerly course towards Lake Baringo. We obtained our supply of water from pools in the bed of a steep, rocky nullah, falling very abruptly in a series of steps down to the Rongei valley below us. The water was of a strikingly red colour, which was due to the soil through which it runs, on the small plateau we were occupying, before precipitating itself down the rocky falls. We had a heavy storm of rain that night. Continuing in a southerly direction next day, an easy march of about ten miles brought us to the Molo river. In spite of the night's rain, the going was good, and we held on up narrow flat valleys enclosed by low stony ridges, through alternate stretches of grass and thorn. The Molo, we found, had recently been in heavy flood, but fortunately had gone down, and was now only ten to fifteen yards wide and waist deep. The donkeys were all unloaded, and their burdens carried across by the men without much difficulty.

On the 19th we made a longish march of fourteen to fifteen miles before we came on the Uganda road,

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and crossed the Molo river again there by the remains of one of Captain Sclater's old bridges, constructed some years previously. The old cart road to the Ravine station had been abandoned, as the railway turned off from it near Lake Nakuru, and the present road keeps close to the line. The general nature of the country traversed was easy though stony, and free of any steep grades, and as our animals travelled excellently we had accomplished the march by noon. I had my second relapse of nasal hæmorrhage that day (since leaving Baringo), my wretched nose starting early in the morning, at about 3 A.M., and continuing steadily until nightfall. This sort of thing was very depressing, as nothing would stop that flow, and it may be imagined how trying this constant trouble was. Garner also was absolutely knocked out of time, and compelled always to retire to bed on camp being reached; so, in spite of our circumstances being quite comfortable, we were not a wildly hilarious crowd on our final tramp to the Uganda railway, Bright being the only one of our number in anything like average health.

We were now south of the equator, and only about fifteen miles distant from the Ravine station; but as a long, waterless march of some twenty-two miles intervened between us and the railway, it was decided to make it in two stages. We halted, therefore, on the morning of the 20th to give the men an opportunity to cook and feed, and the animals to graze and be watered, and struck camp at mid-day. We had but five serviceable water skins left, as the

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majority had been devoured by rats and mice at Baringo, so we started off with these, the men carrying full water bottles. We took the old Uganda road, crossing another stream about one and a half miles after leaving the Molo, and camped at the side of the road some seven or eight miles on, where we were able, with difficulty, to obtain a little fuel from some scattered thorn-bushes.

When camp had been pitched for the night, a bitterly cold wind sprang up—we had risen some 3000 feet since leaving Baringo, and were now over 6000 feet above sea level—which thoroughly searched us all out, and we did not require to issue much water for the shivering men, who would probably have preferred hot grog. We were off again long before sunrise the next morning, and it was perfectly Arctic until old Sol shed the light of his countenance on our path. The men who carried me in the hammock were the most splendid indefatigable ruffians, and fairly skimmed over the ground, leaving the cavalcade miles behind. There were four of them; but two could whisk me along for a couple of hours comfortably before being relieved by their companions. In the early dawn, when it was scarcely yet light, we discerned hundreds upon hundreds of zebra on all sides of us, quietly browsing on the short, succulent grass which had recently sprung up since these plains had been fired. About an hour after leaving camp we met two Masai runners with most kind cablegrams from the Marquess of Lansdowne, in reply to one I had sent from Baringo the day after our arrival,

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announcing the safety of the expedition, and the losses and hardships suffered. Knowing that my companions in rear would like to read these at once, the Masai were told to wait with them until the caravan came up, and to hand them over to the officers. My carriers then dashed on again with their burden of skin and bone, and before long we struck the railway line, which they followed for several miles up to the Nakuru station. Here they left the railway and proceeded about two miles south over a grassy plain to the Uganda Administration boma, which was on high ground about half a mile distant from the shores of Lake Nakuru, which it overlooked.

At 9.30 I was dumped down inside the boma outside the Sub-Commissioner's bungalow, my bearers having traversed some fourteen miles in four hours! My salaams were taken in to Mr. J. P. Wilson, the official in question, an old East African acquaintance of mine, and he presently came out. He could not, however, recognise the blackguard he saw lying on the ground, disguised in straggling whiskers and a villainous beard thickly sprinkled with grey, and splotches of blood all over his filthy khaki shooting jacket, so would probably have set the dogs on me had he not previously been informed who it was. I understood his surprise, for I could not recognise myself on the rare occasions I had glanced at my features in a small hand-glass. I certainly was not too beautiful to live, and in course of time have more or less recovered. He very kindly swallowed his

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repulsion, and conducted me into his bungalow, where a repast was spread, to which ample justice was done ; but it was not for another two hours that Bright and Garner arrived with the caravan, when camp was pitched just outside the thorn fence enclosing the post. We had only two tents, so Wilson very kindly provided one for Bright, another for Mabruk Effendi and Bakhir, and a third large sepoy's pâl for the surviving men. No train left for Mombasa until the Saturday morning, and it was only Wednesday, so we remained as his guests throughout our stay with Wilson, who catered most generously for us, as we had no servants. The men from Baringo were to return now to Hyde-Baker, so small presents were made to them for their kindly assistance in conducting us to the railway, and we separated.

We could not help being astounded at the changes that had taken place in the country since last we were on Lake Nakuru early in 1899. The size and extent of the railway station, with all its outlying bungalows, shops, big bazaar of Indian traders, &c., had converted the place into a regular township; and almost anything was obtainable, from needles and thread up to an engine. March of civilisation it was indeed. Nearly ten years before this had been an uninhabited prairie, the home of countless heads of game when first I saw Lake Nakuru; and even two and a half years before, when Bright and I had last seen the place, beyond the Uganda road there was little to indicate the presence of man. We learnt that the present extent of Nakuru was nothing to

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what it had been of late, for recently a great migration of traders, coolies, and so on had taken place to the present rail-head, which was more than fifty miles in advance of Nakuru, on its way to the Great Victoria Nyanza. All this was perhaps of especial interest to me, who had been originally employed under Captain (now Colonel) Macdonald, R.E., on the preliminary survey for this most interesting railway, in 1891-92. It was difficult to carry one's memory back to those old days, and compare what the country then was with what it now is.

