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# ABYSSINIA

AND ITS PEOPLE;

OR,

*LIFE IN THE LAND OF PRESTER  
JOHN.*



*King Theodore.*

EDITED BY

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN,

FELLOW OF THE ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY, ETC.

*With a New Map; and Eight Coloured Illustrations*

BY MM. VIGNAUD AND BARRAT.

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*IT IS ALMOST a truism to say that the better a country is known, the more difficult it is to write a book about it. Just now we know very little of Abyssinia, and therefore a dull book, provided it contains trustworthy facts concerning that region, would be read with eagerness.*  
—THE TIMES, October 9, 1867.

IT was in the belief that such a book of facts—facts supplied by travellers who have visited Abyssinia during the past half-century—would possess some interest to the general public at the present moment, that the following work was undertaken. Should it, however, be found “dull,” there was no necessity for its possessing this character, as the information given in books of Abyssinian travel is of the most varied and interesting kind.

No literary merit whatever is claimed for the performance, and all it pretends to be is a fair and honest picture of Abyssinia as it was, and as it is, drawn by early and recent travellers. If the book is of no other value, it will at least indicate the authorities which may be consulted by any one desirous of extending his knowledge of the country and its people.

A great deal of nonsense has of late been written about the appalling dangers of Abyssinia, and the extreme difficulties of travelling there under any and all circumstances, and one object of this volume was to

show with what comparative ease (all things considered) several travellers—some very indifferently equipped—have passed through almost every part of the country. As Dr. Beke remarks concerning the alleged “mountain passes and difficulties unknown” [reference is here made to an assertion of Lord Russell, when speaking of the great dangers of travelling in Abyssinia], “it might really be imagined that no Europeans had been in Abyssinia since the time of Bruce and Salt. And yet, within the last quarter of a century, there are few ‘unknown’ countries that have been visited and traversed in all directions by so large a number of educated Europeans, many of whom have published their travels.”\*

At the present moment there appear to be three classes of advisers upon what is commonly known as the “Abyssinian Question.” The first disbelieve in the success of *any* expedition, and are quite willing that the captives should be left to their fate, as “they went to Abyssinia of their own accord, or at least with their eyes open.” The second recommend that an armed expedition should be immediately despatched there, and the King promptly punished for his insult to British authority. The third party, like the second, recommend an armed expedition, but they are of opinion that as Abyssinia is the high road to the interior of Africa, and occupies an important and convenient position adjacent to the shores of the Red Sea, that the officers of the expedition might leisurely look about them after they had accomplished their original task—in other words, that they need not be in any great haste to leave the country after they once get there. Of the three classes of advisers it is believed that the suggestions of the last will find most favour with our Government, and with the public, too, when all the

\* “The British Captives in Abyssinia,” by Dr. C. Beke, p. 18.

circumstances and contingencies of the "Abyssinian Question" are fairly laid before them.

Two kinds of expeditions have been recommended to open the intended campaign—the one to consist of a small but highly trained body of men (selected from their peculiar fitness for the enterprise), who should scour the country in the quickest possible time; the other, to comprise from ten to fifteen thousand soldiers, and form a commission such as it is now understood the Government are fitting out. The idea of a small expedition is no new thing. As early as 1530 the practicability of conquering Abyssinia with a small force of disciplined troops was entertained by the trained officer of the Portuguese monarch. Oviedo, missionary and soldier, thus wrote home to the King of Portugal:—"I earnestly entreat you to despatch 1500 men, with which I undertake to conquer all Abyssinia." The proposal, however, was never acted upon.

It has been suggested that, as Nubia bounds Abyssinia on the north and partly on the west, and as Egypt occupies the principal seaport of the country, Massowah; and England is at the present time on terms of friendship with the Turkish Government;—we should, therefore, requite the insult paid to our country by aiding Egypt in subjecting Abyssinia to her rule. Such a course, however, is most strongly condemned by all travellers who have had experience of Egyptian authority in those parts. The Turkish idea of government appears to be the occupation of a seaport, or trading-post, for the purpose of collecting dues and taxes, and then leaving all the rest of the country to protect itself and manage its affairs as it best can. If anything is to be done for Abyssinia it must not be through the Turks. As Sir Samuel Baker remarks: "The Turks never improve.

There is an Arab proverb that 'the grass never grows in the footprint of a Turk;' and nothing can be more aptly expressive of the character of the nation than this simple adage: *Misgovernment, monopoly, extortion, and oppression, are the certain accompaniments of Turkish administration.*"\* The testimony of other travellers is very similar, and the captives themselves—in every way qualified to judge of the character and antipathies of the Abyssinian people—entreat of our Government to act entirely independent of Egypt in whatever measures they may take for their release.

Territorial and political influence on the shores of the Red Sea were matters which engaged the earnest attention of the French Government long before the Suez canal became a subject for discussion throughout Europe. The importance of the Red Sea as a short cut to India and the countries of the East, was early seen by French politicians and merchants; and after various independent travellers had returned with stories of the fertility and natural wealth of Abyssinia, its political confusion and absence of settled government, the French authorities determined upon despatching a completely appointed expedition to examine and report upon the several aspects of the country. That there might be no mistake, a *second expedition* was started within twelve months, the instructions given to which were similar to those of the first. In part 1 of this book some of the results of those commissions are given, and the reader may see for himself how energetic our neighbours have been in making themselves acquainted with a country which might some day become a French colony. Ever since the return of the expedition, French agents have occupied some of the principal towns or

\* Baker's "Albert N'Yanza," vol. 7., p. 13.



provinces in Abyssinia, according, we believe, to the admirable instructions contained in M. Lefebvre's report (given entire further on for the benefit of my own countrymen). They have, very wisely, not busied themselves in the squabbles of the different tribes for supremacy, or sided with one or other of the chiefs in their fights—as our active countryman, Bell, or as our unfortunate Consul Plowden certainly did; but they have exerted none the less (perhaps more) influence upon Abyssinian politics in consequence. We should, probably, have heard further about French influence in Abyssinia, had the Catholic missionaries, also sent by France, been more successful. If these found favour under one chief or king, their expulsion or persecution was made a political principle by his successor; and so up to this hour they only exert a very small influence in this part of the country, nowhere within Theodore's jurisdiction. I do not mean to say that the French have not as much right in Abyssinia as we have; but I do say that whilst we have been sleeping they have been working there, and that whether they sent an expedition of scientific and commercial inquiry, or an agent, or a consul, they have always been very much more successful than we have been.\* There can be little doubt also that the influence exerted there by them has been detrimental to us, and that the present unfortunate relations betwixt this country and Abyssinia have at least been aggravated by the false reports of certain French agents. The impudent story of the Count de

\* At the present moment M. Munzinger, the active French Consul at Massowah, performs also the consular duties for this country, and it must be stated to his credit that he is thoroughly impartial in his attentions to both Governments, our political resident at Aden continually consulting him on various matters connected with the expedition now fitting out.

Bisson, and the untruths of Bardel, Consul Cameron's agent, are but minor instances of this bad influence. The late French consul, M. Lejean, was imprisoned as well as our own representative ; but the former obtained his freedom because he kept himself aloof from Abyssinian quarrels, and because no Englishman tried to prejudice a suspicious king against him.

It is satisfactory to observe a little less ignorance concerning King Theodore in our public journals of late. Six months ago he was generally spoken of as a mere remove from an orang-outang, a naked scarecrow, compared with whom the King of Dahomey was a polished gentleman. One of the latest exhibitions of this ignorance is the cartoon of *Punch*, where the Abyssinian monarch is represented as a negro of the lowest type, with flat nose and huge lips, attired in left-off top boots, and a military coat from Monmouth Street—a kind of music-hall Jim Crow, crouching and yelping at the feet of Lord Stanley, or somebody else, who presents him with an ultimatum on the point of a bayonet. From the various travellers' description of him, one general portrait may be formed—that of a brave, haughty, and unscrupulous chieftain who with certain surroundings might make a respectable King, but who, when these were removed, would make a very bad one, and should therefore be deposed as soon as possible. In many respects the national character and customs of Abyssinia resemble those of certain tribes of the North American Indians, and if both are descended from the lost tribes of the Jews—as certain bold speculatists have assured us—the resemblance can in this way receive some explanation. Be this as it may, Theodore's character is not at all unlike that of many Indian chiefs whom I have met—a mass of inconsistencies very difficult to European comprehension. Brave

and daring to a fault—untruthful and tricky over trifles ; forgetful of self as an anchorite, and exacting of others in the extreme in all matters of obeisance and ceremony ; chivalrous and forgiving one day, inhumanly cruel and bloodthirsty the next. Like all clever savages, Theodore is exceedingly crafty. His letters, mostly written in the Amharic dialect, are perfect models of diplomatic composition. There is scarcely a phrase which is not susceptible of two or more interpretations. Truly, as M. Lejean has remarked, “it may be said of Theodore, as it has been said of an illustrious European statesman — ‘If you wish to understand his real sentiments from his letters, you must read between the lines.’” Theodore, like the rest of his countrymen, detests the Turks ; and I am told by a gentleman long resident at Khartoom of a report current there during the Crimean War, that the King—then a petty chief—prevailed upon Ras Ali to despatch two messengers to the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, offering him a troop of Abyssinian soldiers to join his forces in waging war against the Turks.

The past history of Abyssinia shows how ill adapted is the system of chiefs and petty despotisms to anything like a settled condition of country. To all appearance Abyssinia has remained in the same disturbed state for many centuries—probably ever since the fall of Axum and the decline of its grandeur. Now a chief, superior to his fellows, would, after a fashion, rule the country for a period ; but his death would as surely be the signal for one of those terrible commotions which invariably leave the country in a worse condition than ever. In fact, the history of Abyssinia appears to be made up of such recitals as abound in the chronicles of the Old Testament—a weary, and almost never-ending series of small fights and petty battles, carried on senselessly and

without cause or reasonable provocation, betwixt tribes and families,—where, for instance, the sons of Reuben and the tribe of Manasseh wage continual war with the Hagarites, and where a king is no sooner on his throne than he is slain and sent to sleep with his fathers, the assassin or the eldest son reigning in his stead, until he, in turn, shall experience a similar fate. In other respects many points of similarity may be traced betwixt the ancient Jews and the Abyssinians.

Much has lately been said of the unhealthiness of Abyssinia. Let a recent well-informed traveller speak on this point:—“When the narrow belt of low land along the shores of the Indian Ocean, which, from its general dryness, arising from the absence of large rivers, is far from unhealthy at most seasons of the year, is once passed, and *the eastern edge of the elevated table-land is attained, a climate is met with which is not merely congenial to European constitutions, but is absolutely more healthy than that of most countries.* I speak from the experience of upwards of two years passed on the high land, under circumstances anything but favourable. \* \* \* \* The captives, in any other country in the world not blessed with such a climate, must long ago have succumbed to the privations and hardships to which they have been subjected. \* \* \* \* It is a temperate, well-watered, and most fertile country, inhabited by an agricultural and at the same time war-like people, and possessing capabilities not surpassed by those of any region on the face of the earth.” \*

THE arrangement of the following book may be briefly stated:—Part I. takes a cursory view of the results of early and recent travellers in Abyssinia, with such a

\* “The British Captives,” pp. 14-16.

selection from their works as may serve to give the general reader a very fair idea of life in Abyssinia, from the days of Bruce to the present day.

Part II. gives one of the best accounts of Abyssinia ever written—that sent home to his superiors in office by Consul Plowden. It really contains everything that it is necessary to know about the country at the present time: its geographical divisions, government, laws, and customs. So closely, indeed, is the information packed in these official despatches, that they very well merit the title of “literary pemmican,” which a correspondent has given them.

Part III. contains the story of the British Captives, the detention of whom by King Theodore has invested everything relating to Abyssinia with so peculiar an interest at the present moment.

Part IV. is devoted to those practical suggestions which have recently been made by distinguished travellers to our Government, for an armed expedition to Abyssinia, to release the captives. The net results, too, of the great French expedition of 1839-43 are here given in the shape of routes to and from every important place in Abyssinia. Major Harris’s route has been included, for the reason that it has been recommended by more than one writer that our expedition should land at Tajurrah, and proceed by way of Ankobar to Debra Tabor, or wherever the King and the captives might be situated at the time.

Part V. will not possess much interest for the general reader, as it is simply a bibliography, as full as the editor could make it, of all the known books published about Abyssinia. To the intending traveller in those parts, or to the geographical student, it may prove useful.

The orthography of Abyssinian proper names is

a puzzling matter. Each traveller has laid down a standard for himself; constructing his rules for pronunciation according to nationality, education, or of accidental bias. As, therefore, no two books or maps have the names of persons or of places spelt in a similar manner—the authors themselves varying the orthography two or three times in the same chapter,—the editor has been unable to preserve anything like uniformity in this particular. The compiler of the last Government Blue-Book seems to have met with a similar difficulty,\* for the chieftain Gobayze is so mentioned on one page, but on the next he is spoken of as *Goluzye*.

Our map might have been a much more elaborate one. It is, however, but a “sketch” intended to assist the reader in tracing out the more important places. Another and much fuller map is in preparation. Of the illustrations, that described as a “View of Mas-sowah” would be more accurate if entitled a “View on the Island of Massowah,” as it only represents the Custom-house and a small part of the port. The picture of the Abyssinian devouring raw flesh is no fancy sketch: it is a truthful representation, by M. Vignaud, of an every-day occurrence in Abyssinia.

As the “Bibliography” at the end is necessarily incomplete, the editor will be obliged by the receipt of particulars of any works, the titles of which may have been omitted.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge my obligations to the REV. GEORGE PERCY BADGER, whose intimate knowledge of all that pertains to the East gives his advice a peculiar value; to DR. C. BEKE, whose works, more than those of any other traveller, have made us acquainted with the geography of Abyssinia; to CLEMENTS

R. MARKHAM, Esq., F.R.G.S., who has been requested to accompany the present expedition for scientific purposes; and to MR. HENRY A. BURETTE, who, not long since, returned from Gondar by way of Khartoom. To these gentlemen I have to express my best thanks for hints and suggestions.

J. C. H.

Oct. 25, 1867.



THE TZETSEAI FLY.

A short time since it was very generally believed that this poisonous insect was only *one* of the many terrors which attended travelling in Abyssinia. Bruce mentions it; but as he visited many parts of Africa, and wrote his book some years after his return home, he, in all probability, erred in fixing it upon Abyssinia. Modern travellers declare the country to be quite free from it, and assure us it is only to be met with several hundred miles distant; Sir S. Baker, however, alludes to a terrible fly to be met with here which "destroys all domestic animals." Our illustration is larger than the actual size. The fly is generally seen with the wings closed, and to all appearance resembles an ordinary summer fly. Its bite is almost certain death to cattle, but appears to be comparatively harmless to human beings.

A FEW ABYSSINIAN WORDS IN  
FREQUENT USE.

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- NEGUS.—The title of the King ; literally King of Kings.  
RAS.—Chief, head, whether applied to a ruler or promontory of land.  
DEDJAZ.—General, Duke, or leader ; contraction of *Dedjazmach*.  
ABOUNA.—Bishop.  
LIK.—Judge.  
TCHIGEE.—Head of the Church.  
THAFI.—Secretary.  
BALDARABA.—An agent, representative.  
ASALAFY.—One who waits at table.  
SHOTEL.—A knife or small sword used in cutting “Brundo.”  
MAISE.—A liquor made of honey, fermented with barley, to which is added a bitter root, called taddo. It is called “hydromel” by Bruce, and by some “mead.”  
GOGO.—Wheaten bread of the finest quality, rarely seen but at the table of the Ras.  
TEFF.—Grass seed. The chief article of food of all ranks. It varies in colour from pure white to black, and is made into their cakes, called “Engard.”  
NENG.—A small grain, not unlike the Indian “raggy.”  
BRUNDO.—Raw meat.  
KASA.—Ransom.  
QUANTAH.—Dried meat.  
DEBS.—Roast meat.  
AMBA.—A Hill Fort.  
DEBRA.—Mountain.



# ABYSSINIA

AND ITS PEOPLE.



**A**BOUT no part of the habitable world has there been such prolonged misconception and ignorance as about the country of the *Habese*, or, as we style it, **ABYSSINIA**.

To the old classic writers it was the land of monsters and of terrors. To the learned of the Middle Ages it was the country of Prester John,—a land where the mountains were all of pure gold, and the children played at marbles with big diamonds, just as ours throw stone ones about. Men with long tails, ladies with two heads, and scores of other wonders were to be met with here. Even the Portuguese travellers who went there could only describe the country as either the most horrible and depraved, or the most beautiful and moral, which they had ever visited. It seems that there has always been something in the land which prevented a truthful estimate being formed of it. Nor have the narratives of modern travellers enlightened to any great extent the public mind upon this mysterious country.

Even our own Government officers appear to be as ignorant of its geography as other people; and so late as the present year the Admiralty authorities “ordered H.M.S. *Octavia* into the Red Sea to visit Massowah

—and, if necessary, GONDAR also,” which reads very droll when it is known that Gondar, the capital, happens to be only some 300 miles inland.

During the early part of the last century it was commonly believed that Abyssinia was, after all, a very respectably conducted country: peculiar, perhaps, but only the more interesting for that reason. Dr. Johnson appears to have held such an opinion, and his “Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia,” although a rhetorical fiction, seems to be founded upon this popular notion of Abyssinian happiness. Johnson, whose first prose publication was a translation of Father Lobo, had doubtless been reading the imaginative pages of the Portuguese chronicles, in one of which we find this picture of Efat,—“a valley so deep, and enclosed by such high and craggy mountains, that the entrance appeared to resemble the descent into hell. After taking possession, however, he found it a most agreeable and fertile district. The inhabitants were brave and affectionate; they even made cotton cloths, and practised other arts better than the rest of the Abyssinians: yet they were pagans, barbarous. The country contained much gold.”

THE tract of country lying to the south of Nubia, and bounded on its eastern shore by the Red Sea, is generally supposed to have been occupied at a very early date by a numerous band of adventurers from the opposite coast of Arabia. They were subsequently known by the name of *Habesh*, which signifies in Arabic, a *multitude* or *congregation*; and to this ancient name we are probably indebted for the modern ABYSSINIA. According, however, to Ludolphus, a German, who wrote a history of this country about the middle of the seventeenth

century, the inhabitants of Abyssinia are descended from the Jewish tribe of Judah.

Mr. Salt, in his account of Ancient Abyssinia, holds a still different opinion. He inclines to the belief that the Abyssinians, or Axumites, as they were called by the Romans, are descended from a race of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Africa, composed of native Ethiopians, who became in the course of time mixed with settlers from Egypt.

Whatever doubt may exist as to their origin, it is certain that they differ essentially both in appearance, customs, and religion from the surrounding negro tribes.

That the most fantastic ideas were entertained even by learned men concerning this region, the pages of Job Ludolphus afford ample evidence. This author candidly confesses his work to be but a compilation, derived principally from the accounts of one Gregory, who had spent some years in Ethiopia. He also acknowledges himself indebted to the writings of Ludovicus Ureta, a monk of Valentia ; Balthazar Tellezius, a Portuguese ; Franciscus Alvarezius, and John Bermudes. Unfortunately, not a copy of either of these works is to be found in the British Museum or the Bodleian Library. While on the one hand we are inclined to smile at the fantastic conceptions of these early geographers, we must in many instances acknowledge the accuracy of the accounts of those circumstances which came under their personal observation. In the map of Ludolphus, for example, the source of the Blue Nile, and the position of several districts and towns are given with marvellous accuracy, while on the same sheet is a drawing of a flying monster, which for daring originality in conception would put to blush Garter King-at-Arms, backed by all his heralds and pur-

suiuants. Again, in another place, four monkeys are represented as effectually making a stand against two particularly ferocious and able-bodied lions, by the simple expedient of throwing sand in their faces. A much earlier author (Seneca), writing of this country, says:—  
“The stones burn as if in a furnace, not only in the middle of the day, but also towards evening; silver unsolders; the footsteps of men are impatient of the scorching sand; the fastening of the standard melts, and no exterior covering of outward ornament remains.”

What wonder then that those who read these startling accounts of Ethiopia, should ascribe its sovereignty to Prester John, and infest its deserts with Basilisks, Salamanders, Griffins, and Wyverns?

Before describing Abyssinia as it now is, it may just be worth while to give a specimen of the nonsense and exaggeration which the old chroniclers delighted in styling “historical narratives.” Regarding the general features of the country, Ludolphus writes:—

“The country is situated between the tropic of Cancer and the Equinoctial Line, and enjoys a wonderful variety of air. The Champion Levels feel the heat, the hilly parts are no less subject to cold. For this reason the thunders are most dreadful, and frequent tempests terrify both man and beasts. Their prodigious mountains overlook the clouds themselves—neither Olympus nor Athos, here accounted wonders, nor Atlas itself, which the ancients fancied to be the support of heaven, is to be compared with them. Their rocks of various shapes and figures, so amazing steep as not to be ascended; *yet* (?) (sic) inhabited. Their surrounded valleys, rugged, and representing abysses for profundity. Metals they also have, but chiefly gold, did they know how to find it and dig it forth.

Their driest places in winter are overflowed in summer ; for those advantages which the rains afford the fields in other places, the rivers supply in Ethiopia. Among those rivers, Nilas, for vastness and fame, far exceeds all the rivers of the whole world. Whose fountains so diligently sought by the ancients are not only here found, but it also now appears that the river Niger is no more than its left channel. Nor do all the rivers of Habassia, as in other places, empty themselves into the sea, but are some of them sucked up in the land, so that it is more difficult to find the mouths of those than the sources of other streams. Plants they have of admirable virtue, and beasts of all sorts, many of which are unknown to us. The largest also of fowl and four-footed beasts are here to be found. The celebrated unicorn, so curiously sought out for in all corners of the world was first seen here. Cattle without number, much larger than ours, feed in the vast woods, affording pasture sufficient as well for the wild as tame."

And this writer is still by many regarded as the authority upon all matters connected with Abyssinian history.