Wilson occupied the government post by himself, with a small garrison of Sudanese and a few Swahilis; but up in the railway bungalows were other officers employed on the construction and superintendence of the line, who interchanged visits with him almost daily, so our first afternoon we met Church, whom we had known in 1897, Cruickshank, Cooper, and Roberts. Cruickshank, the traffic manager, also a former acquaintance, very kindly arranged that we should have an officer's carriage, fitted up with kitchen, &c., for our journey to Mombasa, which was to be hauled up the rope incline to the summit of the Kikuyu escarpment, in order that we should not have to get out and make that dreadful climb on foot. I found a kindly telegram from Major Harrison, D.S.O., of the East Africa Rifles, stationed at Nairobi, awaiting our arrival at Nakuru, in which he asked me to stop with him on the way through to Mombasa, so I wired to him, and also to Colonel Hatch, C.M.G., at Mombasa, asking if he could provide accommoda-



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tion for our Sudanese on arrival; and yet again to Dr. Macdonald, to see if Garner and I could go to the hospital whilst waiting to sail for Egypt.

Before leaving Nakuru it seemed only fair for the reputation of the expedition that I should again summon up enough courage to indulge in a shave. Whilst at my worst with scurvy I had been unable to use a tooth-brush for about six weeks, and had never dared to shave since my chin had been cut open, as I bled so profusely on the slightest scratch, and had been forbidden by Garner to do so. The result was that with a convict coiffure—we always used hair-clippers in camp—and a villainous two months' growth of beard and whiskers, I should have been refused admittance even to a dog-fight; and felt that it behoved me to try and improve appearances before we reached civilisation. My diary on August 22 records the fact: "Removed my over two months' growth of whiskers and grey beard this morning, performing the operation without a scratch—in spite of trepidations regarding profuse bleeding in case I cut myself. Feel a gentleman without this dreadful appendage—but don't look it." Garner followed suit; but he always grew an excellent one.

On the afternoon of the 23rd we removed our few belongings up to the station, and had them stowed into a waggon, whilst the men slept in their carriages. Roberts very kindly dined us in his bungalow near the station that evening, and we slept in the two carriages placed at our disposal. At 6 A.M. the following morning we steamed out

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of Nakuru station, and commenced the railway journey to the coast. It was most interesting to view the country from the train and travel at a fair pace through districts one formerly had tramped wearily across. We picked up, at a small roadway station, Farquhar, who had been a contemporary of mine at Clifton, and was now Superintendent of the Railway Police, and passing Lake Naivasha reached the foot of the Kikuyu escarpment about 1 P.M., starting shortly after on the incline trip. We were glad when we had reached the summit—it was too exciting for invalids, and I experienced some difficulty in keeping my heart out of my mouth. I cannot be sure of the exact rise from the Kedong Valley below—something like 1500 feet, I believe—but the grades were awesome, and we seemed to be hauled up the side of a house by a single cable. This, I was told, was tested to defeat a hundred-ton strain, and was only asked to draw six or seven, so we were quite safe. My nerves had not yet recovered their normal condition, and I can only repeat that I was more than glad when we reached the summit. If anything had given way the coroners would only have had dried dust to sit over. It was a magnificent piece of engineering, however, and one was filled with admiration and astonishment at its conception.

The Nairobi train was awaiting us at the summit, and when the relays of trucks and carriages—six or seven—which had been hauled up the incline, were attached to this, the journey was resumed shortly after three. We reached Nairobi just before dark,