Under John I. and his son Prince Henry, the Portuguese prosecuted their discoveries along the coast of Africa, within five degrees of the equinoctial line. In the reign of John II., Bartholomew Diaz (in 1486) was directed to proceed to the southern extremity of Africa, and explore the passage to India, then an object of the utmost solicitude. After encountering innumerable perils, and discovering a thousand miles of new country, he beheld the high promontory which terminates the southern coast. He gave it the appropriate appellation of *Cabo Tormentosa*, or the Stormy Cape ; but the king changed its name to the Cape of Good Hope, which

it has ever since retained. About the same period information reached Portugal of a mighty kingdom in the East, governed by a Christian monarch. It was immediately concluded that this was the Emperor of Abyssinia, to whom the Europeans, in consequence of a mistake of Marco Polo, and other Eastern travellers, gave the name of Prester John. Hoping to receive information and assistance in the prosecution of his scheme of reaching the East Indies by sailing round Africa, the King of Portugal sent Pedro de Covillam and Alphonso de Payva, into the East to search for the residence of this unknown potentate, and make him proffers of friendship. They were at the same time to explore the Red Sea and the coasts of the Indian Ocean, and gain all the commercial intelligence that could be accumulated. Having repaired to Grand Cairo, the two travellers proceeded on their journey with a caravan of Egyptian merchants, and embarking on the Red Sea, arrived at Aden in Arabia. There they separated: Payva sailed directly towards Abyssinia, where, unfortunately, he was cruelly murdered. Covillam visited Hindostan, sailed to Sofala, and proceeded northwards along the whole eastern coast of Africa. Returning to Grand Cairo, he transmitted such favourable accounts to the Portuguese monarch, that a powerful squadron was fitted out, and intrusted to the command of Vasco de Gama, a man whose talents eminently qualified him for the mighty enterprise. He sailed from Lisbon in June, 1497; after passing the Cape, he directed his course towards the north-east, along the African coast, and after various adventures, came to anchor before the city of Melinda in Zanzibar. From the river Senegal to the confines of this country, the

Portuguese had found a race of men rude and uncultivated, differing from the inhabitants of Europe no less in their features and complexion than in their manners and institutions. Christopher de Gama and his Portuguese followers are said to have stormed the famous Jew's Rock, or Amba Gideon, between the river Tacazze and the lake Tzana, and to have put the Mahomedan garrison to the sword. This point is about 150 miles from Massowah.

In Joseph Stöcklein's *Reis-Beschreibungen*, which contains a report of the travels of the missionaries of the Society of Jesus between the year 1642 and 1726, much curious information is to be gathered respecting the religion of the Abyssinians. Their conversion to Christianity is said to have taken place about the year 327, Athanasius being at that time Patriarch of Alexandria. Some years previously there was living in the country a Tyrian, by name Frumentius, who, by his skill and industry, had raised himself to the highest office in the realm, second only to the king himself. He, being a Christian, determined to take advantage of his exalted position by promulgating that faith as much as was in his power. To this end he repaired to Alexandria, and received from the Patriarch Athanasius the dignity of Bishop of Axum. Armed with ecclesiastical authority he returned to the land of his adoption, where he speedily caused several churches to be erected, and soon gathered around him a small but devoted band of followers. Frumentius being appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria, naturally taught the peculiar dogmas of that church which his successors perpetuated. Hence it occurs that in a small community little more than the size of England, surrounded on all sides by

Pagans or Mahomedans, the outward forms at least of Christianity are preserved, and many primitive rites, which in other countries have become obsolete, are still retained where they were instituted centuries ago. Many attempts have been made by missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church to obtain a footing here, but hitherto they have not been attended with success. Perhaps one cause of the failure of the early missionaries arose from their not understanding the disposition of the people, and attempting to coerce them, as the following extract from the report of Jerome Lobo, written some years before the expedition of Stöcklein, seems to indicate: "Ils sont d'un si mauvais naturel que si on a la moindre complaisance pour eux, ils deviennent bientôt insolens et insupportables, et qu'on ne peut les réduire à la raison, ni être bien servi, qu'en agissant avec eux à toute rigueur et les menant le bâton haut."

In examining the different published narratives of journeys made into Abyssinia, it may be remarked that the particulars taken from each author have been selected rather with the view of forming a tolerably complete picture in the reader's mind of what life there really is, than for the purpose of either surprising or amusing him. The first published record of a journey into Abyssinia was issued, in 1513, at Rome. The author was one John Potken. His book was written in Latin. There is no copy, we believe, in any of the public libraries in this country.



injury. At Baylin, the capital of Danakil, he visited the monarch. The place consisted of twenty mud cabins and six tents, and the palace he found to consist of one apartment, which did both for the king and his horse.

PONCET, 1698.

PONCET was the first traveller who reached Gondar by way of Khartoom and Sennaar. He travelled down the Nile to Siout, thence across country to Sharje, and on to Selima in the desert, where he "found a fine spring of water;" thence to Moshi on the Nile, and on to Dôngola and Korti. From the latter place they crossed the country to Dereira, about thirty miles south-west of Shendy again meeting the Nile, and then on by the old caravan route to Sennaar, from which he appears to have gone by the ordinary route of Matamma, and then on to Gondar. He met with no other than ordinary travelling difficulties, and the country seems to have been very much the same then as now. It was in his capacity as a physician, and at the special request of the King of Abyssinia, that he visited that country. He had been previously established for some years at Cairo.

JAMES BRUCE, 1769-72.

THIS must be regarded as the most important of all the journeys to Abyssinia. Indeed, several subsequent travellers appear to have visited that country more with a view to criticise Bruce's statements than to add to our knowledge of the country. Those assertions of Bruce, however, which were most loudly discredited

at the time have since been corroborated in almost every important particular. Bruce had already established his fame as an enthusiastic and successful traveller before he set out to explore the sources of the Nile. He presented a commanding exterior, was six feet four inches in height, possessed iron nerves and an inflexible will. To these personal advantages may be ascribed in a great measure that almost continual success which appears to have attended his travels. He had, moreover, a continual fund of good humour; could bear small insults; and never struck but at the last moment, when it generally produced the required result. The apparent ease with which Bruce seems to have passed through Abyssinia, when compared with the accounts of recent travellers, might almost lead us to suppose that Abyssinia has considerably retrograded since his time. Another fact, too, may be mentioned: the natives were quite unacquainted with the use of fire-arms, and our traveller making a free display of these, and discharging them occasionally, led himself to be regarded with great awe and veneration. The following incidents give some idea of Abyssinian life a century ago. The accounts of the "banquet" and the "living steaks" are amongst those which have been most frequently doubted.

*Arkeko*, a large town on the bottom of the bay of Massowah (our author remarks), has indeed water, but labours under a scarcity of provisions; for the tract of flat land behind both, called Samara, is a perfect desert, and only inhabited from the month of November to April, by a variety of wandering tribes called Tora, Hazorta, Shiho, and Doba, and these carry all their cattle to the Abyssinian side of the mountains when the rains fall there, which are the opposite six months.

When the season is thus reversed, they and their cattle are no longer in Samara, or the dominion of the Naybe, but in the hands of the Abyssinians, especially the governor of Tigré and Baharnagash, who thereby, without being at the expense and trouble of marching against Massowah with an army, can make a line round it, and starve all at Arkeko and Massowah, by prohibiting any sort of provisions to be carried thither from their side.

*Abyssinian Tape Worm.*—The next complaint, as common in these countries, is called *Farenteit*, a corruption of an Arabic word, which signifies the worm of Pharaoh; all bad things being by the Arabs attributed to these poor kings, who seem to be looked upon by posterity as the evil genii of the country which they once governed. This extraordinary animal only afflicts those who are in the constant habit of drinking stagnant water, whether that water is drawn from wells, as in the kingdom of Sennaar, or found by digging in the sand where it is making its way to its proper level, the sea, after falling down the side of the mountains, after the tropical rains. This plague appears indiscriminately in every part of the body, but oftenest in the legs and arms. Bruce never saw it in the face or head; but far from affecting the fleshy parts of the body, it generally comes out where the bone has least flesh upon it. Upon looking at this worm, on its first appearance, a small black head is extremely visible, with a hooked beak of a whitish colour. Its body is seemingly of a white silky texture, very like a small tendon bared and perfectly cleaned. After its appearance, the natives of these countries, who are used to it, seize it gently by the head, and wrap it round a thin piece of silk or small

bird's feather. Every day, or several times a day, they try to wind it up upon the quill as far as it comes readily ; and upon the smallest resistance they give over, for fear of breaking it. He says he has seen five feet, or something more, of this extraordinary animal wound out with invincible patience in the course of three weeks. No inflammation then remained, and scarcely any redness round the edges of the aperture ; only a small quantity of lymph appeared in the hole or puncture, which scarcely issued out upon pressing. In three days it was commonly well, and left no scar or dimple implying loss of substance. He himself experienced this complaint. He was reading upon a sofa at Cairo, a few days after his return from Upper Egypt, when he felt, in the fore part of his leg, upon the bone, about seven inches below the centre of his knee-pan, an itching resembling what follows the bite of a musquito. Upon scratching, a small tumour appeared, very like a musquito bite. The itching returned in about an hour afterward ; and being more intent upon reading than his leg, he scratched it till the blood came. He soon afterwards observed something like a black spot, which had already risen considerably above the surface of the skin. All medicine proved useless ; and the disease not being known at Cairo, there was nothing for it but to have recourse to the only received manner of treating it in this country. About three inches of the worm was wound out upon a piece of raw silk in the first week, without pain or fever ; but it was broken afterwards through the carelessness and rashness of the surgeon when changing a poultice on board the ship in which he returned to France ; a violent inflammation followed, the leg swelled so as to scarce leave appearance of knee or ankle ; the skin, red and distended,

seemed glazed like a mirror. The wound was now healed, and discharged nothing; and there was every appearance of mortification coming on. The great care and attention he received in the lazaretto at Marseilles, "by a nation always foremost in acts of humanity to strangers," and the attention and skill of the surgeon, recovered him from this troublesome complaint. Fifty-two days had elapsed since it first began; thirty-five of which were spent in the greatest agony. It suppurated at last; and by enlarging the orifice, a good quantity of matter was discharged. He had made constant use of bark, both in fomentations and inwardly; but he did not recover the strength of his leg entirely till near a year after, by using the baths of Poretta.

*High Seasoning Recommended.*—The natives of all eastern countries season every species of food, even the simplest and mildest, rice, so much with spices, especially with pepper, as absolutely to blister a European palate. These powerful antiseptics Providence has planted in these countries for this use; and the natives have, from the earliest times, had recourse to them in proportion to the quantity that they can procure. And hence, in these dangerous climates, the natives are as healthy as we are in our northern ones. He lays down, as a positive rule of health, that the warmest dishes the natives delight in are the most wholesome strangers can use in the putrid climates of the lower Arabia, Abyssinia, Sennaar, and Egypt itself; and that spirits, and all fermented liquors, should be regarded as poisons, and for fear of temptation, not so much as be carried along with you, unless as a menstruum for outward applications. Spring or running water, if you can find it, is to be your only drink.

*Bathing in Cold Water.*—Never scruple to throw yourselves into the coldest river or spring you can find, in whatever degree of heat you are. . . . In these warm countries your perspiration is natural and constant, though no action be used, only from the temperature of the medium; therefore, though your pores are shut, the moment you plunge yourself in the cold water, the simple condition of the outward air again covers you with pearls of sweat the moment you emerge; and you begin the expense of the aqueous part of your blood afresh from the new stock that you have laid in by your immersion.

*Sale of Relations.*—Two priests of Tigré (as Mr. Bruce was told by Ras Michael during a feast at his granddaughter's marriage) had been long intimate friends. They dwelt near the rock Damo. The youngest was married, and had two children, both sons; the other was old, and had none. The old one reproved his friend one day for keeping his children at home idle, and not putting them to some profession by which they might gain their bread. The married priest pleaded his poverty, and his want of relations that could assist him; on which the old priest offered to place his eldest son with a rich friend of his own who had no children, and where he should want for nothing. The proposal was accepted, and the young lad, about ten years of age, was delivered by his father to the old priest, to carry him to his friend, who sent the boy to Dixan and sold him there. Upon the old priest's return, after giving the father a splendid account of his son's reception, treatment, and prospects, he gave him a piece of cotton cloth, as a present from his son's patron. The younger child, about eight years old, hearing the good fortune of his elder brother, became so importunate

to be allowed to go and visit him, that the parents were obliged to humour him and consent. But the old priest had a scruple, saying, he would not take the charge of so young a boy unless the mother went with him. This being settled, the old priest conveyed them to the market at Dixan, where he sold both the mother and the remaining child. Returning to the father, the old priest told him that his wife would stay only so long, and expected he would then fetch her upon a certain day, which was named. The day being come, the two priests went together to see this happy family; and upon their entering Dixan it was found that the old priest had sold the young one, but not to the same Moor to whom he had sold his family. Soon after these two Moors who had bought the Christians, becoming partners in the venture, the old priest was to receive forty cotton cloths—that is, £10 sterling—for the husband, wife, and children. The payment of the money, perhaps the resentment of the family trepanned, and the appearance of equity which the thing itself bore, suggested to the Moorish merchants that there was some more profit, and not more risk, if they carried off the old priest likewise. But as he had come to Dixan, as it were, under public faith, in a trade that greatly interested the town, they were afraid to attempt anything against him whilst there. They began then, as it were, to repent of their bargain, from a pretended apprehension that they might be stopped and questioned at going out of town, unless he would accompany them to some small distance; in consideration of which, they would give him, at parting, two pieces of cloth to be added to the other forty which he was to take back to Tigré with him upon his return. The beginning of such expeditions is in the night. When all were asleep, they set out from

Dixan—the buyer, the seller, and the family sold; and being arrived near the mountain, where the way turns off to the desert, the whole party fell upon the old priest, threw him down, and bound him. The woman insisted that she might be allowed to cut or tear off the little beard he had, in order, as she said, to make him look younger; and this demand was reckoned too just to be denied her. The whole five were then carried to Massowah: the woman and her two children were sold to Arabia; the two priests had not so ready a market, and they were both in the Naybe's house when Bruce was at Massowah, though he did not then know it. The Naybe, willing to ingratiate himself with Ras Michael at a small expense, wrote to him an account of the transaction, and offered, as they were priests, to restore them to him. But the Ras returned for answer that the Naybe should keep them to be his chaplains, as he hoped some day he would be converted to the Christian faith himself; if not, he might send them to Arabia with the rest; they would serve to be carriers of wood and drawers of water; and that there still remained at Damo enough of their kind to carry on the trade with Dixan and Massowah.

*The Custom of Tolls.*—At noon they crossed the river Balezat, which rises at Addi Shiho, a place on the S.W. of the province of Tigré; and after no very long course falls into the Mareb, or ancient Astusapes. They encamped here, by the river's side, and were obliged to stay this and the following day, for a duty, or custom, to be paid by all passengers. These duties are called *Awides*, i.e. *gifts*, though they are levied, for the most part, in a very rigorous and rude manner; but they are established by usage in particular spots; and are, in fact, a regality annexed to the estate. Such places are



called *Ber*, i.e. *passes*. There are five of these *Awidés*, which, like turnpikes, are to be paid at passing between Massowah and Adowa. The small village of Sebow was distant from them two miles to the east; Zarow the same distance to the S.S.E.; and Noguet, a village before them, were the places of abode of these tax-gatherers, who farm it for a sum from their superior, and divide the profit *pro rata* of the sums each has advanced. The farmer of this duty values as he thinks proper what each caravan is to pay. Some have on this account been detained for months; and others, in time of trouble or bad news, have been robbed of everything.

*The Capital of Tigré.*—Adowa consists of about 300 houses, and occupies a much larger space than would be thought necessary for these to stand on, by reason that each house has an inclosure round it of hedges and trees—the last chiefly the *wanzey*. The number of these trees, so planted in all the towns, screen them so that at a distance they appear so many woods. Adowa was not formerly the capital of Tigré, but had accidentally become so upon the accession of the governor, whose property, or paternal estate, lay in and about it. It resembled a prison rather than a palace; for there were in and about it above three hundred persons in irons, some of whom had been there for twenty years, mostly with a view to extort money from them; and, what is the most unhappy, even when they had paid the sum of money which the governor asked, did not get their deliverance from his merciless hands; most of them were kept in cages like wild beasts, and treated every way in the same manner. Janni, their kind and hospitable landlord, sent servants to conduct our travellers from the passage of

the river, and met them himself at the outer door of his house. He had his own short white hair covered with a thin muslin turban, a thick well-shaped beard, as white as snow, down to his waist. He was clothed in the Abyssinian dress, all of white cotton, only he had a red silk sash, embroidered with gold, about his waist, and sandals on his feet; his upper garment reached down to his ankles. He had a number of servants and slaves about him of both sexes; and conducted our travellers through a courtyard planted with jessamine, to a very neat, and, at the same time, large room, furnished with a silk sofa; the floor was covered with Persian carpets and cushions. All round, flowers and green leaves were strewed upon the outer yard; and the windows and sides of the room stuck full of evergreens, in commemoration of the Christmas festival that was at hand. A great dinner was brought, exceedingly well dressed, but no consideration or entreaty could prevail upon Janni to sit down and partake with Mr. Bruce. He stood all the time, with a clean towel in his hand, though he had plenty of servants; and afterward dined with some visitors who had come out of curiosity to see a man arrived from so far. Adowa is the seat of a very valuable manufacture of coarse cotton cloth, which circulates all over Abyssinia instead of silver money; each web is 16 peek long of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  width, their value a pataka—that is, ten for the ounce of gold. The houses of Adowa are all of rough stone, cemented with mud instead of mortar. That of lime is not used but at Gondar, where it is very bad. The roofs are in the form of cones, and thatched with a reedy sort of grass, something thicker than wheat straw. The Falashas, or Jews, enjoy this profession of thatching exclusively; they begin at the bottom, and finish at the

top. The province of Tigré is all mountainous ; and it has been said, without any foundation in truth, that the Pyrenees, Alps, and Apennines are but molehills compared to them. There is no doubt, however, that one of the Pyrenees above St. John Pied de Port is much higher than Lamalmon ; and that the mountain of St. Bernard, one of the Alps, is full as high as Taranta, or rather higher. It is not the extreme height of the mountains in Abyssinia that occasions surprise, but the number of them, and the extraordinary forms they present to the eye. Some of them are flat, thin, and square, in shape of a hearthstone, or slab, that scarce would seem to have base sufficient to resist the action of the winds. Some are like pyramids, others like obelisks or prisms ; and some, the most extraordinary of all the rest, pyramids pitched upon their points, with their base uppermost,\* which, if it was possible, as it is not, they could have been so formed in the beginning, would be strong objections to our received ideas of gravity.

*Axum, the Ancient Capital of Abyssinia.*—Its ruins are very extensive ; but, like the cities of ancient times, consist altogether of public buildings. In one square are forty obelisks, none of which have any hieroglyphics. There is one larger than the rest still standing, but there are two still larger than this fallen. They are all of one piece of granite : and on the top of that which is standing there is a patera exceedingly well carved in the

\* This is one of the statements of Bruce which have brought his veracity into question. Taken literally this description is incorrect, but as a figure of speech to show the extraordinary forms nature has assumed in Abyssinia the traveller is quite correct. Salt, p. 251, denies the assertion, but after all admits the possibility of the occurrence.

Greek taste. Below, there is the door-bolt and lock, which Poncet speaks of, carved on the obelisk, as if to represent an entrance through it to some building behind. The lock and bolt are precisely the same as those used at this day in Egypt and Palestine.

*Slicing Steaks from the Living Cow.*—Soon after they lost sight of the ruins of Axum, they overtook three travellers driving a cow before them; they had black goat-skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands; in other respects they were but thinly clothed, and appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fattened for killing, and it occurred to our traveller that it had been stolen. Soon afterward they arrived at the nearest bank of the river, where Mr. Bruce thought to pitch their tent. The drivers suddenly tript up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall upon the ground, which was but the beginning of her sufferings. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her fore-feet, while the third, who had a knife in his hand, to Mr. Bruce's great surprise, instead of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly before her hind legs, and gave her a very deep wound in the upper part of her buttock. Our traveller at this time was rejoicing, thinking, that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to them; and he was much disappointed upon hearing the Abyssinians say, that they were to pass the river to the other side, and not encamp where it was intended. Mr. Bruce was very much astonished to hear that they were not then to kill the cow, that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened his curiosity; he let his people

go forward, and stayed himself, till he saw, with the utmost surprise, two pieces, thicker and longer, than our ordinary beef-steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast. How it was done he cannot positively say, because judging the cow was to be killed from the moment he saw the knife drawn, he was not anxious to view the catastrophe, which was by no means an object of curiosity; whatever way it was done, it surely was adroitly, and the two pieces were spread upon the outside of one of their shields. One of them still continued holding the head, while the other two were busied in curing the wound. This, too, was not done in an ordinary manner; the skin which had covered the flesh that was taken away was left entire, and flapped over the wound, and was fastened to the corresponding part by two or more small skewers, or pins. Whether they had put anything under the skin between that and the wounded flesh, our author did not know; but at the riverside where they were, they had prepared a plaster of clay, with which they covered the wound; they then forced the animal to rise, and drove it on before them, to furnish them with a fuller meal when they should meet their companions in the evening.

*The Falashas.*—The language of Lamalmon is Amharic;\* but there are many villages where the language of the Falasha is spoken. These are the ancient inhabitants of the mountains, who still preserve the religion, language,

\* The Amharic is the modern language of Abyssinia, spoken at court, and by people of fashion; the Falasha is that of the tribes professing the Jewish religion; but the Geez, or Ethiopic, in which all the Abyssinian books are written, is the ancient language of the country, and the oldest dialect of the Arabic, properly so called, in existence.

and manners of their ancestors, and live in villages by themselves. Their number is now considerably diminished, and this has proportionately lowered their power and spirit. They are now wholly addicted to agriculture, hewers of wood and carriers of water, and the only potters and masons in Abyssinia. In the former profession they excel greatly, and, in general, live better than the other Abyssinians; which these, in revenge, attribute to a skill in magic, not to superior industry. Their villages are generally strongly situated out of the reach of marching armies, otherwise they would be constantly rifled, partly from hatred, and partly from hopes of finding money.

*The King at his Devotions.*—The king goes to church regularly, his guards taking possession of every avenue and door through which he is to pass, and nobody is allowed to enter with him, because he is then on foot, excepting two officers of his bed-chamber who support him. He kisses the threshold and side posts of the church-door, the steps before the altar, and then returns home; sometimes there is service in the church, sometimes there is not; but he takes no notice of the difference. He rides upstairs into the presence-chamber on a mule, and lights immediately on the carpet before his throne; and Mr. Bruce has sometimes seen great indecencies committed by the said mule in the presence-chamber, upon a Persian carpet.

*Waking the King.*—An officer called Serach Massery, with a long whip, begins cracking and making a noise, worse than twenty French postillions, at the door of the palace, before the dawn of day. This chases away the hyenas and other wild beasts; this, too, is the signal for the king's rising, who sits in judgment every morning.

fasting, and after that, about eight o'clock, he goes to breakfast.

*Writing-Materials.*—Notwithstanding the Abyssinians were so anciently and nearly connected with Egypt, they never seem to have made use of paper or papyrus, but imitated the practice of the Persians, who wrote upon skins; and they do so to this day. This arises from their having early been Jews. Their customs our author proves to be similar to those of the Persians, and from this great resemblance would suppose that the Abyssinians were a colony of Persians, were not the contrary well known.