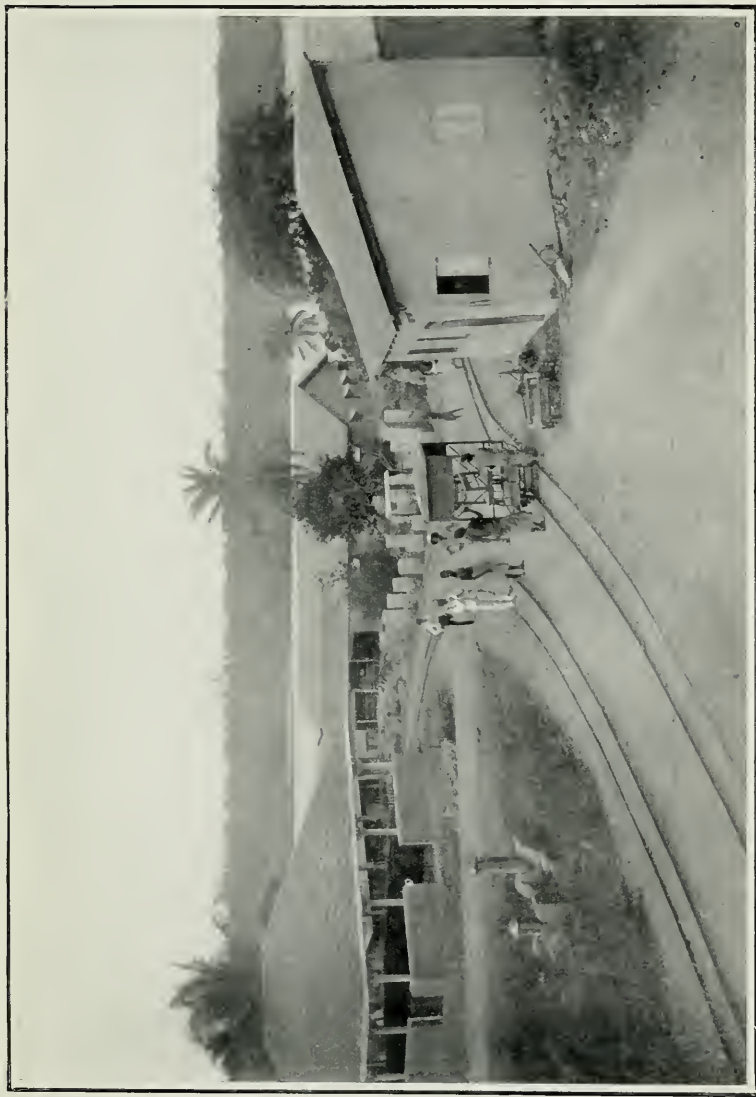
## FRIENDLY FACES

and on arrival the train was met by my old friend Harrison, who drove me up to the East Africa (now King's) Rifle mess, as the journey to the coast would not be continued until next morning. A room was found for me for the night, and I was welcomed by Wake, another old Uganda Mutiny comrade, and spent a most delightful evening talking over old times. The growth of Nairobi is perhaps one of the most striking features in connection with the Uganda railway. In January 1899 the place consisted of one small corrugated iron shed. It was now aptly termed "Tinville," for hundreds of tin-roofed bungalows had been rapidly erected for the accommodation of the numerous officials and employés of the railway; whilst the civil administration had also been removed from Machakos post to this place, where Mr. John Ainsworth, C.M.G., ruled as Sub-Commissioner. The population, we were assured, now numbered about 6000 souls, of whom close on 500 were whites. Nearly the whole of the railway staff, formerly located on Mombasa island, were now housed at Nairobi, which was the new head-quarters, and where the railway workshops, which contained the best and most modern of machinery, had been erected. In addition to being the great railway centre, and that of the civil administration of the interior of the British East Africa Protectorate, this was also the head-quarters of the East Africa Rifles. The officers were housed in comfortable bungalows, to which was attached a nice mess house, and the native lines of the troops were all that could be desired.

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As our train did not leave until ten next morning, Harrison drove me down in his cart after breakfast, and we parted at the station from him and Wake, who had also come down to see us off. Crossing the Athi plains and river, where game was still abundant, we reached the Makindu station that evening before dark, and remarked how this place also had grown since we took the railway from this point to the coast early in 1899. The following morning, shortly before ten, we steamed into Mombasa station, the 450 miles railway journey from Nakuru having occupied us little more than two days, as compared with as many months of tramping in the pre-railway days, when on the road to Uganda. Our survivors were housed by kind permission of Colonel Hatch in the lines formerly built for the accommodation of the first contingent of native troops from India, under the command of Major Barratt, D.S.O., and Major Scott, C.I.E., D.S.O. Here they were very comfortable during the next fortnight, whilst we awaited the arrival of a British India boat to convey us to Aden, *en route* to Cairo.

Garner and I took up our quarters at the hospital, where we received much attention from Dr. Macdonald and his staff of nursing sisters, whilst Bright lived with one of his old friends of the East Africa Administration. We reported our arrival to Sir Charles Eliot, K.C.M.G., C.B., the Consul-General, who was then at Mombasa, and as I was unable to walk he very kindly visited me at the hospital. Making, however, rapid strides towards recovery, before we sailed I



*On Mombasa Harbour, with the Club in the background. The trolley lines are for general use.*

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## FRIENDLY FACES

was able to get about for quite reasonable distances, after a week or ten days. Mr. D. J. Wilson, another old friend of ours, was untiring in his exertions on our behalf, and not only supplied the food for our men, but made all arrangements for the selling off by auction of the few remaining expedition stores and equipment, and helped us in every way during our stay. I was very pleased also to meet again Captain P. B. Osborn, D.S.O., another old Cliftonian, with whom I had been very intimately associated on the Macdonald expedition. He had been severely wounded in the knee at Kabagambi in February 1898 during the Uganda Mutiny, and for a long period had partially lost the use of the lower part of that leg, but had in time made a wonderful recovery, and told me that it was now as sound as ever it had been. He was serving with the East Africa Rifles, but had come to Mombasa for a few days on his way home on leave, *viâ* the Cape; and I had the pleasure of seeing him again for a short time recently in London, before he returned to the scene of his labours.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### HOMeward BOUND

WE sailed from Mombasa on September 8, 1901, on the B.I.S.N. Company's s.s. *Lawada*, accompanied by Captain Howard of the Uganda Rifles, who was going home on leave, and was a fellow-passenger to Aden. Lamu was reached early next morning, and we remained in the harbour until 1 P.M. before we put out to sea again. Kismayu was our next port of call, and had been the base for the recent operations against the Ogaden Somalis. We landed and spent the night here amongst old friends who had formed part of the force and were about to disperse. One of these was Captain de Gex, whom I had formerly known intimately at Lucknow in 1893. He was in charge of the Aden Camel Corps detachment, and had come down from up country to ship them off to their homes. He was shortly bound for Mombasa to obtain some shooting before rejoining his regiment at Malta. Almost the first paper I took up to read on arrival in London contained the sad intelligence of his death. He was killed by a lion on October 11.

The ex-kings of Uganda and Unyoro, Mwanga and Kaba Rega, were now exiles at Kismayu, and through the courtesy of Mr. M'Dougall, in civil charge



## HOMeward BOUND

of the station, they were brought round to his house in the afternoon. We were most interested in meeting these notorious historical personages, who for so many years had been so closely associated with events in Uganda and the upper waters of the Nile, and had a long interview with them. Mwanga spoke Ki-Swahili of course fluently, and was astounded to hear that in a short time it would be possible to proceed from Mombasa to his old capital, Mengo, in three or four days. He was now a thin, slight man with bushy beard and whiskers, and lovely teeth, but was nervous and exceedingly loquacious—a curious combination. Kaba Rega was a big, heavily-built man, with no hair on his face, and had recently lost an arm. He was unable to speak Ki-Swahili, so one of his numerous sons interpreted; but he seemed a very quiet, reserved old gentleman.

We sat down eight to dinner that evening in Captain Longfield's quarters, and it was not too early by the time we had all finished yarning and retired to roost. Next morning there was a fine breeze blowing when De Gex, Bright, and I put off in a sailing-boat to board our good ship again—De Gex coming to see the last of his Aden Corps—and being but a poor tar I with difficulty clung to my breakfast, as we were jumping about more than was pleasant. The *Lavada* had previously some 600 Indian coolies on board, returning to India on conclusion of their term of service on the construction of the Uganda railway, so the decks were pretty well crowded and matters were by no means improved by the advent of an additional

## HOMeward BOUND

sixty or seventy men. The coolies were an unsavoury crowd, and at anchor their presence asserted itself. They appeared to chew onions and oranges most of the voyage, and if you were not overpowered by the odour of the former blended with garlic, it was any odds you took a toss on the peel of the latter, with which the deck was liberally strewn.

We were not sorry to reach Aden, which we did on the afternoon of August 16, but as very stringent plague and "jigger" (little insects that burrow under the toe-nails) examinations were held of all on board, we were unable to land until the following morning, for it was too late to do so when the clean bill of health had been received. We arranged for accommodating our men in a house belonging to Cowasjee Dinshaw, and also obtained from that firm clothes, which we had sent from Cairo the previous December to await our arrival. Here, too, we received the first home letters since we had left Cairo nine months previously, and it may be imagined how anxious we were to hear all that had happened in the interval. We called on General Maitland and dined at the Residency one night, and saw a good deal of Captain Rundle, R.E., who was very hospitable, putting us up for the Club, and so on. But Aden is not much in the way of a pleasure resort for those passing through, and we were by no means comfortable in the unsanitary hotel we had graced with our presence, so were glad to be off again when the Austrian-Lloyd steamer *Silesia* arrived from Burma *en route* to Trieste. We had secured passages on her for the men and ourselves,

## HOMeward BOUND

and Aden disappeared from view on the evening of September 22.

There were only two other passengers, one of whom was a delicate-looking young Swiss going home on leave to his native country, and the other a Turk, who appeared to know most languages, bar English. He was very lonely, smoked cigarettes and drank coffee incessantly all day, never appeared at meals (we were unclean, I suppose, he being a Mohammedan), and *would* talk in Arabic to us. We did not soar to any great height in that difficult language, and, beyond the ordinary routine of camp work and so on, made no pretence of being able to discuss political and theological subjects, so the conversations were dull—downright, deliberately dull.

Suez was reached on the evening of September 27, and, after all had been examined again, we went ashore next morning, passed everything through the customs, and proceeded to the station to take train to Cairo. Whilst waiting there for the train, after a hasty breakfast of eggs and cold pork at the Hotel Bachet, we saw a crowd of some forty to fifty people approaching from the direction of the canal, headed by a white-bearded old man dressed in European fashion. We were fated to tumble across notabilities in out-of-the-way spots, for this was the great Arabi Pasha, returning to Egypt from Ceylon after an exile of close on twenty years. He had just landed, and was met by old Sheikhs and friends from his native town, who joined us on the station platform, but did not travel in the same train. Mwanga, Kaba Rega, and Arabi

## HOMeward BOUND

Pasha—their names are all writ large in some portion or another of African history.

We left by train just after ten, reached Ismailia about 1 P.M., and Cairo shortly after 4 P.M. On stepping out of the train we were much surprised to find ourselves greeted by Sir Rennell Rodd and a large number of Egyptian Army officers—a piece of kindly attention that was all the more appreciated as it was so unexpected—who had come to welcome back those who had safely passed through such dreadful experiences. Whilst we took up our quarters again at the Grand Hotel Continental, the men were accommodated at the Abdin Barracks. We were overwhelmed with sympathetic inquiries from many old friends during our stay, and received also a very warm cable from Sir Reginald Wingate, then at home on leave, in which he highly eulogised the grand and faithful services of Mabruk Effendi and the escort.

Two days after our return to Cairo I accompanied these splendid fellows back to Assuan to rejoin their regiment. On arrival they met with a most cordial and stirring reception, not only from their commandant and officers, but from the whole battalion, who were drawn up awaiting them at the station. The band played them back to the old lines they had marched from more than nine months before; but only half had lived to return, and there was much sorrow intermingled with the gladness. Such a reception must, indeed, have gone far to obliterate—temporarily only, perhaps—the memory of that hideous time, when they had suffered so much, and yet which they had



*Method of taking wood on board as fuel for the Nile steamers.*

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## HOMeward BOUND

faced with such fortitude and firm resolve to win through at all costs. I owe those men much. Had it not been for their loyal and exemplary behaviour, and the grand way in which they worked, none of us would ever have been heard of again alive. During the next day all details regarding pay were arranged in conjunction with Hunter Bey, to whose notice also I brought the names of those especially deserving of recognition. After a pleasant, but necessarily short visit, when I enjoyed much hospitality from Hunter, and his second-in-command, Sutherland, it was my sad duty to wish my black comrades good-bye and return to Cairo on October 3.

The following morning I rejoined Bright and Garner at that place, where we met with much kindness during the few remaining days we spent there before leaving for England. On October 8 we were seen off from the station by Colonels Talbot and Ferguson; travelling to Port Said, we boarded the *Rome*, which conveyed us to Marseilles; and on the evening of October 15, 1901, were back in London town.

I have recorded in these pages the invaluable assistance afforded me throughout by my two companions, Major Bright and Dr. Garner, and the splendid services rendered also by Mabruk Effendi and Bakhir Ahmed during the expedition; but before laying down my pen I must add that, had it not been for their loyal co-operation, the trials we had undergone and the difficulties that were overcome would have proved insuperable. I have tried to

## HOMeward BOUND

show how ably supported I was; and, in conclusion, would express my gratitude and appreciation of all they did for me whilst we were wearily plodding together, under unhappy circumstances, among Swamps and Giants in Equatorial Africa.



## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

### A FEW HINTS ON OUTFIT FOR AN AFRICAN EXPEDITION

EVERY traveller has his own ideas on the subject of outfit, and I would not presume for a moment to imagine that mine are of exceptional value. As, however, I have spent close on five years exploring and surveying in Africa on four separate expeditions, with experience of divers forms of transport, I have some practical knowledge of what the requirements are likely to be.