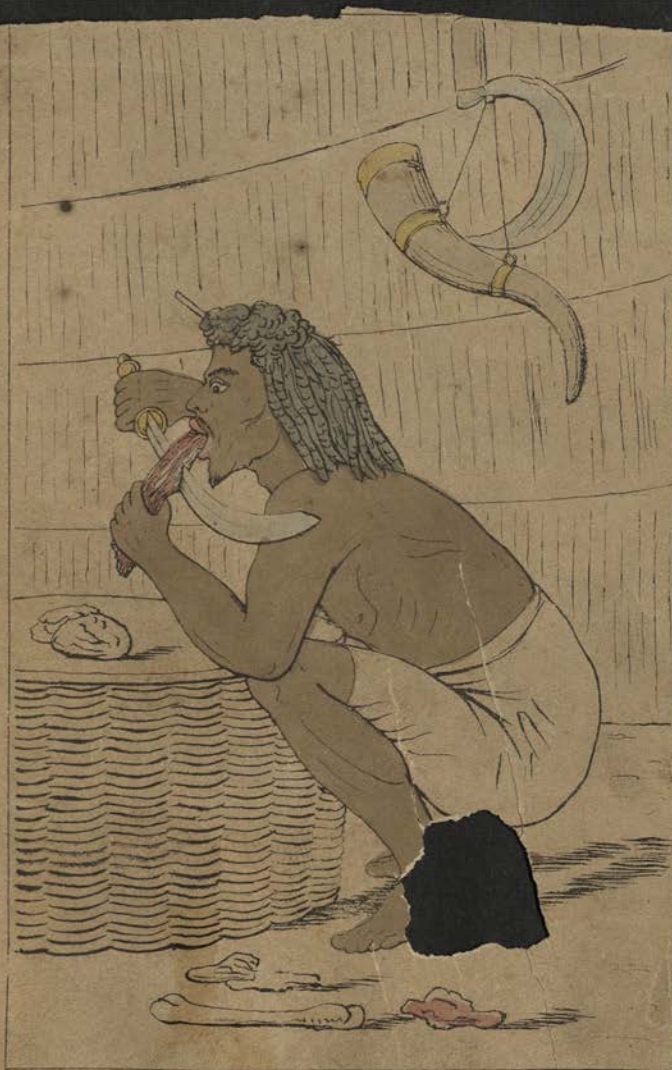
*The Banquet of Raw Flesh.*—Our author, consistent with his plan, which is to describe the manners of the several nations through which he passed, good and bad, as he observed them, gives some account of a Polyphemus banquet, as far as decency will permit him. In the capital (he says) where one is safe from surprise at all times, or in the country or villages, when the rains have become so constant that the valleys will not bear a horse to pass them, or that men cannot venture far from home, through fear of being surrounded and swept away by temporary torrents, occasioned by sudden showers on the mountains; in a word, when a man can say he is safe at home, and the spear and shield is hung up in the hall, a number of people of the best fashion in the villages, of both sexes, courtiers in the palace, or citizens in the town, meet together to dine, between twelve and one o'clock. A long table is set in the middle of a large room, and benches beside it for a number of guests who are invited. Tables and benches the Portuguese introduced amongst them; but bull-hides, spread upon the ground, served them before, as they do in the camp and country now.

A cow or bull, one or more, as the company is numerous, is brought close to the door, and his feet strongly tied. The skin that hangs down under his chin and throat, which would be called the dew-lap in England, is cut only so deep as to arrive at the fat, of which it totally consists, and, by the separation of a few small blood-vessels, six or seven drops of blood only fall upon the ground. They have no stone, bench, nor altar, upon which these cruel assassins lay the animal's head in this operation. We should beg his pardon indeed for calling him an assassin, as he is not so merciful as to aim at the life, but, on the contrary, to keep the beast alive till he be totally eat up. Having satisfied the Mosaical law, according to his conception, by pouring these six or seven drops upon the ground, two or more of them fall to work ; on the back of the beast, and on each side of the spine, they cut skin-deep ; then, putting their fingers between the flesh and the skin, they begin to strip the hide off the animal halfway down his ribs, and so on to the buttock, cutting the skin wherever it hinders them commodiously to strip the poor animal bare. All the flesh on the buttocks is cut off then, and in solid, square pieces, without bones, or much effusion of blood ; and the prodigious noise the animal makes is a signal for the company to sit down to table. There are then laid before every guest, instead of plates, round cakes, if we may so call them, about twice as big as a pancake, and something thicker and tougher. It is unleavened bread of a sourish taste, far from being disagreeable, and very easily digested, made of a grain called teff. It is of different colours, from black to the colour of the finest wheat bread. Three or four of these cakes are generally put uppermost, for the food of the person opposite to whose seat they are placed. Beneath these



are four or five of ordinary bread, and of a blackish kind. These serve the master to wipe his fingers upon; and afterwards the servant, for bread to his dinner. Two or three servants then come, each with a square piece of beef in their bare hands, laying it upon the cakes of teff, placed like dishes round the table, without cloth or anything else beneath them. By this time all the guests have knives in their hands, and the men have the large crooked ones, which they put to all sorts of uses during the time of war. The women have small clasped knives, such as the worst of the kind made at Birmingham, sold for a penny each. The company are so ranged that one man sits between two women; the man with his long knife cuts a thin piece, which would be thought a good beef-steak in England, while you see the motion of the fibres yet perfectly distinct, and alive in the flesh. No man in Abyssinia, of any fashion whatever, feeds himself, or touches his own meat. The women take the steak and cut it lengthways like strings, about the thickness of your little finger; then crossways into square pieces, something smaller than dice. This they lay upon a piece of the teff bread, strongly powdered with black pepper, or Cayenne pepper, and fossil salt; they then wrap it up in the teff bread like a cartridge. In the meantime, the man having put up his knife, with each hand resting upon his neighbour's knee, his body stooping, his head low and forward, and mouth open very like an idiot, turns to the one whose cartridge is first ready, who stuffs the whole of it into his mouth, which is so full, that he is in constant danger of being choked. This is a mark of grandeur. The greater the man would seem to be, the larger piece he takes in his mouth; and the more noise he makes in chewing it, the more polite he is thought to

be. They have, indeed, a proverb that says, "Beggars and thieves only eat small pieces, or without making a noise." Having despatched his morsel, which he does very expeditiously, his next female neighbour holds forth another cartridge, which goes the same way, and so on till he is satisfied. He never drinks till he has finished eating; and, before he begins, in gratitude to the fair ones that fed him, he makes up two small rolls of the same kind and form; each of his neighbours opens her mouth at the same time, while with each hand he puts their portion into their mouths. He then falls to drinking out of a large handsome horn; the ladies eat till they are satisfied; and then all drink together, "Viva la Joye et la Jeunesse!" A great deal of mirth and joke goes round, very seldom with any mixture of acrimony or ill humour. All this time the unfortunate victim at the door is bleeding indeed, but bleeding little. As long as they can cut off the flesh from his bones, they do not meddle with the thighs, or the parts where the great arteries are. At last they fall upon the thighs likewise; and soon after the animal, bleeding to death, becomes so tough, that the cannibals, who have the rest of it to eat, find very hard work to separate the flesh from the bones with their teeth like dogs. In the mean time, those within are very much elvated; love lights all its fires, and everything is permitted with absolute freedom. There is no coyness, no delays, no need of appointments or retirements to gratify their wishes; there are no rooms but one, in which they sacrifice both to Bacchus and Venus. The two men nearest the vacuum a pair have made on the bench by leaving their seats, hold their upper garments like a screen before the two that have left the bench; and, if we may judge by sound, they seem to think it as



AN ABYSSINIAN DEVOURING RAW BEEF.

From a sketch by M. Vignaud.

"Seizing one end of the strip of meat with his teeth, and holding the other end in his left hand, he cuts a bit off close to his lips by an upward stroke of his sword, only just avoiding the tip of his nose, and so on until he has finished." *[Vide Paris.]*



great a shame to make love in silence as to eat. Replaced in their seats again, the company drink the happy couple's health ; and their example is followed at different ends of the table, as each couple is disposed. All this passes without remark or scandal ; not a licentious word is uttered, nor the most distant joke upon the transaction. These ladies are, for the most part, women of family and character, and they and their gallants are reciprocally distinguished by the name *Woodage*, which answers to what in Italy they call "Cicisbeo."

*Marriage.*—Although we read from the Jesuits a great deal about marriage and polygamy, yet there is nothing which may be averred more truly than that there is no such thing as marriage in Abyssinia, unless that which is contracted by mutual consent, without other form, subsisting only till dissolved by dissent of one or other, and to be renewed or repeated as often as it is agreeable to both parties, who, when they please, cohabit together again as man and wife, after having been divorced, had children by others, or whether they have been married, or had children by others or not. Upon separation they divide the children. The eldest son falls to the mother's first choice, and the eldest daughter to the father. If there is but one daughter, and all the rest sons, she is assigned to the father. If there is but one son, and all the rest daughters, he is the right of the mother. If the numbers are unequal after the first election the rest are divided by lot. There is no such distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, from the king to the beggar ; for supposing any one of their marriages valid, all the issue of the rest must be adulterous bastards.

*Church Decorations.*—The churches are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed upon the walls in a

manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses.

#### LORD VALENTIA, 1802-3.

IN 1802-3, Lord Valentia, accompanied by Mr. Salt, his secretary and draughtsman, visited the principal places bordering on the Red Sea, but he does not seem to have approached any nearer to Abyssinia than Arkeko, from which place Mr. Salt proceeded inland, accompanied by Captain Rudland, and Mr. Carter, and seven attendants, besides a guard of twenty-five of the Nayib's *Ascari* (soldiers), and camel-drivers. Salt describes the road from Arkeko to Dixan as being well frequented, and perfectly secure, but as carried for some miles along a defile, in the bed of a stream. After proceeding for some distance, the valley became contracted to a rocky gully, bounded on each side, and overshadowed by steep and lofty hills. This road, in consequence of a terrific thunderstorm which suddenly burst over the party, was in a few hours changed to a rushing torrent. The next morning the water having subsided, they proceeded along the river as before. After five days journeying, for the most part in the bed of the river, between overhanging rocks on either side, Salt arrived at Assubah, at the foot of the Taranta mountain. The ground here was so uneven that they were unable to make further use of their camels, and being able to purchase but one bullock, their luggage was carried on mens' shoulders. After passing Dixan, the condition of the country much improved, affording ample subsistence for their mules. On arriving at Abha they were courteously received by

he chief there resident. He was seated on a couch surrounded by his attendants, and enveloped in a long white mantle, with a deep red border and fringe. No one is allowed to go into his presence without uncovering to the waist, as a guard against assassination, nor is he addressed except in a whisper, with the mouth covered and applied close to his ear. At Antalo they were well received by the Ras, who, however, regretted that, being on unfriendly terms with the Ras of Gondar, he could not facilitate their progress. The party accordingly returned to Massowah by the way of Axum, concerning the ancient ruins and monuments of which Salt affords some most interesting information.

## NATH. PEARCE, 1805-10.

FOR the past sixty years there has generally been some adventurous Englishmen in the service of the Abyssinian monarch, or one of his chiefs. At the departure of Mr. Salt in 1805, he left behind him a sailor belonging to the *Antelope*, whose name was Pearce, and who, having deserted from one of Her Majesty's ships, and wounded a soldier on duty at Bombay, preferred the choice of a new country to the hazard of punishment and disgrace at home. He had spent five years among the half-civilized natives of Tigré, sometimes under the protection of the Ras who had promised to befriend him, and occasionally trusting to his own resources, when his old master—now a British envoy—appeared again in the Red Sea. Pearce seems to have been extremely useful to Salt from his intimate knowledge of the country. Our sailor was to Ras Selassé the same as Bell was to Ras Ali and to Theodore—

general adviser, general in the army, and a "likman-quas." When Salt left, the sailor Pearce refused to go, and he was joined in his Abyssinian life by one Coffin, a supercargo in Bruce's expedition. His "Life" is well worth reading.

#### SALT'S VOYAGE, 1809-10.

ENCOURAGED by the success which attended him on his first expedition, Mr. Salt petitioned the Government to fit out a second, with a view of further exploring the country, in order to estimate the advisability of establishing trading connections therewith. To this the Government consented, and the expedition was placed under his command. He left England in 1809, returning in 1811, and from the observations which he made added considerably to our knowledge of Abyssinia. On arriving at Amphilla, on the coast of the Red Sea, he found it impossible to reach Abyssinia from that place, on account of the unfriendly feeling of the Danakils, a tribe who occupied the intervening territory. He accordingly sailed for Massowah, and taking thence a southerly course, made his way as far as Antalo, returning by nearly the same route.

In corroboration of the circumstance mentioned by Mr. Bruce, of the natives cutting steaks from a living bullock, which statement was almost universally discredited in England, Mr. Salt writes, that Mr. Pearce, who accompanied him, being out one day with a party of Lasta soldiers on a marauding expedition, witnessed the same act of barbarity. Two pieces of flesh, weighing about a pound, were cut from the animal's buttock, and



devoured, still quivering, by the soldiers. After the meat had been taken away, the wounds were sewn up, plastered over with cowdung, and the animal driven forward. In another place, he records having witnessed a Galla chief drink a hornful of warm blood, as drawn from the neck of a cow.

*A strange War Custom.*—A most curious yet barbarous custom is practised in Abyssinia after a victorious battle, the origin of which it is not easy to determine. De Bry, writing in 1599, observes: “Victores, victis cæsis et captis, *pudenda excidunt, quæ exsiccata regi in reliquorum procerum presentio offerunt,*” &c. Mr. Salt states that on one occasion he witnessed eighteen hundred and sixty-five of these barbarous trophies collected and presented to the victorious Ras. It is probably a remnant of the ancient Phallic worship, which obtained universally in Egypt, that the origin of this custom is to be traced.

*Matrimonial Ceremonies.*—Marriage here, our traveller states, appears, generally speaking, to be a mere civil institution; the priests being rarely called in to sanction the rites. When a man is desirous of marrying a girl, he directly applies to her parents or nearest relatives, and their consent being once obtained, the matter is considered as settled, the girl herself being very seldom consulted upon the question. The next subject to be arranged is the dower which the girl is to bring, consisting of so many wakeas of gold, a certain number of cattle, muskets, or pieces of cloth; and this generally occasions, as in most other countries, very serious difficulty. The important point being once adjusted, no further difficulty occurs; the friends of both parties assemble, the marriage is declared, and after a day spent in festivity, the bride is carried to the house of her husband, either on his shoul-

ders or those of his friends ; the mother, at parting with her daughter, strenuously enjoining the husband to a strict performance of the conjugal rites. There is another and more holy kind of marriage practised in this country, where the parties take the communion together, which is sanctioned by the priests ; but this becomes of rarer occurrence every year, the people in general preferring the simple compact, which can be dissolved at pleasure.

*An English Sailor's Freak.*—At the wells of Amphilla an incident occurred to one of Mr. Salt's watering parties, which shows how it frequently happens that foreigners, from wilfully doing violence to the prejudices of uncivilized nations, are themselves the cause of disputes which often terminate fatally. One of the sailors, knowing the horror with which all Mussulmans regard the flesh of the hog, wantonly took a piece of fat pork, and rubbed it over the head and neck of a native who had been sent to attend the party. This incensed the man so highly that, old and feeble as he was, he caught up his shield and spear, and swore by the Prophet he would have revenge. At this threat, which would doubtless have been carried into execution, the sailor, with some reason, became alarmed, when the rest of the party were obliged to interfere, and get him off as speedily as possible to the boat. A present of tobacco succeeded in somewhat appeasing the old man's wrath ; but the affair was not finally arranged until a regular complaint had been laid before Mr. Salt by the chief of the tribe, when it was settled, with some difficulty, by the payment of twenty dollars.

*Prejudice against supplying Water.*—It is a singular fact, mentioned by Salt and other travellers, that there exists among several Abyssinian tribes a peculiar preju-

dice against furnishing water to a stranger. They were always ready to supply him with milk and bread, but never with the first-named necessary. As this does not appear to be difficult to procure in the country, the aversion to bestowing it may possibly arise from some ancient superstition, or veneration of the waters, connected with the history of the river Nile.

It is curious to remark, in the writings of this traveller, the extraordinary dislike he exhibits towards Bruce. In the course of his narrative we find such passages as—“Mr. Bruce’s account is a gross exaggeration;” “not a particle of truth in his statement;” “as false in his deductions as in his premises,” &c. Occasionally, we meet with such patronizing phrases as—“Mr. Bruce gives a very tolerable representation of it.” It is difficult to account for the feeling which caused Salt constantly to sneer at Bruce. Messrs. Combes and Tamisier, on the other hand, who passed through the same country some years later, write: “La grande analogie que nous avons trouvée entre les récits de Bruce et les détails que nous avons puisés dans les annales du pays, nous a prouvé que le voyageur anglais avait travaillé consciencieusement; et pour les incertitudes, pour les obscurités chronologiques, nous avons adopté ses corrections.”

REV. SAML. GOBAT, 1831-4.

THE Geographical Society’s Journal gave a careful analysis of this work: Gobat bears honourable testimony to the character left by Mr. Bruce in Abyssinia. This missionary appears to have spent some time in the

Tigré country with Herr Kugler ; after which he left his friend, and proceeded on by the ordinary road to Gondar, where he remained a considerable period. He then returned to Adowah and went to Debra-Damot, and on to Attegerat. Owing to war breaking out he had to leave ; he arrived at Massowah, December 10, 1832. Gobat appears to have obtruded the importance of his religious mission rather too frequently upon European travellers who visited the country during his residence there, and hence their occasional sneers at him ; but the honesty of his intentions has never been questioned. It may be as well for the reader to learn a little of Abyssinian life from a missionary's point of view, as from that of a scientific layman. Concerning the Tigré country, he remarks upon its Cities of Refuge:—

*Religious Sanctuaries.*—There are five places in Tigré which are never molested by the troubles and horrors of Abyssinian war, on account of the churches established in them,—Axum, Waldeba, Gundigundi, Debra-Damot, and Debra-Abai. These are places of retreat in time of war : property and persons are entirely secure in these asylums. Axum is about fifteen miles distant from Adowah, and the way thither is not bad. Debra-Damot is an invincible natural fortress. Nobody can get to the top of this mountain except by being drawn by ropes.

*Abyssinian Morals.*—Dr. Rüppell appears to have met Gobat at Attegerat. The latter, however, gave the doctor but little encouragement, for he assured him that “all Abyssinians were rascals, without truth, gratitude, or faith.”

*The Falashas.*—Concerning the Abyssinian Jews, Mr. Gobat supplies some interesting particulars, which, as he wrote thirty years before Mr. Stern's work appeared, may

be worth giving here. The Falashas, or Jews, live so retired, and are so separated from the Christians, that the latter know scarcely anything either of their doctrines or of their manners. They live chiefly in the neighbourhood of Gondar and Shelga, and to the north-west of the Lake Tsana. He did all he could to procure information concerning them, but was able to ascertain one thing only, viz. that they are much more ignorant than Christians. Those whom he saw always used to send him to one of their learned men when he proposed any question to them. They do not know of what tribe they are, nor have they any adequate idea as to the period when their ancestors settled in Abyssinia. Some say that it was with Menilec, the son of Solomon, others believe that they settled in Abyssinia after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They have, on the whole, the same superstitions as the Christians: they are only a little modified after a Jewish fashion. He never observed that they took the least interest in the idea of the Messiah; and when he examined them on this subject they coldly replied that they expected him in the character of a great conqueror, called Theodorus, who must soon appear, and whom the Christians also expect; but the poor Falashas do not know whether he will be a Christian or a Jew. What they have in common with other Jews is, hatred to Christ. They have a dialect among themselves which has no similarity either with the Hebrew or with the Ethiopic; but all of them, except some females, speak Amharic. He saw but one book in the Falasha dialect, written in the Ethiopic character; they told him that it was a book of prayers. In fact, they must be very ignorant, having no books except in the Ethiopic

language, and being surrounded with innumerable difficulties which prevent them from learning that language. He saw, however, some individuals who know pretty well the contents of the Books of Moses. They read the Psalms with all the repetitions of 'In the name of the Father, the Son,' &c., which the Christians have added to them, as well as the Songs of Mary and Simeon; but they do not join to them the Oodassé Mariam of Ephrem. They are much more laborious than the other Abyssinians: the building of all the houses of Gondar is their work. They do not allow the Christians to enter their houses, except by force; nor do the latter desire to enter them for fear of their supernatural influence. All of them are considered as bondas or sorcerers, as also are artificers in iron and many others. The Falashas, after having spoken with Christians, never enter their own houses without first washing their bodies and changing their dress. All the provisions they buy in the market are washed by them before they make use of them. Their intercourse with the Mahomedans is a little more free than with the Christians. They never carry arms, either for attack or defence. They maintain their own poor, and will not suffer them to beg.

*The Cause of Abyssinian Immorality.*—The principal cause of the corruption of manners in Abyssinia is, after their mental errors, their unsettled mode of living. A governor, for instance, does not like to remain long at the same place, even when there is no war. He resides sometimes at one end of the province which he governs, and sometimes at the other, with a great number of officers and servants. His first wife is frequently obliged to remain in the house to which he has taken her; and he, not willing to live alone, takes a concubine. Thus,

the first sin being committed, he continues to add others to the number, until he has lost every feeling of conjugal duty. Those who are with him are in the same situation, and do the same things. Several women being in this manner attached to one man, who is not their husband, and seeing themselves neglected, endeavour on their part to corrupt young men, whose situation should maintain them in innocence ; and thus immorality is communicated to all the branches of society. Nevertheless, openly they maintain much more decency than one would be led to suppose, after having read the description which Bruce gives of an Abyssinian feast. Mr. Gobat admits that such a feast may have taken place among the most shameless libertines ; but excesses of that kind are not customary, either as to their cruelty or their indecency. He heard people speak of many things ; but he saw less indecency in the capital of Abyssinia than in the capitals of England, France, and Egypt. In Tigré, with the exception of Adowa and Antalo, the women are much more reserved than in the interior. The ordinary consequence of the immoralities alluded to is sloth ; from which results poverty, together with the desire to live, where pride is not offended, in a state of dependence on others : the result of which, again, is envy, craftiness, and falsehood. The Abyssinians are liars, as well as the Arabs ; but they have yet a feeling of shame when discovered, which the Arabs have not. The first consequence of falsehood is swearing. Another series of vices, which also result from illicit connexions (for so he calls the polygamy of the Abyssinians, as they know very well that it is unlawful), is to be found in the circumstance that the children of one and the same father, who are not of the same mother, are always enemies to each

other in such a degree that they cannot endure to see one another ; nor have they any feeling of filial love for their father, inasmuch as he generally has a fatherly affection only for the children born of a favourite wife : not to mention their jealousies, and the consequences thereof ; which go so far that an adulterer is often killed by his rival. This inconstancy in the intercourse of the sexes with each other may be observed during the whole life of a man. It is this that renders the Abyssinians so light-minded, having nothing constant, but inconstancy itself ; although the children show less of levity than the children of other countries.

*A remembrance of Bruce.*—“Yagoube” (Arabic and Abyssinian for “James”) was a learned man : since him no well-informed white man has come to Gondar. The others profess to know the stars (astrology), and to make us believe that they were learned ; because they knew that we could not confute them on this article. *Missionary* : “Did you know Yagoube ?” *Lik Atecou* : (a learned man, *Lik* being equal to “Judge”) “I did not know him personally : I am too young ; but there are still old men at Gondar who knew him. He was beloved and respected by all the great people of the country.”