The question of weights of separate loads, and their shape and form, is an important one, and must be regulated almost entirely by the type of transport the intending traveller proposes to avail himself of. The usual transport obtainable in Africa is either human, animal, or a combination of both; and it is always advisable not to load men and animals too heavily if you wish to avoid early breakdowns. I am not, of course, referring to those parts of the continent where, owing to the level and unbroken surface of the plains, wheeled traffic is possible, for that would only be in semi-civilised districts, which would probably be rapidly passed through by the explorer in quest of unknown regions beyond, which it is his ambition to penetrate.

Such boxes and loads as are intended for camel transport should be more long than broad, to facilitate the fixing of them by ropes to the saddle, and to minimise the chances of disarrangement over rough ground, which is more likely if the loads are nearly square. I should be inclined to have no load exceeding 100 lbs. in weight, as any beyond that limit become too cumbersome to man-handle readily when loading up. The average load for a camel should not much exceed

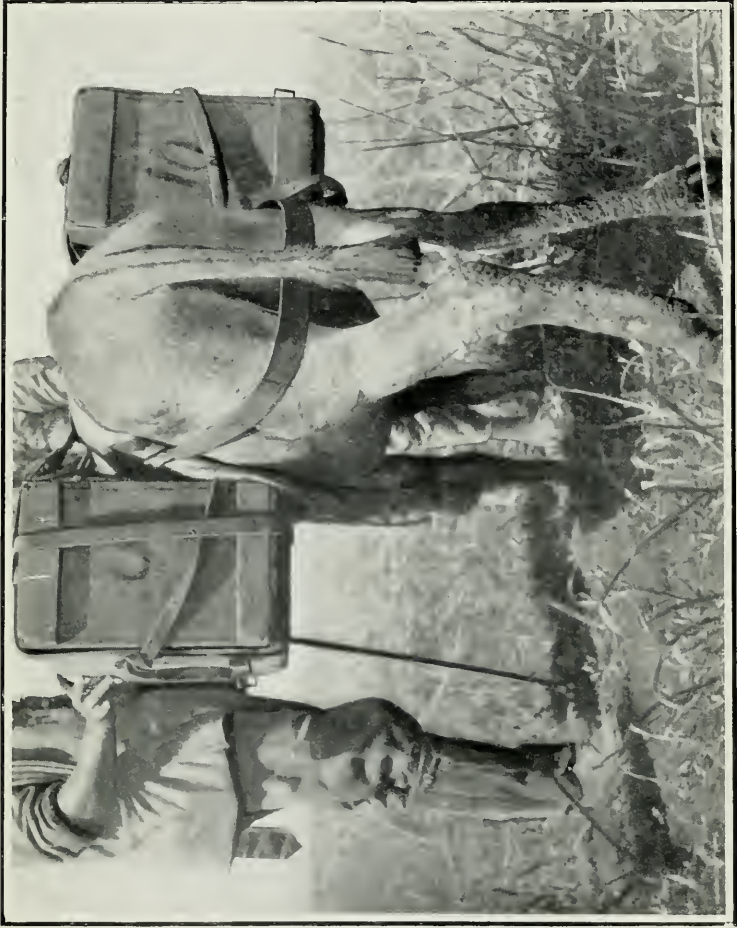
## APPENDIX

300 lbs. if uneven country is to be negotiated. That, however, is merely a question of the strength and physique of the species purchased, for some can carry 400 lbs. and more.

For mule and bullock transport the entire load, exclusive of the saddle, should not exceed about 180 lbs., which allows of a 90-lb. load on each side of the animal. Again avoid a square load, but the length need not exceed the breadth so much in this case. Boxes of ammunition are suitable for mules, but not for camels, and are too heavy for donkeys or men if quite full. Tents are convenient both for camels and mules; but I cannot recommend that a collapsible boat in two sections should be carried on anything but a camel, unless each part weighs within 56 lbs., which a porter could carry on his head.

A donkey should be able to transport comfortably two 56-lb. loads in the saddles we had made. We found the most convenient shape of a box for donkey transport to be 22 inches by 16 inches by 11 inches, which hold almost exactly 56 lbs. of European provisions, such as I will enumerate presently. Don't place long loads on donkeys, as it will hamper their progress, and probably gall their front legs where these come in contact with the box or package projecting beyond the saddle flap.

A Swahili porter, when he carries a load on his head, generally forms a species of small turban to place under it, either of his blanket or some of his clothing. With the load on the top he likes to be able to place his hand on the upper edge of the box, to get a grip there; so the loads should, if possible, not be too deep to admit of this, as he is less likely to part company with his burden if wading through a swift stream or over bad, rocky ground, when he uses a stick in his other hand to assist his footing. Keep his load down to 56 lbs., as you will probably expect him, in addition, to carry a rifle, ammunition, his rations possibly for ten days, and his own private belongings, such as tent and raiment. A good porter, with his face towards home, will make light of a total weight of about 100 lbs., if in convenient shape; but only on



*Special donkey saddles designed by the author for transport purposes.* [To face page 338.]



## APPENDIX

the home run, and not when leaving it. You must study his moods, and, if avoidable, don't insist on the ten days' supply of food being carried by him until he has come to fathom you and understands your ways. Otherwise, he will probably eat that amount in five or six days to diminish the load without and carry it within, and, if you are hard-hearted and firm, nothing will be left for him during the last three or four days of this period, unless he is sure of you.

The traveller who anticipates an absence of about a year may wisely provide for his personal kit two steel trunks, wood bound, and with rollers on the bottom, measuring about 27 inches by 18 inches by 11 inches and 30 inches by 20 inches by 12½ inches, which are obtainable from the Army and Navy Stores at a cost of about 19s. and 23s. 3d. respectively. They serve the purpose admirably, and the smaller box at a pinch can be carried on a donkey if the other animals succumb; but both are better adapted for mule or human transport, and no white ants will touch them, whereas they will spoil leather or wooden boxes, which suffer also from heavy rains.

### PERSONAL KIT

Two strong khaki shooting-suits, with wash-leather over the shoulders and knees, fitted with large pockets and pleats, to carry cartridges, on the left breast, presuming the right is your master-eye. Take some extra khaki cloth for repairs and patching.