*Lejean's opinion of Gobat.*—“I am compelled to speak in severe tones of a man whose good intentions and morality are above suspicion ; but never has any traveller conceived such false ideas of Abyssinia as Mr. Gobat. He was zealous and able, but vain and credulous, and of all men the one least fit to deal with a people whose duplicity and trickery are without parallel. He spent three years in the country, preaching and arguing with the *debteras* and priests, who, for a glass or two of *tedj*, would yield any point whatever, and heap upon him



the most fulsome eulogies, which he has recorded in his journal with a *naïveté* almost incredible."

## RÜPPELL'S EXPEDITION, 1834-7.

DR. EDWARD RÜPPELL, an Austrian surgeon, travelled through the interior of Abyssinia in 1834-7. He started from Cairo for Digetta or Jidda, and from thence to Massowah, and on to Attegerat, Sauana Gondar, Kiratza, and the Lake Tsana, returning by way of Axum and Adowa. Rüppell had previously published another volume of travels in North Africa: "Reise im Nördlichen Afrika," Frankfurt, 1826, the admirable coloured illustrations of animals to which render the book of great interest to naturalists. Dr. Rüppell returned from his second African expedition in 1834, having spent above two years in Abyssinia: his pursuits were not only geographical and statistical, but were also directed to natural history. He found the difficulties of penetrating into that country much diminished since the time of Salt and Bruce, but the work of MM. Combes and Tamisier, he says, is most unsatisfactory. They were the first Europeans who for 200 years had gone beyond the province of Gojam, and visited that of Shoa: yet they have only implicitly copied the sketch of a map of that country, which Salt had compiled merely from hearsay, and have published it as made from their own observations! Von Katte, the only other traveller, has done nothing more than copy their map with all its errors. Any one pursuing his inquiry into Abyssinian discovery will find Rüppell a reliable and intelligent authority.

The maps given by Rüppell are among the best that

have ever been published. Unlike many other plans of Abyssinia, no rivers, mountains, or towns, are included by the traveller unless he knows of their actual existence. So accurate, indeed, are his maps, that it is said by a good authority that the variations in the thickness of the lines in shading, truthfully mark the inequalities of the surface.

COMBES *et* TAMISIER, 1835-37.

THESE travellers landed at Massowah in 1835, and for the space of two years remained principally in the southern part of the kingdom. Their account derives a certain interest from the circumstance of their travelling almost unattended the entire distance, nor were they during the whole time once molested.

Dr. Rüppell does not speak very highly of MM. Combes and Tamisier, but it must be remembered that the former visited Abyssinia for scientific purposes, while the latter gentlemen are content to give us the result of their travels in the form of anecdote and gossip—somewhat desultory, perhaps, but still affording us a good insight into the manners of the people.

*Abyssinian Music.*—“If the philosopher, in order to understand the genius of a nation, has need to study its manners and religion, and if a knowledge of its scientific works is necessary to the savant to appreciate its progress, it is equally necessary to gain a knowledge of the character of a people, to consider its poetry and music. For this purpose the following airs are appended, which, by their plaintive melody and rude pathos, give us a deep insight into the national character of the Abyssinians.”



The following is frequently to be heard in the kingdom of Shoa :—



A common air of the Southern Gallas :—



ANTOINE AND ARNAUD ABBADIE, 1837-48.

ANTOINE and ARNAUD ABBADIE, brothers, born in Ireland, made a journey to Abyssinia in 1837, and remained there until 1845. The succeeding three years they spent in the Galla country. During the course of their travels they collected much information regarding

the sources of the Nile, the accuracy of which, however, has been doubted; but their accounts of the ethnography and language of the countries they passed through are very valuable. They forwarded their reports to the Geographical Society of France, which were published in the *Bulletin* of that society under the title of "Notes sur le haut fleuve Blanc," 1849.

M. ROCHET D'HERICOURT, 1839-40.

During the years 1839 and 1840 M. Rochet d'Hericourt undertook a journey to Abyssinia, which was attended with such success that two years afterwards he made a second expedition to the kingdom of Shoa, under the auspices of the French Academy of Sciences. He describes Tajurrah, when he first landed, as being situated in a tract of country wretched in the extreme. "I know of nothing," he writes, "more miserable than the appearance of the village and the surrounding country. On the shore a white and burning sand, on which are huddled together, indiscriminately, the wretched hovels which compose this village, and in the background bare and rugged mountains of volcanic formation. Such is the aspect of Tajurrah." From thence he took a southeasterly course towards Angolola, in the kingdom of Shoa, where he remained some time, and met with Major Harris and Messrs. Graham, Lefebvre, and Petit.

He thus describes his introduction to Sahlé-Sallassi, the Ras of Shoa, at Angolola. The city consists of two levels, the higher being reserved exclusively for the King and his immediate attendants, and comprises about five hundred huts. After having passed

through the palisade, with which the upper city is surrounded, he found himself in the first court, which was filled with Amharahs. The second court was surrounded by a thick wall, fortified at the top with stout palisades about eight feet high; passing through this he came to the inner court, wherein is situated the house of the Ras, which is distinguished from the others by being built of two stories, the ground-floor being used as stables. The first-floor, which is the King's apartment, is reached from the outside by wooden stairs. Sahlé-Selássie was seated on a leathern chair, called by the Abyssinians a *serir*, his head bare, and his hair frizzled into little curls, a small gold cross was suspended from his neck by a blue ribbon, while a *laupe*, brilliantly embroidered, but partially concealed a vest of Indian workmanship brocaded with gold beneath; two massive gold bracelets on his wrists, completed his costume. It was at Angolola that M. Rochet met with Major Harris and party. He asserts that the English expedition was a complete failure, occasioned by the number of Harris's attendants (thirty-four): for on arriving in the country the people concluded that conquest was his only object, which only raised suspicion and distrust instead of amity and good feeling. The Ras accepted his presents, but would give no orders to supply him and his party with food; the consequence was that as the inhabitants of Shoa are forbidden to transact business with a foreigner without permission, they were almost starved in the midst of plenty, and were only too glad to escape from such a country. Major Harris's own account differs materially from this.

M. Rochet gives an excellent map of the country, from Tajurrah to Ankobar, and some plates, but the latter

are too beautiful and refined to be true. For instance, the picture representing the King of Shoa reclining on a couch, and contemplating the portrait of Louis Philippe with the air of a Royal Academician, is a little overdone.

*Peter Paez and the Early Travellers.*—It is much to be regretted that the accounts of some of the earliest travellers have never been given to the public. That there were several manuscripts written on Abyssinia, and never printed, is evident from the reference which Ludolphus, Tellez, and others make to them. Tellez, particularly, in his "General History of Ethiopia," quotes largely from the writings of Peter Paez, a missionary sent out in 1589—a man of superior talents and address, who, instead of attempting to carry his objects by threats and violence, successfully applied himself to conciliate at once the sovereign and the nation. It is curious to remark that this old traveller mentions the fact of raw and warm beef being considered the greatest delicacy on the table of the King. Several other circumstances, apparently discredited by Tellez, have been fully corroborated by more recent travellers.

#### FRENCH EXPEDITION IN 1839-43,

UNDER M. LEFEBVRE.

THERE is one feature of Abyssinian exploration which has not been sufficiently dwelt upon by writers seeking to explain the present state of affairs in that country. The editor alludes to the different commissions, scientific and commercial, which the French Government have from time to time sent out there. Salt's exploring party was the only attempt of this kind on the part of our own

Government, and that was but meagrely fitted out, and realized very inconsiderable results when compared with the magnificent expeditions despatched by Louis Philippe in 1839-43, for the purpose of exploring Abyssinia, and reporting as to its fitness for a French settlement. The principal commission consisted of M. Théophile Lefebvre, president, M. Petit, and M. Quartin-Dillon, with a great body of scientific assistants and helpers; the transportation being under the command of Vice-Admiral Baron de Mackau. Lefebvre attended to the geography, history, and commerce of the country; and his two friends all that related to science. The routes at the end of this work will show the extent of country they passed over, and the accuracy with which everything was noted down. They travelled through every part of the land, to a greater extent, it is believed, than any English traveller has attempted; and on M. Lefebvre's return home, he issued the result of the exploration in nine magnificent volumes, including three large books of coloured plates, containing everything that would be likely to interest Europeans. This work should be consulted by any one collecting material about Abyssinia. The illustrations of natural history are among the finest ever executed in colours; and the bird's-eye views of the country give an excellent idea of its characteristics and general appearance. The ethnology (with coloured portraits) and the language of Abyssinia are fully treated of. As, however, the price of the work is £20, and only a few copies were printed, it is not likely to be seen by many persons.

In its scientific results this expedition was eminently successful; personally, to those concerned, it was one of the most disastrous connected with Abyssinian explora-

tion. At "Maï Brasio," Messrs. Ferret and Galinier heard from M. Rouget (one of the expedition) that M. Dillon had died, and that four others of the party had shared the same fate, all being buried on the same day. Other deaths subsequently took place.

*Hints for the Extension of Commerce.*—M. Lefebvre, who, as has been already stated, was sent to Abyssinia to report on the facilities of extending French commerce in that direction, as much as for scientific research, offers some very valuable hints on the subject, which English merchants might do well to avail themselves of.

The commerce of Abyssinia, he writes, though very limited, has an individuality of its own; that is, there are certain staple articles which are in constant demand, and to swamp the market at once with manufactures of which the natives have no idea, would be egregious folly. He argues, therefore, that, at first, the importation should consist solely of those articles to which the Abyssinians are accustomed, and afterwards, as they become more civilized, and their wants increase, to introduce other products to supply them. The place of all others to be chosen as an entrepôt should be Massowah. It is the present centre of all foreign-mercantile transactions; it is regularly visited by the caravans which come from all parts of the interior, and, moreover, offers to ships the advantage of an advantageously situated and commodious harbour. Other places equally adapted as ports might be selected on the coast of the Red Sea, but amongst a people so notoriously averse to change as the Abyssinians, it would take a long time before the caravans could be induced to take that route. Let us assume that a commercial company is to be established in Abyssinia. Massowah should be the head-quarters;



but agents should be located throughout the different towns in the interior to collect produce, and keep the office at Massowah informed as to the articles most in demand in their particular districts. The principal of these agents should reside at Gondar, the commercial centre of all Abyssinia. He, or his agents, should visit all the little merchants, and induce them to forward their produce to the head-quarters of the company. Much depends on the tact of the Gondar agent; for the natives, being such rogues themselves, are very suspicious of others, and much skill will be necessary to induce them to make their first venture. Nothing should be absolutely bought at the place of production; for, in the first place, the company could not transport the goods as quickly or as cheaply as the natives themselves, who are accustomed to the route; and, in the second place, the merchants, when they arrive at Massowah, *must* sell, or bring their goods back. Moreover, having a certain market, they could, instead of making but two journeys a year, as at present, make three or four, if not detained months, as they sometimes are, to settle their affairs.

The agent at Gondar should have complete control over the sub-agents in the interior. He should possess the perfect confidence of the company, and if not himself a partner, should at least have considerable interest in it. The minor agents, in like manner, should receive a commission upon all the business they execute, in addition to a fixed salary. It is absolutely essential that no consideration of expense should stand in the way of appointing agents, and new agencies should be established whenever an opening is presented.

Having thus given a general outline of the scheme, M. Lefebvre proceeds to enter into further particulars

by defining the position of the various agents and duties.

**MASSOWAH.**—General entrepôt. It is here that both exports and imports will be delivered. The manager must reside here, whose duty shall be to superintend both purchases and sales; and the cashier, who shall have sole charge of the financial department. These two officers and the Gondar agent need be the only Europeans, all the others might be Abyssinians, who, besides having a perfect knowledge of their own locality, would be satisfied with a very small salary in addition to their commission, varying from two to four dollars a month, according to the importance of their position.

**KAYEKOR** (*on the frontier*).—An agent at two dollars a month, to transmit letters and facilitate the progress of trains. He should forward to Massowah grain and other provisions from his neighbourhood. A sure way to get grain cheap is to furnish the labourers with oxen necessary for their work. For the accomodation they give half their harvest.

**AXUM** (*Tigré*).—An Abyssinian at the same salary as the last would suffice to give notice of the arrival of caravans, which generally remain some time to recruit their animals' strength in the good pasturage which surrounds this town.

**ATEBI** (*Agameh*).—This station is important, being close by the salt plains. It is from this point that the caravans branch off to Lake Alelbad, near which plains they procure salt and sulphur. It would be necessary to have an intelligent agent located here, with a residence and store-house, provided with money to enable him to purchase salt in the favourable season, which is from September to May: this article is one of the greatest

importance in the country, for blocks of salt constitute the only native currency. Atebi being a sanctuary, or place of refuge, the station is not exposed to any risk.

ANTALO (*Enderta*).—The agent at this market should send on the merchandise adapted to the localities of Ashangui and Sokota. It is only beyond Ashangui that calicoes are much sought after. In Christian Abyssinia they are of much less value.

SOKOTA (*Waag*).—A first rate agent should be posted here. This market does a large amount of business with Wadela, which produces wool. The Yedjou country, where mules are bred, and Achangui, from whence is procured honey, wax, and other articles in demand by the Wollos, who sell horses and buy calicoes.

YANEDJA (*Wadela*).—The agent here corresponds with that at Sokota, and serves as a half-way house between that station and the districts of Yedjou, Achangui, and Wollo.

GONDAR.—The commercial and political centre of Abyssinia, and the rendezvous of all the caravans which take from thence the natural products of the country, or proceed further into the interior to exchange musk, coffee, gold, and ivory, for European goods. Hunters resort hither to dispose of elephants' and hippopotamus' teeth, as well as rhinoceros, buffalo, ox, and antelope horns. It is also the centre of manufacturing industry.

BASSO (*Gojam*).—An agent at this town is very important. Coffee, ivory, gold collected by the Gallas, and musk are sold here.

DEBRA ABAI (*Shiree*).—A good agent should be appointed here. It is a large market for ivory, cotton, rhinoceros and antelope horns and furs.

DEBRA LIBANOS.—Midway between Ankobar and the province of Gojam.

ANKOBAR (*Efat*).—An agent should be placed here to purchase merchandise brought up by caravans from the south-east, and to forward it to Massowah.

BITCHANA.—An intermediary agency between Gondar, Basso, and Ankobar.

KAFFA (*Galla*).—An important market for products from Central Africa.

*Commercial System of the Country.*—The greater part of the caravans of the Abyssinian merchants come from Gondar, and travel to Massowah or Cairo. These trains leave at every season of the year, but they are more numerous in the month of January, after the end of the rains, and in June, before the rising of the rivers. Unfortunately there is no fixed tariff for duties to be paid at the different places on the route; for although a tariff is supposed to exist, yet at every post there is always a dispute between the officers who collect the duties and the merchants. When the caravan arrives at Massowah Abyssinian merchants pay a fixed duty of 10 per cent.; Europeans, however, in virtue of a treaty concluded with the Porte, only pay 5 per cent. On the return journey, having disposed of their produce, and laid in another stock, the caravan reunites at Dixan. One portion usually takes the eastern route from this place, passing through Agameh, Enderta, Lasta, Tehuladere, and “Ouareh Kalto.” Although this last-named province is at the frontier of Shoa, many of its merchants prefer Massowah to Tajurrah, as the route by the Azobo valley, Attegerat, Enderta, and Agameh are safer. At the same time, travelling is easier, for the country produces good pasturage for the beasts.

As soon as the merchants arrive at Gondar they dispatch a portion of their wares to the markets of Bege-meder and Gojam, where they meet with other caravans, which transport them to the Gallas countries. The merchants who devote themselves to this last-named traffic come from Derita, a town entirely Mahometan. They usually buy glass ware, which is in great demand among the Gallas, although little used by the Abyssinian Christians.

As the people of Gondar, Adowa, and Antalo, are almost the only merchants who go to Massowah, it is from these three points trading expeditions are made to the interior, and it is to them that the small dealers repair, both to dispose of their own goods and furnish themselves with others.

The articles principally exported by Abyssinia are gold, ivory, coffee, musk, wax, leather, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, antelope, and buffalo horns, tallow, furs, ostrich feathers, tortoiseshell, mules, gum, myrrh, senna, colocinth, and pearls; receiving in exchange, cloth, silk, blue and red cotton, velvet, calicoes, and muslins, glass-ware, antimony, bottles, earthenware, files, and carpenters' and goldsmiths' tools, tin, mercury, glass, needles, scissors, razors, nails, loaf and soft sugar, muskets, sword blades, copper, and tobacco.

## FRENCH EXPEDITION IN 1840-41.

FERRET ET GALINIER.

At the time M. Lefebvre's commission was being fitted out, another expedition, also equipped by the

French Government, left for Abyssinia to report more especially upon the Tigré, Amhara, and Samen provinces. The gentlemen, under whose auspices the commission sailed, were Captains Ferret and Galinier. They spent some time in Egypt, and at Cairo, on their way to Mount Sinai, fell in with Mr. Bell, then quite a young man, who afterwards connected himself in so tragic a manner with the fortunes of Theodore. They subsequently met with Lefebvre's expedition.

As a book of travels it is not as entertaining as many others, but it contains a large amount of valuable information on the country MM. Ferret and Galinier were specially commissioned to investigate; and until M. Lefebvre published a work under the same auspices, eight years later, it was undoubtedly the best which up to that date had been written.

A main object of the expedition were geological and astronomical enquiries; but the printed results do not form so imposing a work as the magnificent set of books edited by Lefebvre. They do not appear to have penetrated the country to the extent of Lefebvre and his party; and on their map they acknowledge the friendly assistance of our Dr. Beke with all honesty. They appear to have taken the Tigré country as a fair sample of the rest of Abyssinia, consequently it is not worth while to give particulars of the short journeys pursued by them.

*Bell the Englishman.*—"Whilst we were admiring the travelling arrangements of the Arabian pilgrims, in comparison with whom even the Englishman is but a poor traveller, and surveying the multitude of new faces around us, a cry of surprise is raised by some of our party who have recognised a friendly face—Mr. Bell. In-

deed it was he, really Mr. Bell, a young Englishman, *but not a tourist, thanks to God*. At twenty-two years of age, Mr. Bell had already visited Egypt, Nubia, the deserts along the Euphrates, and he now contemplated the exploration of the sources of the Nile. A caprice of the wind takes him into the roadsteads of Tor. He sees us, and will not part with us, but offers to join our company, which of course we are but too glad to accept. From this moment our little caravan is increased by a devoted companion and a gallant friend, whose lively spirits, cheerfulness, and inexhaustible sallies made us very often forget the fatigues of our long marches, and the tediousness of these interminable journeys in Abyssinia" (Vol. i., p. 298).

Further on they remark :—

" Mr. Bell has left us for the purpose of surveying the sources of the Nile."

KRAPF AND ISENBERG, 1839-42 : 1855.

WHEN Messrs. Gobat and Kugler left the missions founded by them in Abyssinia, their places were taken by Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf. The former reached Adowa in 1835, and the latter in 1837. Owing to opposition, however, from some of the native priests, they had to leave the country. They at first proceeded to Cairo, a starting point for all parts of the Red Sea ; and when there, they determined upon entering Abyssinia by the south, through Tajurrah. Having procured a letter from the Pasha of Egypt, a letter of introduction to the King of Shoa, they started for Tajurrah. Between the years 1839-42, these gentlemen appear to have traversed

every part of the kingdom of Abyssinia and surrounding tribes. They spent some time in the King of Shoa's country, mixing with the Gallas, and studying their language, customs, and government. The authors proceeded as far as Debra Libanos, and accompanied the King in one or two expeditions a considerable distance to the south and west of Ankobar. In the 3rd part Krapf details his journey home by way of Gondar and Massowah. Throughout this long journey he encountered great hardships and danger. He was plundered by one chief, and nearly killed by another, and often had to turn in a direction very different from what he desired. The result of this compulsory divergence, however, was the acquisition of valuable geographical information about many parts not previously traversed by other Europeans.

In 1855 Dr. Krapf again visited Abyssinia. It was in this journey that he made the acquaintance of King Theodore, who was crowned whilst our traveller was waiting at Massowah. The return journey was made by way of Sennaar and Khartoom. In Part 3 of this book are some extracts from Dr. Krapf's description of the King, and in Part 5 is his advice to our Government respecting the proposed expedition. This gentleman has just received the appointment of interpreter and agent to that portion of our army now proceeding there.

*Eating Brundo.*—Concerning this peculiar custom Dr. Krapf says that the Abyssinians eat raw flesh, which they call *Brundo*. They take most delight in the "Shaluda," the double or germinous muscle, of a cow. The practice mentioned by Bruce of the Abyssinians cutting a piece of flesh from a living cow, and covering up the place again, he never witnessed in any part of the country; but



with his own eyes he once saw some Christian soldiers of Shoa, on an expedition against the Gallas, cut off the foot of a live sheep, and then leave the animal to its fate. The foot was forthwith devoured raw. He suggests, however, that they may have been in a great hurry, and had not time to slaughter the animal in the regular way.

## MAJOR HARRIS, 1841.

IN this year the British Government decided upon sending a Mission to Sahlé Selássie, King of Shoa, for the purpose of concluding a treaty of Amity and Commerce. The conduct of this embassy was entrusted to Major W. C. Harris, who had acquired some reputation by his previous travels in Africa. The Mission landed at Tajurrah, and proceeded inland to Ankobar, the capital of Southern Abyssinia, distant about 350 miles from the former town. Harris's travels to the "Highlands of Æthiopia," as he styled the uplands of Shoa, have recently acquired fresh notoriety from a quotation taken from its pages, which some of the more timorous journals have dwelt upon in their leading articles as a sufficient reason for the abandonment of any expedition to such a dismal country. The quotation speaks of "*a suffocating Pandemonium, where no zephyr fanned the fevered skin ; where the furnace-like vapour exhaled almost choking respiration, created an indomitable thirst, and not the smallest shade or shelter existed. Each weary hour brought a grievous accession, but no alleviation, to the fearful torments,*" &c. Harris, however, had acquired the art of literary composition in the Minerva school, and it is only now and

then that he descends to sober description or plain facts. He is an admirable artist, but altogether too gushing a writer. Superlatives are to be met with in every line. The dash and rattle of the books of adventures written by military captains forty years ago are conspicuous throughout. Everything is either the most beautiful, the most ugly, the largest, or the smallest. The sky is "the molten vault of heaven;" the moon does not rise, but "dips her first flickering beam in the unruffled surface of the oval lake;" the sun is "the implacable orb;" time "slowly flaps his leaden wing;" foul water is "a mephitic fluid;"—everywhere double adjectives and adverbs. The quotation just given, too, forms part of a description of "The Pandemonium of Bahr Assál," an "unventilated and diabolical hollow," 570 feet below the ocean, through which the travellers passed on their way to Ankobar. It is the worst place on the route, and as Major Harris visited it in July, the worst time was selected; but travellers can now take another route. The notes on Natural History appended to the 3 vols. are soberly written, and valuable. Major Harris dedicated his work to the Queen, and was knighted soon after.

*Abyssinian Dandies.*—Fops in numbers are to be seen at Tajúrrah, who have called in the aid of moist quicklime towards the conversion of the naturally jet black peruke to a most atrocious foxy red—when judicious frizzing, and the insertion of the wooden skewer, used for scratching, completes the resemblance to a carriage mop. But this novel process of dyeing, so contrary to that employed by civilised beaux, is only in fashion among the Somauli, who, in common with the Danákil dandies, employ, in lieu of a down pillow, a small wooden

bolster,\* shaped like a crutch, which receives the neck, and during the hours of presumed uncomfortable repose, preserves the periwig from derangement.

*Ladies of Tajúrrah.*—The softer sex of Tajúrrah, whilst young, possess a tolerable share of comeliness, and a pleasing expression withal; but they are speedily past the meridian of beauty. A close blue chemise, a plain leathern petticoat, or a cloth reaching to the ankles, and a liberal coat of lard over extravagantly braided ringlets, which are knotted with white beads, form the toilet of maid, wife, and widow. An occasional necklace of coloured beads falling over the sable bosom, a pendant of brass or silver wire of no ordinary dimensions in the ear, and large ivory bracelets or anklets, proclaim the besetting foible of the sex: but ornaments are by no means general. Mohamedan jealousy tends to the seclusion of the better order of females to a certain extent; but a marriage in high life, when the procession passed close to the encampment, afforded an opportunity not always enjoyed, of beholding the beauty and fashion of the place. The matrimonial shackles are here easily loosed; and the greater portion of the population being deeply engaged in the slave trade with the interior, have their rude houses filled with temporary wives, who are from time to time unceremoniously shipped for the Arabian market, in order that the funds accruing from the sale of their persons may be invested in new purchases.

*Superstitions of the Shoans.*—Amongst the manifold superstitions of the people of Susa, a new knife, before being used for cutting meat, must be blown upon by the priest. Witchcraft has a firm hold upon every mind;

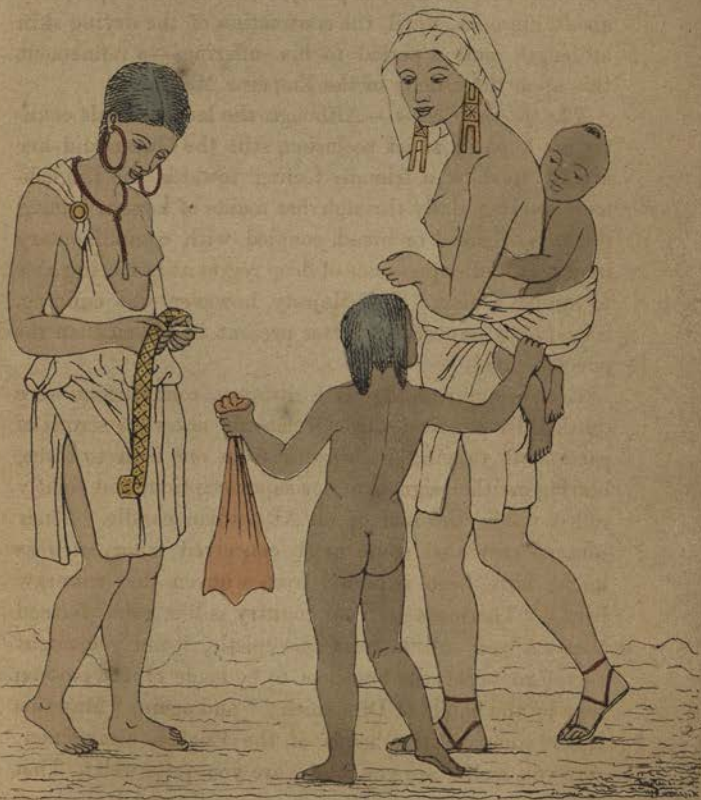
\* See a representation of this pillow a few pages further on, in the account of the Rev. Mr. Stern's work.

and many a luckless worker in iron is, with his whole family, condemned to be burnt alive in his house, as an atonement for evil deeds. Theft is punished by sewing up the culprit in a green hide, when he is suspended by the heels in the market-place, with the stolen property about his neck, until the contraction of the drying skin at length puts a period to his sufferings—a refinement this upon the cruelty of the Emperor Maximin.

*The Queen of Shoa.*—Although the ladies of this country are kept in strict seclusion, still the Queen did her utmost to show a friendly feeling towards the Englishmen, sending daily through her maids of honour trifling presents of mead or bread, coupled with complimentary inquiries, and expressions of deep regret at not being able to receive a visit. Her Majesty, however, was cunning. She always expected a better present in return than the one she gave.

Even when residing at a distance, commissions were continually received through laconic notes on scrolls of parchment varying in breadth from one inch to three, bearing neither signature nor superscription, and tightly rolled up in the end of an Abyssinian candle. Their contents revealed some newly-conceived fancy, such as might have been expected from a queen that eats raw beef. “The brass in your country is like gold,” formed the sum and substance of one epistle, “and you might therefore order the bracelets to be made of the pattern sent by the hands of Dinkenich;”<sup>\*</sup> and again, “May this letter come to the hands of the English commander. Are you well? are you well? are you quite well? That the soap may not end quick, you will send it in large

<sup>\*</sup> *i. e.* “She is beautiful”—one of her Majesty’s Abigails.



A YOUNG WOMAN OF ANKOBAR,  
AND A MARRIED WOMAN OF AMPHILLA.



quantities, saith Besábesh."\* Not long after her Majesty's arrival, an unfortunate child, recently purchased from a Guráguê slave caravan, was sent to the Residency, with a request that *Hubsheeri* might be exchanged for some clear salad oil which had met with especial approval "for medicine for the face;" and great surprise was elicited by the information that such a course of proceeding would involve disgrace and criminality, inasmuch as the unchristian-like traffic in human beings is held in abhorrence beyond the great water.

*Slavery in Shoa.*—Caravans, consisting of from one hundred to three thousand individuals of all ages, pass through Shoa during the greater portion of the year. Three-fourths are young boys and girls, many of them quite children, whose tender age precludes a sense of their condition. Even adults are unfettered, and the majority are in good spirits, all being well fed and taken care of, although many of both sexes arrive in a state of perfect nudity. Surrounded by the rovers on horseback, they are driven promiscuously along the road, males and females being separated at the termination of each march, and made to sit in detached groups comprising from ten to fifteen souls, who are deterred from wandering by the exhibition of the whip; but this is rarely used, except for the chastisement of the unruly, who may seek to effect their escape. In the eyes of every African, the value of a slave increases in the ratio of his distance from the land of his nativity, the chance of his absconding being reduced in the same proportion. The usual prices in the Shoan market are from ten to twenty German crowns; but females possessing superior personal attractions often fetch from fifty to eighty, which outlay is

\* The name of the Queen.

returned threefold in Arabia. The profits accruing from the trade are thus obviously large ; and notwithstanding the murders which are annually perpetrated by freebooters on the road to the seacoast, the mortality can scarcely be said to exceed that under the ordinary circumstances of African life.

*Hints to English Merchants.*—These remarks are so valuable, and to the point, that it is difficult to believe they came from the writer of the earlier portion of the work.

Although free to all nations, the eastern coast, from Sofala to Cape Guardufoi, has in later years been little frequented by any, save the enterprising American, whose star-spangled banner is to be seen waving to the breeze in parts where others would not deign to traffic ; and who, being thus the pioneer to new countries, reaps the lucrative harvest which they are almost sure to afford. English ships from India have occasionally visited the southern ports for cargoes of ivory and ambergris, but the trade being yet in its infancy, admitted of little routine ; and in the absence of any rival, the Iman of Muscat is, with his daily-increasing territories, fast establishing a lucrative monopoly, from Mombas to Zanzibar.

In most of the interior countries lying opposite to this coast, to the south of Shoa, the people unite with an inordinate passion for trinkets and finery a degree of wealth which must favour an extensive sale of European commodities. In Enárea, Caffa, Guráguê, Koocha, and Susa, especially, glass-ware, false jewellery, beads, cutlery, blue calico, long cloth, chintz, and other linen manufactures, are in universal demand. That their wants are neither few nor trifling may be satisfactorily ascertained from the fact that the sum of £96,000, the produce of the slave trade from the ports of Berbera, Zeyla, Tajúrrah, and Mas-



sowah, is only one item of the total amount annually invested in various foreign goods and manufactures, which are readily disposed of, even at the present price of the monopolist ; who being generally a trader of very limited capital, may be concluded to drive an extremely hard bargain for his luxurious wares.

*It would be idle to speculate upon the hidden treasures that may be in store for that adventurous spirit who shall successfully perform the quest into these coy regions—for time and enterprise can alone reveal them.* But it is notorious that gold and gold dust, ivory, civet, and ostrich feathers, peltries, spices\*, wax and precious gums, form a part of the lading of every slave caravan, notwithstanding that a tedious transport over a long and circuitous route presents many serious difficulties ; and that the overreaching disposition of the Indian Banian and of the Arab merchant, who principally divide the spoils on the coast of Abyssinia, offer a very far from adequate reimbursement for the toil and labour of transportation. No quarter of the globe abounds to a greater extent in vegetable and mineral productions than tropical Africa ; and in the populous, fertile, and salubrious portions lying immediately north of the equator, the very highest capabilities are presented for the employment of capital, and the development of British industry. Coal has already been found, although at too great a distance inland to render it of any service without water communication ; but the fossil doubtless exists in positions the most favourable for the supply of the steamers employed in the navigation of the Red Sea. Cotton of a

\* Ginger is exported in great quantities from Gurágué ; and amongst other indigenous spices, the *kurárima*, which combines the flavour of the carraway with that of the cardamom.

quality unrivalled in the whole world is everywhere a weed, and might be cultivated to any requisite extent. The coffee which is sold in Arabia as the produce of Mocha is chiefly of wild African growth; and that species of the tea-plant which is used by the lower orders of the Chinese flourishes so widely and with so little care, that the climate to which it is indigenous would doubtless be found well adapted for the high-flavoured and more delicate species so prized for foreign exportation. Every trade must be important to Great Britain which will absorb manufactured goods and furnish raw material in return. Mercantile interests on the eastern coast might therefore quickly be advanced by teaching the natives to have artificial wants, and then instructing them in what manner those wants may be supplied through the cultivated productions of the soil. The present is the moment at which to essay this; and so promising a field for enterprise and speculation ought no longer to be neglected or overlooked. The position of the more cultivated tribes inland, the love of finery displayed by all, the climate, the productions, the capabilities, the presumed navigable access to the interior, the contiguity to British Indian possessions, and the proximity of some of the finest harbours in the world, all combine inducements to the merchant, who, at the hands even of the rudest nation, may be certain of a cordial welcome.

If, at a very moderate calculation, a sum falling little short of £100,000 sterling can be annually invested in European goods to supply the wants of some few of the poorer tribes adjacent to Abyssinia; and if the tedious and perilous land journey can be thus braved with profit to the native pedlar, what important results might

not be anticipated from well directed efforts, by such navigable access as would appear to be promised by the river Gochob? The throwing into the very heart of the country now pillaged for slaves a cheap and ample supply of the goods most coveted must have the effect of excluding the Mohammedan rover who has so long preyed upon the sinews of the people; and this foundation judiciously built upon by the encouragement of cultivation in cotton and other indigenous produce, could not fail to rear upon the timid barter of a rude people the superstructure of a vast commerce.

*A rich mercantile harvest is assuredly in store for those who shall unlock the portals of the Eastern coast, and shall spread navigation upon waters that have heretofore been barren.*

## CHARLES JOHNSTON, 1842-3.

To undertake this journey into Africa, Johnston resigned a valuable medical appointment in the East, and voluntarily assumed the character of an adventurer. Our traveller took the route from Tajurrah, on the coast of the Red Sea, to Ankobar, the capital of Shoa. He left the former town on 1st March, 1842, and arrived at Ankobar in July following, having retraced his steps to various points on several occasions. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf did the journey in seventy-nine days. Johnston does not seem to have met with any more real difficulties than the two missionaries; but he lacked their address and power to command, and he seems to have been indecisive and trifling. At Farree he was imprisoned by Wallasmah, and from his paltry prison he escaped to Ankobar. It is curious

to note, in this case of imprisonment of an Englishman, that pride on the one hand, and the hope of receiving a considerable ransom on the other, induced Wallasmah Mahomed, the governor of Efat, to confine our traveller, who, when he expostulated with the governor, and told him that "his queen would be very angry when she came to hear of the letters being taken from her servant," very coolly threatened to have him chained, assisting the interpretation by placing his two wrists together, as if bound.

MANSFIELD PARKYNS, 1844-47.

This traveller spent three years in Abyssinia on a prolonged hunting expedition. He landed at Massowah, and having hired a few native servants, proceeded through almost every part of the country. The narrative of his travels is remarkable for the apparent ease with which he pursued his way. What constituted a difficulty or a hardship to another traveller, was only a pleasurable variation to him. As mentioned in the paragraph below, he never wore a hat or a boot during all that time, and the scorching sun, which frightens most people from African travel, shone upon his bare head at all hours of the day. The book makes no pretensions to be considered a scientific authority, but from the wide extent of country traversed and the truthfulness of the journal, it will always be valued for its information about Abyssinia. After reading Parkyns' narrative, most persons will be apt to discredit the extreme difficulties and dangers which many of our newspapers have recently assured us attend all Abyssinian travel. The book was not published until 1853.

*Steaks from the living Cow.*—"What I have described has been almost entirely what I have myself witnessed, or heard related on the spot. Although I do not bind myself to the exactness of a journal in matters of times, places, and persons, I have, in only one or two instances, deviated from it by combining into scenes various anecdotes, the value of which, as illustrations of my subject, would have been lost had they been scattered through the work. In some few cases I may have fallen into a common error, that of putting down as customs incidents which I may have seen, but which, in reality, may happen scarcely once in a hundred years. I make this remark on account of the reputation poor Bruce got. Even to the present day one or two of his stories are discredited. I have been often asked about "*the steak cut from the live cow,*" and have only to say, once for all, *I firmly believe that Bruce saw what he has stated.* While I was in Abyssinia a soldier, in conversation with me and several others, volunteered a story quite similar to Bruce's, both as regards the manner of the operation and the reasons why it was performed. On inquiry, he said that such a practice was not uncommon among the Gallas, and even occasionally occurred among themselves, when, as in the case Bruce relates, a cow had been stolen or taken in foray. The men who drive her being hungry have no alternative but to go on fasting, kill the cow, or act as described. The first they will not do; the second would imply the necessity of carrying home the residue of the meat, or leaving it to the jackals—neither of which would suit their inclinations; so the third is adopted. I have heard it remarked that it was scarcely possible to believe human beings capable of such cruelty. In answer to this I would merely observe that

no one should venture on such a remark in a country where salmon are crimped, and eels skinned, alive; nor should they talk of cruelty of any sort till the state trials, and other books, showing the horrible death which many of our ancestors suffered for their adherence to the Stuart family, be out of print, and the old sentence for high treason forgotten. The Abyssinians cut off the hand, foot, or tongue, or perhaps put out the eyes for such an offence; but this punishment is a mere shadow of the refinement of savage cruelty practised by our forefathers not many generations ago, and sanctioned by the laws of an enlightened and civilized nation. In defending Bruce I am not attempting to prepare the reader's credulity for some extraordinary story of my own. I have not got anything marvellous to tell—I wish I had. All that I profess to do is to enter more particularly into the customs of the people I have visited than has hitherto been done."

*The Climate.*—The highlands of Abyssinia enjoy probably as salubrious a climate as any country on the face of the globe. The heat is by no means oppressive, a fine light air counteracting the power of the sun. At certain seasons of the year the low valleys, as of Mareb and Taccazzé, especially the former, are much to be feared, from the malaria which prevails, and which brings on, in persons exposed to its influence, most terrible inflammatory fevers, of which four cases out of five are fatal; and even in a case of escape from death the effects on the constitution are such that it will be years before the sufferer recovers its shock, if indeed he should ever do so entirely. More than one of the few Europeans who have visited Abyssinia within the present century have fallen victims to it. Many have died also from dysentery—a

complaint which often comes on in the rainy season as an epidemic. These two are the most commonly fatal complaints of Abyssinia. The season most to be dreaded is immediately after the rains (about September), and the two or three following months. The cause of the prevalence of malaria at this time of the year is evident: the streams, which have been flooded for a long distance on each side of their ordinary limits, retire, and leave pools and marshy spots full of quantities of putrefied vegetable matter, the exhalations from which are the cause of the evil. It is seldom that a traveller need find himself in these spots during the dangerous season. When Mr. Parkyns could get wood he invariably lighted two large fires, and slept between them. This plan, though not very agreeable till you are used to it, is a capital preventative of disease; for during the day the sun's heat raises the moisture in steam, which, when the evening becomes cool, descends in the form of dew or fog, and in this form is one of the greatest helps to a fever. The heat you have around you answers the purpose of a local sun, and you are in no more danger than during the daytime.

*The value of Sunlight.*—Another practice should also be recommended; that of never venturing abroad in a low, unhealthy spot till the sun has risen an hour or more. It is customary to hold the sun in great dread. Our traveller does not pretend to say whether his constitution in this respect differed from that of other men, but, for his own part, he never retired into the shade to avoid the noonday heat: and for four years never wore any covering to his head, except the rather scanty allowance of hair with which nature had supplied him, with the addition

occasionally of a little butter. During the whole of this time he suffered but little inconvenience.

*M. Lefebvre's Expedition.*—[As Mr. Parkyns was proceeding down the Red Sea he fell in at Suàkin with poor M. Vignaud, the artist to Lefebvre's expedition, 1839-43. M. Dillon and others of the commission had previously died. See under p. 59.] "On the 15th we neared Souàkin, having crossed by mistake to a point a considerable distance off. As we arrived in the evening we lay outside till morning. Another vessel lay near us, outward bound. After we had been anchored some time she sent a boat off to us, requesting me to visit a French gentleman, who was lying on board her sick of a fever. I immediately went to him, and found it was a M. Vignon, who had been for some time in Abyssinia as draughtsman to a scientific expedition sent there for commercial and other investigations. He had, poor fellow! already lost three of his companions by illness or accident, one only besides himself surviving; and I could not help feeling that this journey, to which no doubt he had looked forward with the greatest pleasure as that which was to carry him, after all his dangers and fatigues, to rest happy and most deservedly renowned among his countrymen and friends, would probably be soon finished."

*Massowah.*—The island is a mere rock of coral, without a vestige of vegetation to enliven its bare face. There are cisterns for collecting the rain-water (no spring existing), but most of these have been allowed to fall into disuse, and the inhabitants of the island are obliged to trust to Arkeko, a village on the mainland, distant some three or four miles, for their supply. This water, moreover, is rather brackish. The extreme heat of the



place would not appear extraordinary to any one acquainted with its position.

*Clothing not required.*—From the day he left Suez (March 25, 1843), till about the same time in the year 1849, he never wore any article of European dress, nor indeed ever slept on a bed of any sort—not even a mattress. The utmost extent of luxury which he enjoyed, even when all but dying of a pestilential fever that kept him five months on his beam-ends at Khartoom, was a coverlid under a rug. The red cap he wore on leaving Massowah was soon *borrowed* of him, and the sandals after a month were given up; and so, as has been before said, for more than three years (that is, till he reached Khartoom) he wore no covering to his head except a little butter, when he could get it; nor to his feet, except the horny sole which a few months' rough usage placed under them. During the whole of this time he never had a headache, though exposed to the sun at all hours of the day, and was never footsore, though he walked constantly in the roughest imaginable places.

*Table Customs.*—When the master of an Abyssinian house takes his meals, all his servants stand round the doorway and look on; which custom, though it has at first a disagreeable effect to a stranger, is in reality a mark of respect to their superior, showing that they are in attendance on him, and not merely eating his bread and idling their time away. The master's feeding-time, in fact, is a sort of muster for the servants. The dinner-tables in great houses are usually of wood, roughly made, but frequently also of wicker-work neatly put together. When a party is expected, fresh grass is spread on the floor, and the tables are ranged of various sorts and sizes—the highest nearest the master's end of the room;

some wooden, some wicker, some broad, others narrow, it being only in a few fashionable establishments that two or three of corresponding size can be found. All, of course, are very low, being made of the height most convenient for a person seated on the ground; for chairs are unknown in the country. The table being spread, the bread is brought in by servants in large baskets carried on their heads. If the bread be all made in the house, the cakes of inferior quality are ranged at the top of each basket, while the better sort are underneath, or the different kinds are brought in in different baskets. In either case the piles are so arranged on the tables that the best sort appears at the top of each pile. It often happens, when there is likely to be a great consumption, that additional bread is borrowed of the neighbours or servants of the house. Each basket of the subsidy is then carefully examined by the "azzadge," or house-steward, and the contents disposed of as above: namely, the "dàgousha" and barley bread is laid at the bottom, the coarse kind of "teff" comes next, and at the top of all the finest white bread. Before each person is placed a pile of from eight to ten of these cakes for a small party; but at such an establishment as Oubi's, sometimes each guest would have thirty or more cakes before him. This is so arranged, because the nobler guests are first seated and eat of the finest bread, then those of the humbler rank take their places and partake of the second class of bread, and so on in succession till the coarsest is eaten by the servants and poor friends, The cakes supply the place of napkins, as the fingers of the guests are frequently wiped on them after being dipped in the dish or rendered bloody by the raw meat. This, however, does not in the least affect the appetites

of those who, coming after, have to eat them. The company being assembled, the most distinguished personages are requested to be seated, and are placed according to their rank by the "Shelika zifan beyt," or "Agafâri Adderash," two dignitaries of whose duties, &c., we will more fully speak in the proper place. A good deal of politeness sometimes ensues as to precedence; but, all being at last settled down into their places, the "soup-bè" or cooked dishes, are brought in by the cook-women, each of whom receives a piece of bread dipped in the dish she has carried. These are placed on the table according to their quality, the best nearest the top; and the "asalafy," or waiters,\* take a piece of bread from before each person, and, sopping it in the sauce, return it to him. They also serve the guests with meat from the dishes, cutting, or with their fingers † tearing it into pieces of a convenient size; and in doing this they frequently show great favouritism, giving the kidneys and tit-bits to one, and the gristle and bones to another. They are very attentive, never allowing any one to be

\* The office of "asalafy" in Abyssinia would seem to correspond nearly with that of the "scissor," "carptor," or "diribitor" of the ancients.

† "I imagine there can be no need for me to say that forks are not used in Abyssinia any more than they are in other Eastern countries, except among a few of the Turks, who have very lately borrowed their use from the Franks.