Three thick flannel shirts for the march, and a similar number of twilled lining to wear in camp.

Six pairs of strong woollen socks for the march, and three of lighter material to wear about camp.

One strong flannel suit for camp, with an extra pair of trousers.

Three flannel pyjama suits complete.

Three pairs of strong shooting-boots, with nails, and plenty of spare porpoise-hide laces.

Two pairs of leather gaiters, or three of putties if preferred.

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One pair of canvas shoes to wear about camp.

Twelve pocket-handkerchiefs.

Four stout bath-towels.

Kummer bunds, according to taste.

Housewife, with plenty of needles, thread, and buttons, scissors, &c.

Hair-clippers—you will probably not be accompanied by a barber.

Small camp looking-glass.

Tooth-powder and brushes.

Razors and strop, shaving-soap and brush.

Sponges and bag, nail-brush and pumice-stone.

Soap, and a small case to hold the cake in use.

Pipes, tobacco, and cigarette-papers, according to taste.

Clips for tent-poles, dubbing for boots, or some soft soap.

Waterproof-cloak, and warm coat for the evenings.

You may perhaps like to wear drawers and vests; if so, take them, but you will hardly need them.

For your bedding you will require a good serviceable valise, made of Willesden canvas, in which to carry three blankets, two pillows and four pillow-cases, mosquito-curtains, and a few of the articles enumerated above, such as kit to change into after arrival in camp; but I do not advise sheets. Your camp bed and mattress will also be enveloped in this. Get the "Compactum" type. Don't forget a canvas bath, wash-hand stand and basin, water bottles and filters, sun-hats, white umbrella, dark glasses, and some literature. Some people like sun-pads to cover the spine attached to the inner side of the shooting-jacket; but I think a treble pleat on the outside over the spine is more convenient.

On the march you will probably wear a pig-skin belt, with pouches and a good hunting-knife attached; whilst your field-glasses will always be at hand for examining the country or spotting the best head in a herd of antelopes. As for your battery, I must leave that entirely to your own ideas on the subject; but rifles are essential and a shot gun



## APPENDIX

affords plenty of sport, and keeps the camp pot a-boiling. Take magazines for your ammunition, and distribute it evenly between them, so that if one or two loads get lost you don't necessarily lose the entire supply belonging to any one of your weapons. All your battery should be provided with canvas sling cases in which your orderly or gun-bearers can carry your rifles on the march; don't forget cartridge-bags and bandoliers; whilst a net for game is useful for birds or hares picked up on the road. Another case containing all your cleaning-rods, implements, vaseline, &c., one of the animals or porters will carry, as those will only be required in camp; but I should have a good knife in my pocket, or on the belt, containing corkscrew, cartridge-extractor, &c. &c. &c.

Diaries, memorandum-books, pens, ink-powders, pencils, and writing-paper, envelopes, and complete writing-case you take as a matter of course. Then when you have fitted yourself out with a green rot-proof canvas tent with double fly, and a large ground-sheet to cover the interior, in addition to a small necessary tent shelter, and a camp chair or two, and folding tables, with lanterns, candles, and matches, you, personally, will be ready for travelling—as soon as you have purchased your camp crockery of aluminium ware, such as cooking pots (three or four of different sizes, with covers), teapot, kettle, knives, forks, spoons, cups, saucers, tumblers, &c. &c.; spirit lamp, sparklet bottles, with cartridges, and solidified spirits of wine.

### COMMISSARIAT AND EUROPEAN PROVISIONS

As to provisions for the journey, I would strongly recommend that these be entirely taken out from England. The Army and Navy Stores have had so much experience in making up provision boxes that it will only be necessary to mention the cases similar to those we had made up to find your wants immediately supplied. Our boxes of red pine 22 inches by 16 inches by 11 inches were fitted with lock and key—screwed-down boxes necessitate much labour,

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which is best avoided. These boxes are screwed down originally for transshipment; but when once the box is taken into use you need never screw it up again for camp purposes, as hasps are all ready, and on the top of the contents inside is the padlock and key. These boxes are especially adapted for donkey and man transport; but for camel they would be better longer, and increased up to 75 or 80 lbs. in weight, when a camel could comfortably carry four of them, or a mule two. Our boxes averaged about 56 lbs. in weight, and held sufficient necessities for one European for a month, or for ten days for three, which we considered liberal.

This is what they contained, everything possible being in hermetically sealed tins, which no amount of wetting would damage to any appreciable extent:—

Jam, biscuits, tea, cocoa, coffee, saccharine or saxine, soup squares, corn flour, arrowroot, compressed vegetables, dried apple-rings, prunes, Liebig, bovril, pickles, sauce, essence-flavouring, sardines, salt, one tin hare soup, curry-powder, candles, tobacco, red currant jelly,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb. bar washing-soap, curling-paper, tin-opener, corkscrew, mustard, pepperettes, tinned milk, and oatmeal. These can be varied to suit especial tastes; but they will serve as a basis to guide others.

Don't forget matches; you will only be able to take them out from England on special steamers, as the ordinary liners will not carry them; and it may perhaps be advisable to postpone purchasing them until you reach your port of disembarkation. A mincing-machine should not be omitted; and get a few additional boxes made up with extra porridge, candles, tobacco, self-raising flour, and some larger tins of plain biscuits. Before starting up country arrange to take with you, in bags, sufficient white flour and rice to last the Europeans for the entire trip, as you need them badly when you can get no fresh vegetables, after you have left civilisation. If possible, take either milch goats or cows when you start off—it makes a great difference to one's health to obtain fresh milk—and a flock of goats and sheep for meat.

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You will probably at one time or another run out of this, as game may be scarce and your live stock unreplenishable, so it would be advisable to take a few cases of tinned meats for an emergency. The Stores will make up 56-lb. boxes containing: Army rations, lunch tongues, roast beef, haricot mutton, spiced beef, stewed rump steak, duck and peas, roast fowl, Oxford brawn, sausages, and lard. A native servant will always worry you for lard or "ghi" to cook with, but only give it rarely. He can very well do without, and it is not absolutely necessary.

### LIQUOR

You will chiefly be dependent on water, but it is as well to have a small supply of wines as medical comforts in case of sickness, in addition to the "tot" of whisky and sparklet soda, every other day or so. Take therefore a few bottles of brandy and port, some small pint bottles of champagne and lime-juice, and add Eno to your medical comforts.

### MEDICINES

Unfortunately I am not a doctor, and can only suggest under this head what the ordinary amateur physician is most likely to find use for during his travels. It must always be remembered that amongst natives "faith removes mountains," and so long as the traveller has the most elementary knowledge of how to treat fevers and to deal with ulcers and dysentery, the small stock of medicines that I enumerate will in most cases be found ample—speaking from my personal experience:—

Quinine tabloids, or powder preferable for the men.

Ipecacuanha tabloids for dysentery, with opium tabloids.

Lead and opium tabloids for diarrhoea or dysentery.

Purgative pills for constipation.

Dover's powders to create a sweat in fever.

Phenacetin tabloids for sun or feverish heads.

Permanganate of potassium for cleansing wounds.

Boracic powder and ointment for powdering wounds.

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- Oil of cloves for toothache—or menthol, equally good.
- Dermatol for ulcers, or powdering sores or cuts.
- Cough lozenges.
- Nitrate of silver for cauterising ulcers or snake bites.
- Alum for clearing muddy water.
- Arsenical soap for preservation of skins.
- Antiseptic lint and wool, bandages, and oilskin.
- Mustard leaves for pneumonia, bronchitis, &c.
- Clinical thermometers, and small pocket-case of instruments containing lancet, needles, &c.
- Syringes for cleansing wounds, the ears, &c.
- Elliman's embrocation for bruises and strains.
- Keating for—well, everybody knows what "Keating" is for.
- Ointment for that distressing complaint so common in camp—piles.
- A catheter might be added, as cases of stricture sometimes occur.

### CAMP EQUIPMENT.

In addition to his own personal needs, the traveller will require certain equipment for his column, which will be found generally indispensable.

Collapsible boat complete—a 10-foot James' boat in two sections we found excellent. Take a stout hawser, 40 or 50 yards in length, to establish a ferry in crossing rivers.

Tarpaulins and ground-sheets for covering loads.

Buckets, galvanised iron, or canvas will do.

Axes, bill-hooks, reapers, picks, shovels, and saws.

Rope of different kinds, and plenty of it.

Saddles for transport animals, head-stalls, and picketing-ropes.

Weighing-machines, lines, hooks, sail-needles, large quantities of twine, pack-thread, &c.

Casks or water skins.

Complete case of tools, with hammer, saw, screw-driver,

## APPENDIX

chisel, bradawl, file, &c., &c., and plenty of assorted nails and screws.

Canvas bags—waterproof if possible—to carry the men's rations, such as flour, rice, lentils, &c., &c. They should be capable of containing 55 lbs. of unground grain at least.

Flags for marking out the camping-ground.

### EQUIPMENT AND KIT FOR MEN

The Swahili porter is provided with a small cloth tent, blanket, and "sufaria," or cooking pot. Our Sudanese Jehadia we fitted out with two blankets, a pair of boots or sandals, a pair of "putties," a brown jersey, water bottle and haversack, an ammunition belt to carry 40 rounds, a rifle, a sword-bayonet, white cloth pyjama trousers, and a canvas kit-bag; whilst for cooking purposes the regulation camp kettles (British) cannot be beaten.

### TRADE GOODS

It will be well understood that the usual coinage of civilised countries has no value in remote parts of Africa, where all bartering and purchasing is carried out by means of certain articles that appeal to the vanity of the natives for adorning their persons, and which they are ready to accept in exchange for such food, live stock, and other goods they may possess. The requirements of the natives vary all over the continent, so that it is difficult to advise on this subject; and it is well to obtain the opinion of those persons acquainted with the regions intended to be traversed, as to the special form of trade goods likely to be in most request.

At different times and places when travelling in Africa, I have employed the following articles for purchasing food:—

Beads of many different varieties—these are probably the most general form of trade goods.

Iron, brass, and copper wire of about the thickness of ordinary telegraph wire.

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Cloth of different colours and texture, but chiefly white.  
Fancy cloths—much in request amongst semi-civilised women.

Native tobacco—especially useful in Turkana and Marle.  
Revolvers, swords, ammunition, Terai slouch felt hats, watches and chains, and salt, amongst Gallas and Abyssinians.

Native hatchets, spear-heads, hoes, knives, and nails, amongst agricultural or warlike natives.

Cowrie shells and ostrich feathers.

In Karamojo the cow constitutes a great attraction to natives, and grain used to be purchased in the following manner: A cow would be sold for from 50 to 60 goats and sheep; each sheep or goat would then be sold for one full bag of grain, weighing from 50 to 60 lbs.—as no one person possessed sufficient grain to purchase a cow outright with it.

### SURVEY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Bound for unknown regions the traveller (who has now fitted out himself, his men, and the expedition generally) intends of course to carry out some sort of survey, to impress those at home with the interesting geographical knowledge he has accumulated during his wanderings. If he cannot survey himself, he will probably take some one who can, and possibly more than one. They will require instruments and materials for this special work, such as the following:—

Theodolites: perhaps a five-inch fitted with micrometers and a small three-inch one in addition; or it may be that Sextants can be more easily manipulated by those about to undertake the survey.

Chronometers are essential, and should be the best watch ones procurable, with watertight fittings.

Barometers and hypsometers for recording heights.

Pedometers or perambulators for recording distances.

Plane tables and stands.

Prismatic compasses.

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Heliographs and stands are useful for flashing signals.  
Camera and spools, for faithful reproduction of country and natives.

Maximum and minimum thermometers; and books and tables for working out calculations, such as:

“Nautical Almanacs,” “Raper’s Navigation,” “Star Atlas,” “Hints to Travellers,” logarithm tables, angle-books, the “Chatham Reconnaissance Book,” note-books, &c.