"Many of my friends have asked me if I had ever eaten with my fingers; and when I replied that I had done so for more than six years, and that even when in Egypt I continued to do so *par préférence* in my own lodgings, and up to the day I got on board the steamer which was to convey me homeward, they appeared astonished, nay, even horrified. Some of my readers may be ignorant of the fact that within the last two centuries forks were rare in England."—*M. Parkyns*.

a moment unsupplied. The guests take their bread and sauce and mix them together into a sort of paste, of which they make balls, long and rounded like small puddings. These they consider it polite to poke into the mouths of their neighbours ; so that if you happen to be a distinguished character, or a stranger to whom they wish to pay attention, which was often his case, you are in a very disagreeable position ; for your two neighbours, one on each side, cram into your mouth these large and peppery proofs of their esteem so quickly one after the other, that long before you can chew and swallow the one, you are obliged to make room for the next. They generally succeed in half choking you ; and if you feel you are losing the skin of your mouth, lips, and throat from the fiery effects of the pepper, you dare not ask for water, as that would be considered rude ; and the mead is seldom served till the dinner is over. While these dishes, which are generally made of mutton, are on the table, the cow is killed and flayed outside ; and immediately on their removal the “brundo” is brought in, each servant carrying a yet quivering lump in his hands. The choicest pieces are carried to the highest tables, where are seated the master of the feast and the most distinguished guests. There is usually a piece of meat to every five or six persons, among whom arises some show of ceremony as to which of them shall first help himself ; this being at length decided, the person chosen takes hold of the meat with his left hand, and with his sword or knife cuts a strip a foot or fifteen inches long from the part which appears the nicest and tenderest. The others then help themselves in like manner.

*Eating Brundo.*—“ If I should fail in describing pro-

perly the scene which now follows, I must request the aid of the reader's imagination. Let him picture to himself thirty or forty Abyssinians, stripped to their waists, squatting round the low tables, each with his sword or knife, or 'shotel' in his hand, some eating, some helping themselves, and some waiting their turn, but all bearing in their features the expression of that fierce gluttony which one attributes more to the lion or leopard than to the race of Adam. The imagination may be much assisted by the idea of the lumps of raw pink and blue flesh they are gloating over. But I have yet to describe how they eat the strip of meat which I have just made one of the party cut off. A quantity of 'dillikh,' or 'aou-a-zé,' being laid on his bread, he dips one end of the meat into it, and then, seizing it between his teeth, while he holds the other end in his left hand, he cuts a bit off close to his lips by an upward stroke of his sword, only just avoiding the tip of his nose, and so on till he has finished the whole strip."

The "debs," or broiled meat, is brought in nearly at the same time with the "brundo." It consists of the rib-bones, with the meat cut in strips, and hanging like a tassel from one end. The servant holds the bone in his hand, and each of the guests cuts off a strip, and eats it with the pepper as he does the "brundo."

*Washing before Eating.*—One good custom may here be mentioned which the Abyssinians have in common with the Mohamedans, that of washing hands before and after eating and drinking. The "quontach" is a servant appointed to bring water before and after meals to each guest, usually in a horn, but sometimes, in new-fashioned great houses, in a brass ewer. While the people are yet eating, this servant comes round to every

one with a wicker dish-cover or basket, and begs a trifle in the name of the Virgin Mary or of the Saviour, whereupon each person gives him a portion of what he is eating. This is the custom on family party days only, when not many persons are assembled ; but at grand entertainments this is not usual. On these occasions the boys about the house get under the table like so many dogs, lying down in all the filth there accumulated, and by alternately pinching and caressing the feet and legs of the visitors induce them to throw down morsels ; but although this is almost always done, it can scarcely be said to be so much allowed as winked at. These little imps are often very handy, as, when one is half-choked by the peppery balls, the easiest way to get rid of them is to let them drop unobserved. The boys will not fail to pick them up and devour them greedily, even should they have been half chewed by you already. Bones are often gnawed and regnawed by a dozen mouths before the poor patient dog outside is allowed to have his turn.

J. A. ST. JOHN, 1845-46.

(*Oriental Album.*)

THIS traveller appears to have passed much of his life in the East, and his various works upon Egypt, Nubia, and other parts of Africa, entitle him to our respect in such an inquiry as the present. Mr. St. John does not seem to have travelled to any great extent in Abyssinia, but the parts visited by him he has described with much clearness. An artist of the name of Prisse was his companion, and the illustrations by the latter are among the

best of the kind which have been produced in this country.

*Abyssinian Female Slaves.*—During his stay at Thebes, a small caravan arrived from the interior, with women belonging to nearly all the various races which inhabit the African continent. It is a rule with the Jellabis to dispose first of such females as are wanting in beauty and accomplishments, and to reserve their finest slaves for the rich market of Cairo; they accordingly, in all the towns of the Upper Nile, pen, as it were, in separate enclosures the several classes of persons they have for sale, crowding the rough and ordinary together, while such as are of superior quality are folded in smaller numbers apart. To the comparatively poor and ignorant Islamites who inhabit that part of the valley, the former class only are shown; but when a European presents himself, he is indulged with a view of the whole stock, from the belief, whether well or ill-founded, that he usually possesses more money than wit. Happening to be otherwise engaged, Mr. St. John did not accompany his fellow-traveller to the Theban slave-market, where among other African beauties, he saw a neat Abyssinian young woman, whose countenance greatly interested him. On demanding her price, he was told by the Jellabi that he should have her in exchange for the double-barrelled gun he had in his hand.

*A beautiful Galla Slave.*—Another woman, nominally an Abyssinian, but in reality a Galla, he was himself desirous of setting free at Cairo, under very peculiar circumstances. The Jellabi who owned her, hired in the slave-market a separate apartment for her accommodation, where she sat on a neat sofa, attired superbly, and holding in her hand a small glittering dagger, with

which she played while speaking or spoken to. Her beauty was of the rarest kind, and she would have commanded an enormous price, but for the belief of all those that saw her, that she was so fierce and revengeful, that no one was quite safe while within her reach. She had been there, he was assured, full three months, and had attracted hundreds of admirers, but no purchaser. Her face was of the richest and most delicate oval, with dimples in the cheek and chin, a short upper lip, a mouth formed like that of a Greek statue, and eyes of the most lustrous light. As she spoke Arabic, our author thought it would be quite possible to tame this Æthiopian Medea, by the use of a few magic words; but he found upon inquiry that this pleasure, however great it might have been, would have cost him far too dear. He could not have sent her back to her country, and therefore left her with regret in the hands of the Jellabis, who asked for her a sum that might have peopled a Turkish harém. Of the Gallas we have spoken already, so that it need only be added in this place, that they may be regarded as the Georgians of the South in personal beauty; while, in moral qualities, they are exceedingly superior to those Caucasian Amazons.

*Ethiopian Girls.*—Until thirteen or fourteen years of age the girls wear no covering, except a short apron of thongs round the waist, usually adorned with party-coloured shells. Of this they are very proud, and it costs them quite as much to part with it as it would a European woman to doff her whole costume and sell it to a stranger. Mr. St. John witnessed an example of this. On descending the river he met two or three very pretty girls playing in the ruins of a temple. The little damsels appeared to be somewhat alarmed, and retreated slowly





YOUNG GIRL OF 12 YEARS OF AGE,  
N. ABYSSINIA.



towards their mothers, who were sitting down gossiping on the other side of a wall. Their whole stock of clothing consisted of the thong-apron above described; and his companion, who desired to bring home a specimen of this primitive garment, made overtures to one of the mothers for the purchase of her daughter's wardrobe. Unable to resist the sight of the piastres, she bade the girl take it off at once and deliver it to the traveller. But the modest little creature demurred, and upon being further pressed burst into tears. His friend was obdurate, and so was the mother. If she would not strip there she was ordered to go behind a wall, which she did, crying bitterly all the while; and when she handed over her apron, a few rags were thrown her to replace it. She was at length comforted by being told by her mother that the money she had received would purchase her a dozen aprons better than the one she had lost. Upon this she dried her face, and they walked off with their prize to the boat, where, being saturated with castor-oil and mutton fat, they found it impossible to keep it in the cabin. It was therefore suspended on the mast for purification. Exactly the same kind of apron is worn by the Dyak girls in Borneo, except that with them it is adorned in front by a bright metal plate.

In one respect the genuine Ethiopian women are greatly superior in figure to those of Egypt. The breasts are more finely shaped and better placed, and do not, when women are a little advanced in life, appear to be elongated, as among the females lower down the valley. When, however, they reckon any negroes or negresses among their ancestors, the case is different. Then the breasts are placed low, and shaped like half an orange, indicating the unsightly shape they are to assume.

It has been already remarked that these women are beautifully formed, and if any parts of the body are more finely fashioned than the rest it is the hand and arm. No women have prettier or softer hands, and they are so small that in general they will pass through the bracelet which fits the wrist. A girl of ten years old in Northern Europe will commonly be found to have a hand larger than a full-grown woman here. Of this peculiarity in their figure they are very proud. Mr. St. John once purchased of a young married woman the bracelets she wore on her wrists, and when he paid her the money she bade him to take them off himself. Her pretty round arm was very small, and he thought it would be difficult; but, pressing together the hand like a glove, she enabled the ornament to slip off with the greatest ease. With one of her companions, who had a bracelet of curious fibre and precious stones interwoven, he was not so successful. Press her hand how she would it would not come off. At this she was evidently much mortified, and, in a pettish manner, bade him take out his penknife and cut it.

Their necklaces are of two kinds: a broad throat-band, composed of beads of various colours, tastefully strung; and another, which hangs loosely over the bosom, consisting of indurated berries, or small precious stones, accounted holy because brought from Mecca. They wear their hair in innumerable ringlets, in size not exceeding one's little finger, falling straight down the forehead and head, and kept in form by being plastered with mutton-fat. When they stand in the sun this melts easily, and dripping on their shoulders and bosoms, runs over their whole bodies, diffusing anything but fragrance.

M. LE JEAN, 1860-2.

THE late French Consul at Gondar has given us, in the pages of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (Nov. 1864), the result of his experience in Abyssinia. Few men have had a better opportunity for studying the institutions and customs of the country than this gentleman, and as he also suffered imprisonment at the hands of Theodore, what he says concerning that monarch possesses a peculiar interest at this moment. Fortunately for M. Le Jean, no counter influences were used by the other Europeans to set the king against him, and, after a short detention, and a mock trial to justify it, he was permitted to return to France. His report is most graphically and impartially written, in which latter quality it contrasts greatly with other recent French accounts. Several English journalists have of late availed themselves largely of M. Le Jean's excellent papers, without, however, acknowledging the source from whence their information was drawn.

*The Patriarch Salama.*—The present patriarch of Ethiopia (1864) is one of the most wretched specimens of the Coptic clergy. Haughty, violent, avaricious, and a meddler, he spends his time between usury, intrigue, and commerce—and what commerce! . . .

The character of Salama was so notorious that one day his confessor publicly disclosed his last confession, and informed the faithful that the patriarch had nine mistresses, of whom two were nuns. His ignorance is so proverbial that the professors of theology occasionally submit knotty questions to him for solution, which he commonly does by excommunicating the inquirers. . . .

*King Theodore.*—The final battle which placed Theo-

dore upon the throne was fought at Dereskié on the 5th of February, 1855. Oubié fell by the hand of Kassa\* himself. Chéton, wounded in the field, dragged himself to a cavern hard by, and there died; Kokobié, Oubié's general, passed over with his army to the enemy, and Kasai found himself at last in the position he had so long and so ardently coveted. The day following, he caused himself to be crowned with regal splendour, in the same church at Dereskié which the vanquished general had but the day before prepared for his own coronation. Kasai took the name of Theodore, which had been borne by a great and glorious Negus who reigned about the twelfth century. The fact of assuming this name marked the determination of Kasai. A tradition universally known in Abyssinia, and mentioned by all travellers since Bruce, asserts that a negus of the name of Theodore should restore the Ethiopian empire to its former splendour, destroy Islamism, and raise the Cross above the Crescent. With consummate audacity he declared that he was the man indicated by the prophecy. It is certain that in 1855 every one in Abyssinia believed it, if indeed they do not still.

The first acts of King Theodore II. were stamped by a sound judgment and moderation, which contrast strangely with his subsequent character. If, at the moment when the bells of Dereskié announced his accession to the throne, he had reflected on the troubles through which he had so recently passed, and considered the means by which he had gained his present position, we can well understand that, looking down from the

\* In this, as well as in other Abyssinian proper names, great diversity of spelling obtains. It is written *Kasa*, *Kassa*, *Kasai*, or *Kassai*.

height to which he had climbed, he should have become giddy, and that his sober judgment should have deserted him. Never, however, did monarch conduct himself more discreetly than at that critical moment, and the programme which he followed for four years amply justifies the prepossession with which he was regarded by certain Europeans. His idea was very simple: he wished to regenerate Abyssinia, and to draw from its ancient civilization the elements of its restoration. This Utopian idea was eminently grateful to the overweening national pride of the Abyssinians, and enabled the king to avoid that resistance against reforms which Peter the Great and the Sultan Mahommed, under similar circumstances, could only combat by the effusion of blood.

Abyssinia, even during its state of greatest decadence, offers to the unprejudiced traveller, the elements of an advanced social order. Feudality certainly exists there, but scarcely to a greater extent than in England; the institutions are thoroughly democratic, the administrative machinery is simple; the code of laws is that of Justinian, with certain modifications necessitated by circumstances; property is well defined, individual rights are guaranteed by appeal to the emperor; commerce is protected; and political vengeance and the horrors of war in a great measure neutralized by the number and inviolability of *ghedem* (places of refuge). The law in itself is good,—it is the fault of the barbarity brought in by unceasing anarchy if the nobility be overbearing and rapacious, the Church corrupt, justice venal, marriage annulled by the contagious example of the aristocracy, and the right of refuge and of caravans violated. There was no other means according to the doctrine of the conqueror of Dereskié, of restoring the integrity of

the empire, than by enforcing the ancient royal code with impartiality and rigour.

Judicial and religious reform therefore occupied the paramount attention of Theodore. The principal want of Abyssinia was security in travelling, and in fact the country generally was infested with bands of robbers. A royal proclamation dated from the camp of Abadjard, near Gondar, in August, 1855, ordered "that every one should return to the profession of their fathers, the merchant to his shop, the peasant to his plough." The edict was executed with a Draconic rigour—impossibilities do not exist in Abyssinia. The people of Tishba, incorrigible bandits, occupying a fortified village on the Ifag mountain, came to the camp of Theodore armed to the teeth, and demanded a confirmation of their rights, recognized by David the Great, to exercise the profession of their fathers. "What is that profession?" asked Theodore, calmly. "Robbers on the highway," they insolently replied. "Listen," said Theodore, "your profession is dangerous, and agriculture is worth more; descend into the plain and cultivate it; Lamghé is the richest ground in the empire, I myself will give you oxen and ploughs." They were inflexible. The King finished by acceding to their request and dismissed them. As they were returning, elate, as they conceived, at having frightened the King into submission, they were joined on the road by a squadron of cavalry, the chief of whom proceeded to demonstrate that if David the Great had authorized them by a charter to live by pillage, there was a decree by another King still greater, which authorized the soldiers to destroy the robbers.

*Theodore's Appearance and Character.*—He is 49 years of age, middle height, of imposing presence, and of



an open and sympathetic cast of countenance. His features, less regular than those of Abyssinians generally, are expressive and mobile, and have nothing of that borrowed dignity which usually stamps the countenances of Orientals with an air of solemn insignificance. His glance is quick and piercing, while the hard lines of his profile plainly indicate the inflexible will by which he has bent to the yoke the necks of the freest and least tractable people of the East. Exacting in others in matters of etiquette, the king allows himself full license as regards costume, and affects a *negligé* which, however, never descends to bad taste. A simple military cassock, full trowsers, and a girdle, wherein are placed his pistols and an English sword, and over all a *chama*, or embroidered toga—such is his usual costume. The same disregard of luxury is apparent in all his actions: the furniture of his tent is of the most simple description, while his residences at Magdala and Debra-Tabor are filled with silks and stuffs from the looms of France and India. On the march, he carries the black and clumsy shield of a common soldier, while at his side trots a page bearing his “dress” shield, covered with blue velvet, and spangled with imperial fleurs-de-lys.\*

Argumentative and even logical in debate, his thoughts are frequently conveyed in language most eloquent; other resources failing, however, he is somewhat prone to resort

\* The arms of Abyssinia, as given by Ludolphus, and corroborated by Salt, are, a lion passant, either holding in its paws a patriarchal cross, or before one fixed in the ground. On the official seal, however, attached to the letters of Theodore sent to the British Government, appears a lion counterpassant, and crowned; surrounded with the motto—“*Moa anbasa zaeoemogada Juda;*” in English, “*The Lion of the Race of Judah has triumphed!*”

to an *argumentum ad hominem*, which seldom fails in gaining the end he has in view. For example,—In Gondar there resided a number of merchants who entertained a very subtle difference from the Church respecting the nature of Christ. When Theodore heard of it he ordered them immediately into his presence. “Do you acknowledge the Abouna?” he asked. “Certainly,” they all replied. “Then in that case, my children,” responded the king, “you are rebels if you think differently from the Abouna, who is the head of the Church, and from me who am the temporal protector. Abjure your errors at once, or the public executioner shall exercise the functions of his office.” At that moment the executioner, armed with his heavy sword, made his appearance. The unfortunate victims urged that they had been taken by surprise, and requested three days to think the matter over. “Good!” answered the king, “you shall have the time you ask for. Let these men,” he added, turning to his guard, “be kept without food or drink, and in three days bring them again before me.” By the evening of the second day there was not one of the party who did not profess to hold identical opinions on the nature of Christ with those of the king and Abouna.

*Theodore's Treachery.*—Of the little reliance which can be placed upon the honour of Theodore, M. Lejean adduces the following instance:—Negousié, the rebel chief, had long harassed the king by making incursions into the country, rapidly retreating towards the mountains, laden with spoil, at the approach of the royal army. At length, in January, 1861, Theodore so hemmed his rival in that retreat was impossible. On the evening preceding the day of the battle, the voice of a herald was heard proclaiming aloud from a neighbouring height—

“ Thus speaks the Djan-hoi :—I pardon all those who will this night quit the camp of Negousié, and I assign them three places of refuge :—the church of Axum, that of Adowa, and my own camp. As to those whom I shall to-morrow find under arms, let them expect no mercy.” At dawn of day scarcely twenty followers remained to Negousié ; these were all killed except the chief and his brother, who were taken alive. When brought before Theodore, he promised them their life and liberty if they would return to their allegiance ; but the next day he ordered their right hands and left feet to be severed from their bodies, and by a refinement of cruelty refused them a drop of water to assuage their thirst. Both brothers died under the fearful operation. As for the other insurgents who, in accordance with the king’s proclamation, sought sanctuary in the church, the greater number were ruthlessly dragged out and executed. It was on this occasion, when Theodore had thus vigorously crushed out sedition from his empire, he made a speech to the assembled clergy in answer to an address from them, in which he used these words :—“ I have made an agreement with God. He has promised not to come down upon the earth to smite me, and I, on my part, have promised not to ascend to heaven to molest Him there.”

*Theodore's Temper.*—Another prominent feature in the character of Theodore is the uncertainty of his temper, and the suspicion with which he regards all the actions of Europeans, as the following incidents will show :—

There happened, just after the confinement of Cameron, to be in the country a young Irishman (Mr. Kerens) of about eighteen years of age, who, having led for some months a perilous life in Nubia in hunting, was induced to visit Abyssinia and see its sovereign. Knowing that

the king was passionately fond of war and the chase, he brought him a beautiful carpet as a present, whereon was represented the well-known picture of Jules Gérard, in the costume of a Spahi attacking a lion. \* \* He arrived just at the moment when Mr. Cameron was arrested, and in consequence his reception was none the more favourable. The hunter presented his carpet. "What impertinence of these English!" said Theodore to his officers. "See how one of them has just foretold me by a picture that the Turks will kill me. Do you not see that this man who is firing at the lion—this Turk—wears a fez? Who is the lion of Ethiopia if it is not myself? Meanwhile, before the Turks kill me put this Englishman in irons." The young man asked in surprise, "What have I done?" "Thou hast done nothing," replied the king in a milder tone, "but as I have imprisoned thy consul, thou canst not love me, *and those who do not love me ought not to go free.*" Two months afterwards Mr. Cameron received a new companion in captivity. It was a young Frenchman, to whom hitherto Theodore appeared much attached. He was absent at the time of Cameron's arrest, and yielding to a generous impulse, on his return sought an audience of the king and begged him, by the honour of a civilized monarch, to set the captives at liberty. Unfortunately he spoke the Amharic language very badly, and it seemed that in his confusion he used rather a stronger word than he intended. "Listen to this ass," said Theodore, "who dares to dictate his orders to me! Since he feels such a lively interest in the consul, let him be chained with him."

*Plowden and Bell.*—Plowden was appointed English Consul, and in 1849 concluded a treaty of commerce with Ras Ali. He foresaw the high position to which

Kassa was destined, and, attaching himself to him, followed him everywhere; not in his official capacity of consul, for that, the suspicious jealousy of the Abyssinians would never have permitted him. "We do not wish," said an Abyssinian chief in 1856 to the French consul at Massowah, "to allow foreign consuls to set up for themselves independent sovereignties in our empire. We have received Mr. Plowden simply as a traveller. But if he had exercised the privileges of his title," added the chief, with a bravado peculiar to his nation, "he would not have lived four-and-twenty hours."

This jealousy of foreign consuls is accounted for by the fact that the Abyssinians look upon the jurisdiction and exceptional immunities enjoyed by them as constituting petty independent sovereignties, each one of which they regard as a dismemberment of the empire.

Mr. Bell was a retired officer of the English navy, attracted to Abyssinia by a love of adventure, and who attached himself to the person of the future emperor by a sympathy which had become almost a species of worship. Long before the battle of Dereskié, he became attached to his fortune whether good or bad, following him like a faithful dog, and sleeping across the doorway of his chamber, and this sympathy was in a great measure reciprocated. The negus paid great attention to his disinterested advice, and induced him to explain to him the history, compare the strength, the politics, and present situation of the European States. As a return for the faithful services of Bell, the king bestowed upon him the rank and title of *likamankuas*—that is to say, he was one of four personal favourites who are permitted in an engagement to dress precisely the same as the king, so as

to mislead the enemy. It was in the exercise of this honourable and perilous office, and in the following manner, that Mr. Bell subsequently lost his life.

*Death of Bell.*—Baffled in his pursuit of Negousié, the king returned to Gondar, where he learned that Mr. Plowden had been murdered by the soldiers of an insurgent chief named Gerred. Some arms discovered in their possession furnished sufficient excuse for executing a large number. He then marched northwards to Woggera in pursuit of Gerred, who, knowing the inferiority of his force, descended to the little plateau of Tchober, and resolved to risk what could be, on account of the confined space, little more than a duel. Recognizing the king, who approached surrounded by a group of officers, he charged towards him, raised his gun to his shoulder, and fired. The king drew back and escaped with a slight wound on the shoulder. Instantly Mr. Bell, seeing his master in danger, rushed forward, and with one well-directed blow laid Gerred lifeless at his feet, but was himself, at almost the same moment, pierced through with a spear by the hand of Gerred's brother. Thus fell the only two men who seem to have understood the Abyssinian character, and who made of King Theodore a warm friend instead of a dreaded enemy.

*M. Gobat and the Swiss Missionaries.*—The favour which these two Englishmen enjoyed doubtless impressed M. Gobat, a Swiss missionary who afterwards became Bishop of Jerusalem, with the idea that the present was a favourable opportunity of establishing a mission in Abyssinia. Accordingly, in the early part of 1856, Mr. Martin Flad and ten of his countrymen left Basle for the court of King Theodore. To their surprise the king informed them that he would permit no dis-

cussion of dogma amongst his Christian subjects, but if he chose to try what he could do with the Falashes (Jews) and the Galla prisoners of war, he was welcome to make the attempt. Meanwhile, fortune having sent a dozen Europeans to his dominions, the king had no idea of not availing himself of their services. Having read in the Bible that King David drove to the field of battle mounted on a chariot, he gave orders to the missionaries to build him one. Having carte blanche as to shape and size, they constructed a large machine resembling an arm chair, which they painted green. Through some fault in the construction, the chariot would not "travel;" it was therefore borne triumphantly to the scene of action on men's shoulders; the aboriginal spectators believing it to be some new weapon of warfare. It was soon disabled, and the wreck now adorns the royal arsenal of Magdala. Theodore, by no means disconcerted at the failure of this first essay, gave orders to his guests to construct for him a mortar and howitzer. In vain did they plead they had no materials. The imperial edict had gone forth and must be obeyed. One of their number, a Polish deserter from the artillery, at length constructed a mould, and the king himself superintended firing the first shot. The result was, as might be supposed,—the howitzer burst. Although these contretemps are not assigned as reasons for the ill-feeling which subsequently subsisted between Theodore and Flad, there is no doubt they tended in a great measure to that end.

*Theodore's Vanity wounded.*—During the early part of the correspondence which ensued after the death of Plowden, Theodore expressed great dissatisfaction that the letters from England were not written by Her Majesty

in person. "Who is this Russell?" he continually asked of Cameron. "Cannot your queen write to her brother Theodore herself?"

"I know," said Theodore to M. Lejean, "the tactics of European governments. When they wish to take possession of an Eastern territory, they first of all send missionaries, then consuls to strengthen the missionaries, and finally, battalions to back up the consuls. I am not a Rajah of Hindustan to be bamboozled in that manner. I prefer to deal with the battalions first."

*Language.*—It is natural to suppose that in a country, composed of so many petty independent states as Abyssinia, a great diversity of dialect should exist, amounting in many instances almost to a different language. The first and most important dialect, and that which may be said to constitute the national language, is the Geez. It is *par excellence* the literary language of the country, for it is employed in transmitting historical traditions, and is used both by the official authorities and the Church. Like all languages which have been in existence for any considerable period, it has undergone many changes. Its characters have in like manner been differently expressed during various epochs, as the inscriptions which still remain amply testify. The most ancient characters in the country are the Hymiarite, which is supposed to be the language spoken by the Abyssinians before they left Arabia. It may be remarked that Hymiarite or Geez is nothing but the ancient and now dead Arabic, from which we may conclude that it is not the aboriginal language of Abyssinia. This, in all probability, is Amharic, which, however, has received so many additions from the Geez as scarcely to retain its individuality. The dialect for the most part spoken in Tigré is but a cor-



ruption of Ethiopian, with a considerable admixture of other words derived from the neighbouring tribes of Gallas. The Agâo dialect seems to derive its origin from the Sanscrit; the Adal likewise points indubitably to an Asiatic origin.

REV. HENRY STERN, 1860-2.

THIS gentleman, whose name is so painfully associated with the present captivity, proceeded to Abyssinia, at the desire of the Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the Falashas, a remnant of the Jewish race who still retain a degenerate form of their ancient faith. Mr. Stern travelled by way of the Nile, and entered Abyssinia from the north-west. In the preface to his work, "Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia," he says that the special object of his visit to that country did not prevent him from coming in continual contact with every other class of people; and as our author has an observant eye, and possesses considerable powers of description, his book is quite as entertaining as it is instructive. The graphic letters of Mr. Stern, describing the hardships of his long captivity, have been reprinted in almost every newspaper in the country. His notice of Theodore, from which the following has been condensed, although varying in some particulars from other accounts, has nevertheless a peculiar interest at the present moment; the first paragraph will show Mr. Stern's treatment of lesser matters:—

*A Young Lady's Pillow.*—[It is a curious fact that the wooden rest, or hollow pillow, represented in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics as an article of bed furniture in

the time of the Pharaohs, is still in use amongst the damsels of Abyssinia.] The chief attention of Ethiopia's sallow and copper-coloured maidens is bestowed on the ornament of the head, and in this matter they are as much swayed by fashion as the most fastidious beauty in the Quartier St. Germain, or in the stately saloons of Belgravia. Happily their fashions are not subject to the caprice of a *modiste*, or the inventive power of a distinguished beauty. The palace at Karnak, and the tombs of Theban monarchs, as in times of old so also in the present day, furnish the approved and orthodox models for the more ambitious *frisieur*. Pride, has, however, in all countries to pay a penalty for its indulgence. Thus, in Africa, where curl papers have not yet been introduced, the woman whose hair has undergone the tedious process of plaiting, must also, during the night, have it protected from becoming dishevelled; and as this cannot so easily be done in a country where a bullock's hide or



a mat forms the bed, necessity has contrived a bowl-shaped stool in which the neck is wedged, and on this substitute for a pillow the vain maiden sleeps in an immovable and most uncomfortable posture during the tedious hours of the long tropical night. In Abyssinia, where the women are particularly proud of their copper-coloured charms, very few, even on a journey and with fifty pounds weight on their backs, will forget to take the wooden pillow and the hollow grease-filled gourd.

*Early Life of Theodore.*—[It was the following account of the Abyssinian monarch which so annoyed the king, causing him to burn down the Gondar churches and kill the priests, because those persons only, he believed, could have told the missionary Stern. The latter, too, was

chained up and unmercifully flogged for this and another candid remark about the king.]

King Theodorus, the present ruler of Abyssinia, was born in Quara, a small province on the western borders of Amarah. His father, Hailu Weleda Georgis, though a reputed scion of Queen Saba's royal line, acquired no distinction in life, and awakened no sympathy or regret at his death. The small fortune of the deceased nobleman was soon seized and wasted by greedy relations, and the poor mother of Kassa (the surname of the future king), like numbers more in the demoralized country, where love is seldom hallowed by the religion that belongs to it, was, ere long, driven by want to eke out a miserable subsistence by the sale of kosso,\* whilst the tender object of her affection found a refuge in a convent at Tschangar, twelve hours south-west of Gondar. In this asylum the young orphan might have spent some years in dreary indolence and life-sapping inactivity, had not Dejjaj Marou, a defeated rebel, invaded the sanctuary, burned all its huts, and, by killing and mutilating helpless boys, glutted his cowardly vengeance on their victorious parents. Kassa eluded the inhuman cruelty of the dastardly foe, and, under the covert of night, gained the house of his powerful uncle, Dejjaj Confu.

In this chieftain's home, which was the rendezvous of scheming and discontented rebels, the ardent youth imbibed an enthusiastic love of war, and a passionate ambition for daring and dangerous exploits. His courage, which knew no fear, and shrank from no obstacle, soon secured him the favour of his guardian,

\* The Kosso tree grows at an altitude of about 8,000 feet. Its beautiful flowers, which hang in profusion on every branch, are a specific against the tapeworm, from which all Abyssinians suffer.

and the admiration of his troops. *Dejaj Confu*, however, died, when his two sons and heirs, as it will also sometimes happen in other lands, had hardly consigned the mortal remains of their parent to its last resting-place, before they began to fight and quarrel about the patrimony. *Dejaj Goshu Beru*, the valiant and crafty governor of *Damot* and *Gojam*, eagerly watched the issue of this fratricidal strife, and when the whole province had been reduced to anarchy and disorder, he invaded it with his hordes, and, almost without any resistance, made himself master of the most fertile and populous part of Abyssinia. *Kassa*, who had joined the partisans of the elder brother, fled before the ferocious conqueror to *Sarago*, in *Alava*, where, concealed in the hut of a kind peasant, he eluded for more than a month the pursuit of the ruthless foe. It is narrated that, some years later, when *Kassa's* military successes and triumphs had achieved for him the title of *Dejaj*, he was sent to *Alava* to repress and quell an insurrection in that district. The rebels, without resistance, were awed into submission; and, to prevent any further troubles, every insurgent was mulcted in a penalty of feeding for a week half a score or more of voracious troops. *Kassa's* former benefactor refused to receive the unwelcome guests, and upon being dragged before the chief, he was instantly recognized by the recipient of his bounty; and, amidst the plaudits of the soldiery, exalted to the Shumat of *Sarago*, and rewarded with the gift of twenty dollars, eight oxen, eight cows, and eight male and female slaves.

We next find *Kassa* at the head of a band of seventy robbers, in the marshy and malarious borders of the western kolla, or low-land. The men became tired of their captain's strict discipline, and conspired against

him ; but, before their plot was ripe, "the secret was divulged, and, in a terrible encounter, Kassa, with a few bravos, disabled and routed his enemies. With this small band of faithful followers, he now joined Derar, another desperado, and these two companions for some months were the terror of the Tougrourees and the scourge of all the Khowadjees, or Mohamedan merchants, on the road between Wochnee and Matamma."

We next hear of Kassa as having returned to his home. His exploit, however, had made his name known far and near, and numbers of disaffected reckless chiefs and adventurers followed him into his retreat. With this band he again sallied forth, ostensibly to aid the oppressed, but in reality to further his ambitious designs.

The Waisero Menin, mother of Ras-Ali, and nominally queen of all the provinces west of the Taccazé, now began to dread the growing power of Kassa ; and, prompted by deep, passionate animosity, which invariably characterized her proceedings towards those who defied her authority, or did not minister to her revolting excesses, she despatched a large army to crush, as she said, "the Kosso vendor's son." Informed of the expedition, Kassa, without delay, hastened to meet the enemy ; but, no sooner did the latter come in sight of their opponents, than they were seized with a panic, and fled to Dembea. The cunning woman had now recourse to intrigue, and the witchery of soft blandishments, which she had often found more powerful than her armies, to entrap a formidable enemy ; but Kassa, who saw the bait by which he was to be caught, met all these overtures with indifference or polite evasion. Baffled and embarrassed, the treacherous queen was more than ever intent upon revenging herself on the presumptuous rebel ; and,

as open violence and crafty art had equally failed, she did not shrink from compassing the redoubtable chieftain's death at the high price of her own grandchild's honour, the daughter of Ras-Ali, whom she gave him in marriage. The young wife, instead of abetting the infamous design of her grandmother, with a constancy and affection seldom witnessed in that demoralized country, foiled every attempt on her beloved husband's life, by diverting the dangers which threatened him or herself.

DR. BEKE, 1865.

THE most recent work of any importance upon our subject is the new edition of this author's "British Captives in Abyssinia." Believing that he could be instrumental in obtaining the release of the prisoners, he left this country in 1865, at the desire of the contributors to the "Abyssinian Captives Liberation Fund," and proceeded with several valuable presents to the country of King Theodore. He went free of any political connections, relying solely upon his knowledge of Abyssinian life, and the justice of the cause he had engaged in. On his arrival at Massowah, difficulties for proceeding into the interior presented themselves; and as it was reported that the captives had either been liberated, or were about to be, Dr. Beke and his lady soon returned to London, some of the presents being afterwards sent to the king by Mr. Flad. The above work is a remarkable digest of almost everything that has been written and published upon the subject of the British captives in Abyssinia. Our "Bibliography" at the end will show the number of valuable works which Dr. Beke has written, and in Part IV. his suggestion for a Government expedition is given.

## PART II.

### *CONSUL PLOWDEN'S DESCRIPTION OF ABYSSINIA, 1852-5.*

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HAVING, in the preceding pages, given a general summary of Abyssinian travel and adventure, accompanied by a few remarks upon the country, and the manners and customs of the people, as they have appeared to early and recent travellers, the reader is now presented with what is believed to be the best and most truthful description of Abyssinia which has yet been written. In forwarding his official despatches to the Government it was Consul Plowden's practice to send "enclosures." These papers comprised admirable accounts of the history, government, topography, and superstitions of the Abyssinian people; all written for the benefit of Earl Granville, then our Foreign Minister. The "enclosures" having been separated from the business and other despatches, are here given in something like consecutive order.

In 1846-47 the three great divisions, or provinces, of Abyssinia were governed as follows: the Amhara country by Ras Ali; Tigré and Samien by Ras Oobeay (or Ubie); and Shoa by Sahela Selássie. No official intercourse was maintained with any of these chiefs by the British Government until a Mr. Walter Plowden

suggested to the Foreign Office the advisability of establishing a consulate at the port of Massowah, or some other convenient place on the sea-coast.

This gentleman was the youngest son of a Bengal civilian, and was partner in the house of Carr (Dwarbanath), Tagore, & Co., from which firm he soon after withdrew and started on his return to Europe. At Aden he fell in with a native "dhow" from Abyssinia, which happened to be there for trading purposes. An offer was made him to go to Massowah, and he availed himself of it. Plowden was a highly educated man, clever, and of engaging manners, and he seems to have made friends with some influential Abyssinians very soon after his arrival at the port just mentioned. The story of an adventurous fellow-countryman living in the interior as a chief, or high officer, soon came to his ear, and in one of his expeditions to find this bold person, he met with Ras Ali, the then reigning monarch of that part of Abyssinia. To this chief, or king, Plowden made himself so agreeable and useful, that he received a substantial acknowledgment in return. Finding in Abyssinia, then, a new field for enterprise, and one in which his services would be profitably employed, and, to all appearance, fully appreciated, he resolved upon making it his future home.

There was another inducement to stay here. Bell, the Englishman, of whom Plowden had heard so much, was a man of similar disposition to himself, fond of adventure, and preferring activity in an almost unknown part of the world to the quieter duties and routine of European life. As both were of a generous and open nature, it is not to be wondered at that, after they made each other's acquaintance, a lasting friendship soon sprang up betwixt



them. Bell,\* who had married a chieftain's daughter, and occupied a high position in the court of Ras Ali, soon explained to his new friend something of the undeveloped resources of Abyssinia; and the latter, desirous of benefiting both his own and his adopted country, quickly saw how advantageous active intercourse would be to each if the necessary relations were once established. With the advice of Bell, he thereupon wrote to Lord Palmerston, giving an accurate description of the products of the country, and explaining how, in his opinion, a considerable commerce must ensue if a consulate were established at Massowah. He then gave his antecedents, and offered himself as a candidate for the office.

Consul Plowden was appointed by Lord Palmerston, and on the 2nd November, 1849, a "Treaty of Friendship and Commerce" was concluded betwixt this country and Ras Ali. By the treaty it was provided that His Majesty of Abyssinia should receive an ambassador from this country, and "Her Britannic Majesty would, in the same manner, receive and protect any ambassador or

\* Mr. William Lees Bell writes:—"My cousin, the late Mr. John Bell, who was for many years the adviser of King Theodore, was born in Malta, and in 1837 [Messrs. Ferret and Galinier, however, assert that he was 22 years of age when they met him in 1839 at Cairo, see p. 67] joined the Euphrates and Tigrés expedition under Colonel Chesney. In consequence of his great skill in eastern dialects, he was left at Aleppo as British Consul, and there he conceived the idea of travelling to discover the source of the Nile. During his journey through Abyssinia he met with a chieftain's daughter, a very beautiful girl, whom he married, and thus became the head of the tribe, and chief adviser of the king. \* \* \* \* My cousin's family in Malta is in possession of a long correspondence, which frequently refers to the king's designs and resources."

consul whom His Majesty or his successors might see fit to appoint."

Such is the outline of the story of our first political connection with Abyssinia. That Plowden found many more difficulties in his way than he had expected is now well known. In order to assist in maintaining order and good government, he sided with the chief who, to all appearance, was the rightful ruler, and who certainly seemed to possess the greatest amount of power. After five years of fruitless endeavour, however, his friend Ras Ali was, in 1854, overthrown by one of his sons-in-law, who induced the Coptic bishop to crown him Emperor of Abyssinia. This person was the present King Theodore, who, so far from insisting on the observance of the treaty of 1849, at first refused altogether to recognize it.

On Theodore's accession both Consul Plowden and Bell at once acknowledged him. Why this course was determined upon may be gathered from the opening pages of Mr. Badger's admirable "Story of the British Captives," given further on. For a recital of the tragic events which led to both Bell and Plowden's deaths, the reader is referred to M. Lejean's account p. 101, and that given by Mr. Badger in Part III. of this book. Shortly after Bell's death, a Mr. Speedy, formerly an officer in the Indian service, entered that of King Theodore. It was twelve months after Plowden's death, however, before a successor was appointed to the English consulate in the person of Captain Cameron—a relation of Mr. Plowden, and at present one of the unfortunate prisoners in Abyssinia.

Although Consul Plowden had been instructed to reside at Massowah "for the protection of British trade with Abyssinia and the countries adjacent," yet,

in order to gain accurate information concerning the country, he had been requested by his superiors to make excursions as opportunity offered to the different provinces and to report upon them. Consul Cameron has been much blamed for occasionally quitting Massowah, but as that part is not now within the Abyssinian dominions, it will be seen from Plowden's report that it is almost impossible to conduct on all occasions the duties of a consul without visiting the interior.

In forwarding his first enclosure, "Remarks on the Social System of Abyssinia," Plowden says: "So peculiar is that system; so difficult to assimilate to European ideas—a difficulty felt by Bruce, and the cause, perhaps, of his ill reception in England—that each despatch must swell to a volume should I endeavour to explain it in all points of view; nor will it ever be thoroughly understood until, by proximity, *a free and frequent communication take place betwixt the two nations.* I may, by affording such information as I possess, induce each to think more, perhaps more favourably, of the other; but no efforts of mine can annihilate the 3,000 miles that interpose, *or the more fatal barrier of the Turkish domination along the line of coast.*"

It will be remarked that the consul's information is somewhat disconnected, but his excuse for this is, "I have much difficulty in presenting the information I would give, in a concise form, as I know of nothing that I can refer to analogous with the singular institutions of this country."

## CHAPTER I.

GENERAL SURVEY OF ABYSSINIA, 1852-3.

IN speaking at all of Abyssinian institutions, it must be remembered, as a general key to their peculiarities, that the form of government and its military spirit are feudal; whilst in the laws and customs, the Jewish institutions are everywhere traceable.

The title of Ras signified, in the times of prosperous and hereditary succession, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief of the Emperor, and the highest rank in the empire.

The Ras now claims the right, as then possessed by him, of appointing all other chiefs of provinces, and officers of every kind, at his will and pleasure; and having a sufficiently commanding force at his disposal, is, in fact, master and king of the country, the form even of consulting the Emperor having been disregarded for many years.

Amidst the conflicts, however, of great families, whose members claim the hereditary chieftainship of different provinces, and whose name will at any moment conjure into existence a numerous army for rebellion or rapine, the Ras is obliged to employ a subtle and tortuous policy, rather than violence, in order to retain his control over those fierce warriors, his equals by birth, impatient of a superior, and in some instances sufficiently powerful to be nearly independent. The resemblance is apparent to the times of Louis XI. and his rebellious vassals.

Each chief holding the rank of "Dejajmatch," *quasi* Duke, appointed by the Ras, or as often only obtaining his consent after a successful contest with his own immediate rivals, is entire master of all sources of revenue within his territory, with full power really of life and death, theoretically vested in the Ras alone. His feudal subjection consists in the obligation to send, from time to time, some presents to his superior, and to bear his shield; that is, to follow him to war with as large a force as he can muster: against private enemies he is generally expected to protect himself. He takes tolls from all merchants passing through his district.

The most powerful of these feudal inferiors of the Ras is the Dejajmatch Oobeay, Chief of Yemen, who, having added by conquest the whole of Tegray [Tigré\*] and other provinces, has become in point of warlike equipments fully the equal of the Ras, possesses every avenue leading from the interior to the sea, and acts in every respect as an independent sovereign, though still nominally subject to the Ras, and paying to him a small yearly tribute of 5,000 to 10,000 dollars.

The immediate troops of the Ras consist of a number of petty chiefs, governing one, two, or more villages, who imitate, as far as they dare, the independence of the greater barons, and who take the field, when called on, with 5 or 500 men, according to their means.

Besides these, who are numerous, the Ras has his matchlock men, and four or five bands of rude and dis-

\* Consul Flowden's orthography of these native names varies considerably from that adopted by other English travellers, but in pronouncing, the result will be found almost identical with the renderings of Beke, Krapf, Parkyns, Stern, and recent explorers; at all events, it was not thought advisable to alter his spelling.

orderly soldiery, his guards. From the lax system of government, and the manner of paying these men by quartering them on the country-people, with instructions to levy so much grain or other property, it may be supposed that these undisciplined troops, when at a small distance from the camp, are almost equally independent of the Ras, and frequently are simply organized bands of robbers, the rather that after the commission of any profitable crime they have but to reach the camp of some great feudal chief at a distance from the Ras, and by entering his service obtain perfect immunity, or, would they enjoy in ease their spoil, to take shelter in the nearest well-reputed church, which is inviolable as the "city of refuge" of the Mosaic Law.

Regarding the collection of duties, each chief claims them as part of his revenues, excepting those levied at Gondar, Adowah, and a few other towns, collected by an officer called the "Negadeh Ras," who pays a fixed sum yearly to the Ras or Oobeay, and extorts as much as he can from the merchants for his own profits.

Custom-houses, or rather passes, have been established in Abyssinia on every spot where Nature in that mountainous country has confined the road to some narrow defile, not to be avoided without an immense *détour*, if at all, and near some commanding elevation where a good look-out can be stationed, or perhaps at a brook fordable only at one spot; and as the different chiefs sometimes give orders on the sudden to allow no one to pass, great trouble ensues, not only to merchants, but to all wayfarers. Frequent quarrels, and even deaths, occur at these posts, always kept by armed men, and it requires no little temper and knowledge of the country to avoid

these inconveniences, or to send messengers, &c., to any distance in safety.

A merchant starts from Massowah for Basso, the last mercantile station to the southward of Christian Abyssinia; he pays at Massowah the import or export duty to the Turkish governor: he must then engage a guide from the Shohos, an independent tribe inhabiting the hills near the coast, and in possession of the only passable roads winding through defiles for fifty or sixty miles; according to the agreement made, and his appearance, wealthy or otherwise, he may pay this guide from ten dollars to half a dollar. Arriving then in Oobeay's dominions, he will be stopped four or five times before he reaches Adowah, and on each occasion must arrange with those in charge of the tolls as he best can as regards payment, the amount being arbitrary, and the system in fact one of legalized plunder. On arrival at Adowah he pays certain more regulated duties to the Negadeh Ras of that town, a *douceur*, moreover, being expected as the price of a friendly settlement of dues. After meeting the exactions of several minor posts he will next have to pay at the town of Doobaruk, in the province of Waggera, duties on the same scale with those of Adowah, generally about one dollar per mule-load of merchandise; and being then clear of the territories of Dejajmatch Oobeay, enters those of Ras Ali, whose tolls commence at Gondar. Here the duties are nominally settled, though long disputes almost invariably occur, and after three or four more detentions and payments on a smaller scale in Begemeder, he passes the Nile, and arrives in the domains of the chiefs of Godjam or Dámot. These may be in a state of entire rebellion or of sulky submission to the Ras: as in the latter case they pay him a fixed tribute, he does not

interfere with their toll-levying, and the merchant must disburse at some eight or ten more stages of his journey ere he can reach Basso.