A 100-foot chain and arrows, steel or canvas 100-foot tapes, box of mathematical instruments, protractors, scales, drawing-paper, tracing-paper, tracing-cloth, section and green paper, paint-box, Indian ink, brushes, assorted pencils, India-rubber, drawing-pins, paper-fasteners, rubber rings, blotting-paper, penholders and nibs, etching-nibs, and pocket-knives for sharpening pencils, erasing blots, &c. All these may be necessary, in addition to foolscap paper, envelopes, and so on. If the above are purchased it will be found that most requirements will be met from a survey point of view.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Under this head you must jot down any special things you may require, such as skinning-knives, butterfly-net, and poisoning tins, and the various other things that go to make up a naturalist’s paraphernalia. I think then that you may rest satisfied that few of the things that are so essential in the wilds will have been forgotten, and that you may now consider yourself thoroughly well equipped to take the field for such length of time as you have calculated that your provisions will last.

H. H. A.

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(For reproduction of the following letter, see illustration facing page 40.)

### EMPEROR MENELIK'S LETTER TO MAJOR AUSTIN

MAJOR AUSTIN,  
c/o DEJAJ TASAMMA, Nadur Village.

*From MENELIK THE SECOND, the conquering lion from David's descent, who is anointed by God, King of Kings of Ethiopia.*

*To all the Abyssinian officials and representatives to whom this letter may be shown.*

This letter should be accepted with joy and peace wherever the bearers may arrive.

The bearers of this, Major Austin and party, who are said to belong to the English nation, should not be opposed or interfered with in any way wherever they go, through the country of Dejjaj Tasamma; they should be rendered every possible assistance in buying whatever they want, such as horses, mules, and donkeys, for the transport of their luggage, and should men be required for the purpose they should be provided.

Bearers will ask nothing from you without paying for it, but should you consider it within the limits of civility to offer them anything you can do so. Should you fail to offer them the assistance I am requesting from you, you will have to pay for it dearly with your skins, because I will punish it very severely.

Written at ADDIS ABABA.

25th Baramhat.



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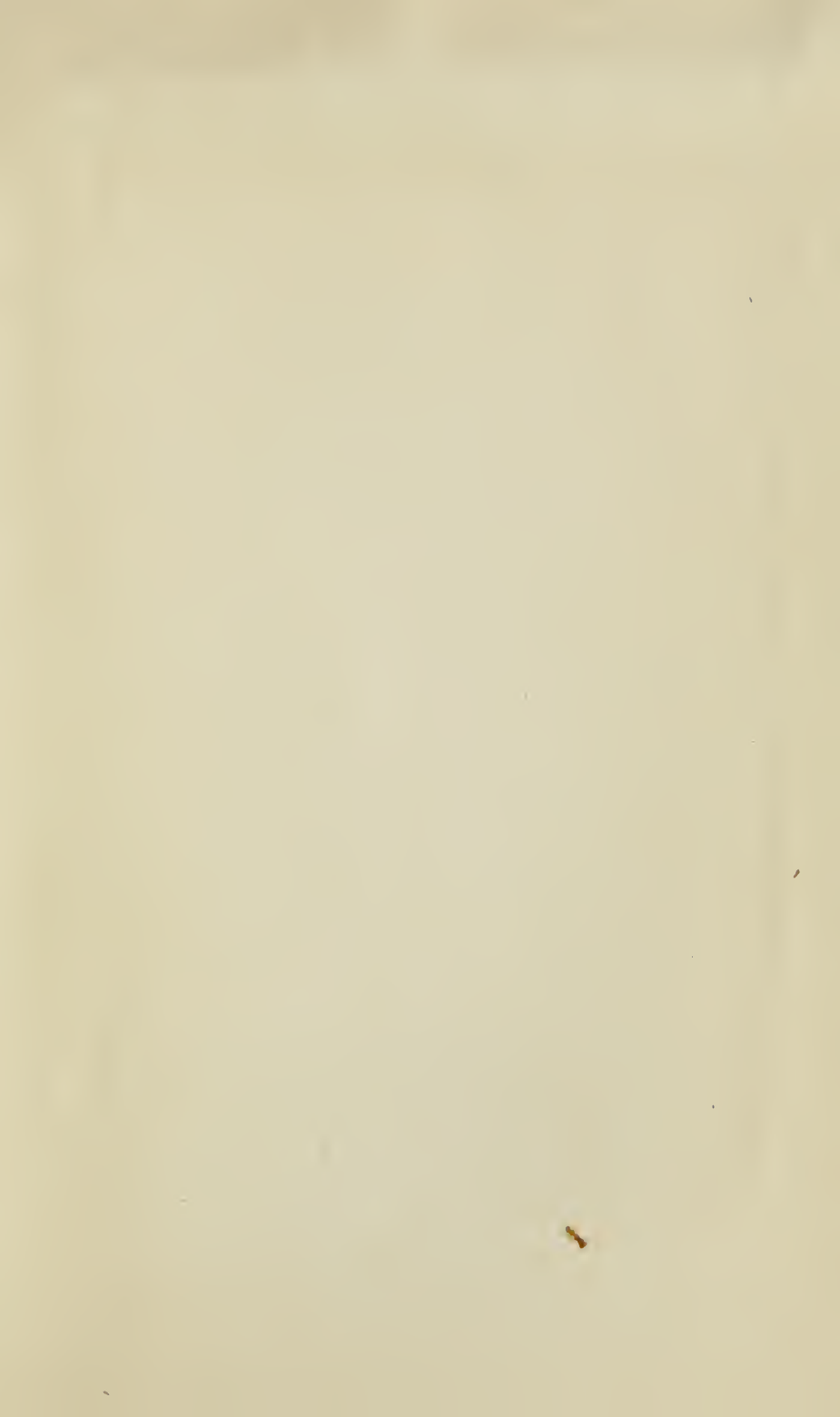
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THE END









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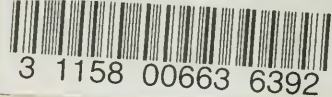
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