It is needless to dwell on the danger to the merchant in the case of revolted chiefs, who plunder indiscriminately, and from whom, even if captured, the recovery of any property is hopeless. As tolls are taken each way at the places mentioned, all these observations apply equally to exporting as to importing.

A code of laws called the "Feth Negust," said to have been compiled by the Council of Three Hundred, in the earlier ages of the Church, and regarded originally as of almost equal authority with the sacred writings, is the guide of the Abyssinian chiefs in their decision as judges. The twelve "Licks" of Gondar originally formed the supreme court of justice, a court of final appeal; but the office ceased with the power of the emperors.

The "Feth Negust" is now expounded by some learned priest or scribe, and there are few in the country competent to the task. It is frequently consulted, more after the fashion of the "Sortes Virgilianæ," the book being opened with solemnity, and the first passage found that appears to bear upon the question being hastily dressed to suit the case in hand, and present an aspect of oracular wisdom; in this light it is at least regarded by the uninformed multitude, that is, the whole nation save the priesthood, and it is invariably set aside when the passions or whims of the presiding chief seem to require it.

On the accusation of any man in Abyssinia of any crime, he has the right to demand to be heard in the first instance by his own judge—that is, either the chief of his village or the master to whom he is attached for



the time being—and to be forwarded to his residence, together with his accuser, by any authority to whom he shall appeal in the king's name.

Strangers may be judged by the district chief or the chief paramount, as they may choose ; in every way the final right of appeal to the supreme ruler exists, but the Ras, not being strong enough to enforce this right at present in the case of Oobeay, the decisions of that chief are considered final. The chiefs of the Agows of Lasta, called the "Wagshoom," and the chief of Kwora, on the borders of Sennaär, although feudally subject to the Ras, claim also this privilege of final judgment ; but with these exceptions the greatest chief may, on the complaint of a peasant, be summoned from any distance to appear at the Ras's court, and be obliged personally to answer the charge before the "af-a-negoos," or king's mouth, an officer who hears all cases, and reports them concisely to the Ras for his verbal decision. .

After an accusation, before the pleadings can commence, both parties must give security approved of by the "af-a-negoos." These bails or securities are answerable for the execution of the sentence whatever it may be, or must suffer it themselves should the principals abscond. But at the end of the trial these first securities may declare off in case of doubting their principals, and others must be found ; the only alternative to the convicted party being chains.

In all suits, civil or criminal, there is no prosecution by the crown, and no police of any kind. The party aggrieved must lay the accusation, find out the aggressor, seize him, and convict him as he best may.

The Mosaic law of blood for blood being in full force, when a man is convicted of having killed another,

whether purposely or by accident, or in self-defence, he is handed over to the relatives of the deceased to be put to death by them, unless they can be persuaded to accept the blood-money, a similar sum being also paid into the royal treasury. It not unfrequently happens that no relation is found sufficiently near of kin to interfere in the matter, and the homicide then escapes scot-free. With the greater chiefs there is generally a desire to administer justice impartially, when not embarrassed by some political motive.

The power of the Ras of Begemeder, chief of Northern Abyssinia, dates nearly from the overthrow of the ahtyee or hatze, or Emperor of Gondar, by Ras Michael.

The present Ras, though no other chief is powerful enough to encounter him in the field, can only retain his title by the maintenance of a large army, and constant wars against his rebellious vassals. Of all the inferior chiefs "whose title is Dejjamatch," the greatest is Dejjamatch Oobeay, who, partly by the concurrence of the Ras, and more by subtlety, fortune, and the force of arms, governs with absolute sway the country from near the coast of the Red Sea to Gondar, and from Lasta to Sennaär;—the only conditions that should prevent him from being regarded as an independent sovereign being his title of Dejjamatch, held from the Ras, and the payment of a tribute of money to him yearly as his feudal superior; otherwise, the Ras does not interfere with his rule over these vast provinces, by which he commands every avenue to the interior of the country available for trade or policy.

The Ras has been engaged in the siege of a hill-fort in Godjam now for four years; and another chief in rebellion, after gaining two battles, has pillaged Gondar, and

rendered all communication with Godjam circuitous or dangerous.

It is now doubtful if the Dejazmatch Oobeay will be faithful to his allegiance, or rebel in the hope of seizing the supreme power. In the latter case, the whole land will bristle with arms, and all communication become impossible.

Such is the present political state of Abyssinia.

#### DIVISIONS OF NORTHERN ABYSSINIA.

THE boundaries of Northern Abyssinia, at present defined as the districts inhabited by Christians, do not reach by 90 or 100 miles to the Red Sea at any point. This interval is occupied by various savage tribes: the Adaiel, the Azobo Gallas, the Areya Gallas, the Danakil, the Taltal, the Shiho, the Habab, and the Arab tribes of the Beni Ameer. These have adopted more or less strictly the Mussulman faith, and are all, excepting the Gallas, wandering tribes, living by their flocks or their camels; governed by no master, and occupied with incessant feuds or combats.

Through the district occupied by the Shiho is the nearest route to Abyssinia, and the most practicable. It is, indeed, the only one desirable, seeing that it bears directly on Massowah, the only good harbour, I believe, in the Red Sea from Sowakin to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb.

These tribes of Shiho furnish guides to all passers for half a dollar each, and even conduct a party for the same sum; rich native caravans pay according to their numbers, but always moderately, and a white man is, of course, considered fair booty, to be fleeced according to the extent

of his ignorance or his fears. Though vexatious by their delays, they are never known to rob or ill-treat any voyager; they fulfil strictly their contract of safe-conduct through their territories into Abyssinia, and no reasonable man can find fault with their moderate charge for this. It is true that occasionally the Taltal tribes make an incursion and plunder travellers not well armed, in spite of the Shiho, watching their occasion when the warriors of the latter tribe are engaged elsewhere; but this impugns not their good faith, having never been suspected of collusion.

They acknowledge no superior, save the elders of the tribe in council, now that the Naibs of Arkeeko are politically extinct.

The Turkish Government occupying the Island of Massowah, their Pasha here claims also the coast for fifty or sixty miles inland, and forces various feeble tribes in those limits to pay tribute; but, in return, affords them no protection when devastated by the Shiho or the ruthless soldiery of Oobeay; these people are therefore sufficiently miserable and poor.

[To this report Lord Clarendon replied that—“Her Majesty’s Government were led by the representations formerly made by you to expect that advantage would result to British interests from the conclusion of a treaty with the rulers of Abyssinia and from the establishment of a British consulate in that country. It appears, however, from your reports now before me, that there is little reason to expect that such will be the case.

“Nevertheless, Her Majesty’s Government having concluded the treaty and established the consulate, are reluctant to renounce all hope of benefit from those measures: but their means of obtaining in this country

information on which to act are necessarily very limited ; and I must have recourse to you for a report as to the possibility of your establishing yourself either at Massowah or at any other place on the sea-coast where you may retain an influence on the rulers of Abyssinia, and facilitate communication with the provinces under their government.

“ The measure which you have taken, as reported in your despatch of the 24th of May, for obtaining a public recognition of the treaty and of the obligations resulting from it, appears to me to be judicious ; but it is obvious from your despatches that *the difficulty of dealing with Abyssinia results, in a great measure, from the absence of any place on the coast with which a safe communication can be kept up ;* and it is to the discovery of such a place at which you may fix your residence that I would particularly direct your attention.”

After six months' preparation, Plowden sent home his excellent sketch of the laws, customs, government, and position of Abyssinia, with a short account of its neighbours, which follows, expressing a hope that “ the report may assist in deciding clearly the course to be pursued with reference to Abyssinia, for,” remarks the consul, “ struggling with the difficulties of the Abyssinian character and institutions ; baffled by their ignorance, and more by the want of any supreme authority ; obliged by my position to be recognized as a friend to the Abyssinian nation, yet forced by geographical circumstances to reside partly at a Turkish port, where the governor necessarily regards me with suspicion and hatred, as one seducing from him the allegiance of his slaves ; I can scarcely convey to your lordship an idea of the difficulties I have had to contend with.” ]

## CHAPTER II.

## DIVISIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

**N**ORTHERN ABYSSINIA is a state isolated from the sea and from the civilized world by surrounding tribes of savages, and is fast lapsing from its former condition as a Christian realm, governed by one absolute sovereign, into subdivisions of small tribes, that will hereafter retain probably little of religion or civilization.

It is separated also from its kindred province of Shoa by strong and fierce races called Galla, who are independent, notwithstanding the boastful title of King of the Gallas assumed by Sahela Selassie and his successor, whose actual dominions do not equal a fifth part of the Galla territory.

The country that I name Northern Abyssinia, and which is inhabited by professing Christians, is about 400 miles in length from north to south, inclining westerly, and 300 in its greatest breadth, which is from north-north-west to south-south-east—that is, from the neighbourhood of Massowah to the town of Ayjubay in Godjam; and from Wayhaynee, the limits of the Egyptian dominion in that quarter, to the borders of Effat, belonging to Shoa.

Its north-western and western boundary is formed by the Pashalic of Sennaär; partly on the west and to the south-west vast forests, frequented by wild beasts, or hot

plains inhabited by negro races, exclude Abyssinia from the navigable part of the Blue Nile. To the south, that river, an impetuous torrent, forms its boundary, almost its safety, from the Gallas—excellent horsemen, whose delight is war. To the east and south-east the Gallas of Borona, Wallo, Worahaimano, and Worrakallo, separate it from Shoa. The three last are the stronghold of Islamism; and these are again barred from the sea by the savage Adaiel, by whose hordes, led by Mahommed Grayne, Abyssinia was nearly destroyed, when saved by Portugal and the introduction of firearms. To the eastward again, more northerly, other tribes of Gallas called Areya and Azobo still interpose between Abyssinia and the sea-coast: and to the north-east and north various tribes with various tongues, Taltals, Danakil, Shihos, Hababs, &c., everywhere seclude that realm and join the dominions of Abbas Pasha, in the tribes of the Beni-Ameer, ruled by the Pasha of Taka.

A circle is thus completed that must somewhere be broken through, either by the Abyssinians themselves, had they the power, or by that nation desiring a free intercourse with them.

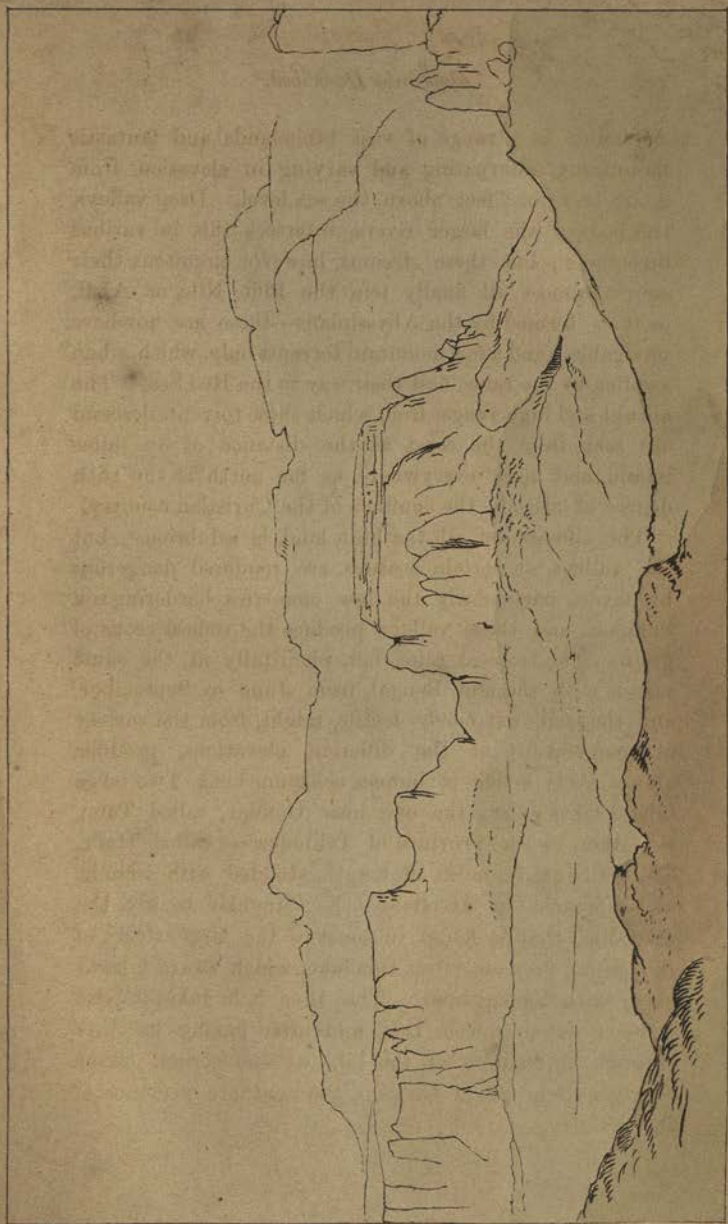
The tribes I have last mentioned, that seclude Abyssinia from the Red Sea, occupy a strip of land along its coast of 70 to 100 miles in breadth; and it is here that the Turkish Government has occupied several points, of which mention shall be made hereafter: and although these tribes were formerly Abyssinians, and still, in many places, as at Massowah, speak the ancient Ethiopic tongue, as they are now completely separated, I shall not include them in an account of Christian Abyssinia in its present limits.

Setting aside, therefore, this border along the sea,

Abyssinia is a range of vast table-lands and fantastic mountains, alternating and varying in elevation from 4,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea level. Deep valleys, the beds of the larger rivers, intersect this in various directions; but these streams, however circuitous their course, almost all finally join the Blue Nile, or Abäi, as it is termed by the Abyssinians—these are nowhere navigable—and a few mountain torrents only, which, when swollen by the rains, find their way to the Red Sea. The abrupt and high ranges from which these torrents descend are seen from the coast at the distance of 80 miles inland, and mark everywhere, as far north as the 16th degree of latitude, the confines of the Christian country.

The climate, on all the high land, is salubrious; but the valleys, at certain seasons, are rendered dangerous by fevers; particularly the low countries bordering on Sennaär, and these valleys produce the richest crops of grain. The tropical rains fall plentifully at the same season with those of Bengal, from June to September, and the soil, extremely fertile, might, from the variety of temperature at the different elevations, produce almost every article of human consumption. Two large inland lakes exist; the one near Gondar, called Tana, the other, in the province of Tehluderree, called Haik. The former is 60 miles in length, studded with islands, and abounds in excellent fish. Singular to say, the crocodile, that is found in most of the large rivers of Abyssinia, does not infest this lake, which swarms, however, with hippopotami. The Blue Nile takes its rise a short distance from this, and after forcing its way through the waters of the lake at one corner, forms nearly a circle round Godjam, the southern province of this country.





OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE COUNTRY  
IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ATTEGERAT, TIGRÉ.



The flat and overflowed lands round the Lake Tana are kept as pasture for cattle, or partially sown with grain ; but they are well adapted for the cultivation of rice, or sugar-canes, which both grow wild ; or of indigo, which has thriven in Shoa.

The cold plains of Waggera and Godjam, and the lofty mountains of Semen, where the blackberry, the hawthorn, and the fir, now usurp great part of the soil, are fitted for all the productions of northern latitudes. The more temperate provinces would probably be favourable to the growth of pepper, spices, and coffee, which last has already been planted at Korata ; and even the coast, and hottest districts, might give crops of cotton of fine quality. Barley, wheat, peas, grain, beans, maize, Indian corn, millet, linseed, saffron, oats, and some kinds of grain unknown to us, are cultivated with little trouble ; a small oblong potato, called "dennich," and the root of a very nourishing banana, the "ansett," form a great part of the food of some districts.

In the present confusion and supineness not a fiftieth part of the surface is, I suppose, cultivated ; while such is the bounty of Nature that Edjow, and other provinces, produce two crops per annum on the same ground.

Fruit-trees, the plum, the orange, the lemon, and the peach, grow wild in the jungle ; the vines are luxuriant, and the quality of the wine excellent ; numerous streams everywhere irrigate and adorn this agreeable land, whose rich meadows, lowing herds, sparkling waters, golden harvest, and shady trees, often present a scene of European beauty to the traveller.

Gold and copper exist, and iron is found in great abundance ; plains of sulphur and various salts, in the province now occupied by the Taltals, supply all

Abyssinia with those commodities; and other wealth may lie hid in that volcanic tract. A search for coal would, elsewhere, be probably successful; but to describe the mineral and natural riches of this country should be the task of one better qualified for the investigation.

It is a country that combines mineral resources, a delightful climate, and tropical luxuriance, with so much general salubrity, that no waste of European life need be apprehended from frequenting it.

The temperature of the moderate elevations is very regular, in some places scarcely varying ten degrees throughout the year. Mineral and hot springs abound. All the colder provinces, particularly the Galla, are favourable to horse-breeding; sheep, goats, and cattle, thrive throughout the country; the mulberry has been grown; the potato, lately introduced, flourishes; and food is, in general, found too abundantly, as it is found almost without labour.

But while Nature has done so much, human energy, or skill, has done nothing. The utter want of roads and bridges—the stagnant, or lawless, nature of the social system—the obstinate attachment to ancient customs—the multitude of rulers, indifferent to everything but their personal enjoyment—the constant wars, and consequent insecurity of life and property—are fast ruining a country of whose beauty and fertility its inhabitants may, with some reason, boast.

The divisions of language in Christian Abyssinia are two, Teegray and Amharic. The former, a slight corruption from the ancient Geez, itself derived from Hebrew and Arabic; and the latter, in my opinion, a distinct language, into which have crept many words from the former. The Amharic is now the written language

of the country, the Geez character being used, with some additions. The Teegray dialect is spoken in the province of Teegray, bounded by the River Takazzee, flowing from the south-south-east to north-north-west, and with some variations all along the sea-coast from Massowah, inclusive, to the port of Aggeek. The Amharic, by the rest of Abyssinia, from the Takazzee to the Abäi : and also in the province of Shoa. In Teegray I include the tribe called Agow, that inhabit a district at the source of the Takazzee, anciently called the kingdom of Lasta, whose origin I cannot divine, and whose language is totally different ; and in the Amhara, the Agows of Damot, whose language is half Galla.

The manners of the Amhara are pleasing ; their features are generally of the European and Asiatic, that is, Arab, cast, and they are remarkably quick and intelligent. Their standard of morality is very low ; sensual pleasures, as intoxication, are gratified without scruple and without shame : in general, the interests or convenience of the moment are the only rule of conduct ; want of tact and ill-temper the only crimes in their code.

Two phrases in the Christian doctrine that suit their careless temper are much insisted on : “ that this world is fleeting and valueless,” and “ that the indulgence of the Creator is infinite,”—the one to justify their *insouciance*, the other as removing all check to their follies and enjoyments. Crimes are seldom committed wantonly, but all considerations yield generally to those of interest, in prince or people. They have a great contempt for other nations, and scarcely know, or do not care, if any exist or not ; the tribes on their borders they regard as created for the breathing-fields of Abyssinian valour ; hardly

believing that the rain falls, or the sun shines, on other lands, they are persuaded that the world beyond the sea is a succession of barren deserts. The most common question to a European is whether corn grows in his country, and sometimes whether there are women; yet are they manly, generous, usually humane and indulgent, always polite, and seldom coarse. I attribute their faults to ignorance, their virtues to a kindly nature. Except tillage of the ground, their pride renders them adverse to labour; but the women are exceedingly industrious.

The people of Teegray are somewhat different in character; with more of the obstinacy of their Jewish blood they are ruder and vainer than the Amhara, noisy, talkative, and quarrelsome. Though nearer the sea they are even more ignorant of other nations; they despise all the human race but themselves, and generally each man, all existing but himself. On the whole, I think them inferior to the Amhara; but they are more laborious, and more trustworthy individually, though politically treacherous.

The Agows have a peculiar character as well as language; they are sterner, harsher, and more resolute than the other Abyssinians, and are proverbial for dissimulation and hardness of heart, as well as extreme selfishness. They permit no interference of the other races in their government or internal policy and laws. They all speak the Teegray and Amharic as well as their own language. They are always governed by a chief of their own race, whose laws, though severe on themselves, are just and even encouraging towards strangers. They acknowledge, as feudal superior, the Ras of Regemder, since the fall of the Empress of Gondar.

The inhabitants of each province in Abyssinia have some peculiar traits ; as Godjam and Kalagoozia are famous for union, Teegray Central for the contrary ; some are warlike, some cowardly, some faithful, and some treacherous, and so on.

In some respects they are a happy people. They possess in their own land all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life in profusion ; they have great freedom of speech and action, and are always gay, systematically, as by constitution. Their conversation, often sensible, is always witty. A practical philosophy leads them to prefer laughter to tears ; the tragedy and the comedy of life are received alike with indifference or a joke. Misfortunes and death are generally met with fortitude. It is hard to convince them that they will benefit either by our science or our wealth.

The most curious point in their character is this, that no one is expected to feel ashamed of any crime or vice ; and whereas in other countries men in committing serious crimes are morbidly excited, in Abyssinia they are perpetrated with indifference, and generally recounted, sometimes by the individual himself, certainly by others, with gaiety and laughter. In the same way, females are rarely gross or immodest outwardly, seeing that they need in no way be ashamed of the freest intercourse with the other sex. I have never yet been able to discover what an Abyssinian could be ashamed of, except a solecism in what he considers good manners, or the neglect of some superstitious form of social observance. They are peculiarly sensitive, however, to ridicule and abuse, whether true or untrue, and half the time of an Abyssinian master is passed in deciding disputes on such subjects. Some traits, though apparently of slight con-

sequence, are often very irksome to a stranger ; for instance, every man above the lowest rank has a door-keeper, whose duty it is to examine who should be admitted, and when. The insolence of this officer rises in proportion to the rank of his master. The primitive ante-chamber is a court in the open air, without seats, often muddy, always filthy ; and as the porter will contrive to keep you waiting, even against his master's orders, this system is most disagreeable to a European. Further, you wait amongst a crowd, and it is pointed out to you that the brothers or sons of the king are there in the same position.

Sometimes the order comes to clear the court, when sticks are used without distinction of persons. The chiefs affect a trifling and childish manner, to the great annoyance of a white man, who has, perhaps, some important affairs to speak on, and who, from his more energetic feelings, thinks them of greater importance than they are. I will not dwell on these matters, but the difficulties they raise are not trifling, nor easy to vanquish.

The Abyssinians are superstitious ; they believe in the efficacy of amulets ; of writings in jargon mixed with Scripture ; in the charms of Mussulmans to control the hail and the rain ; in spirits of the forest and the river ; in omens ; in fortune-tellers ; and in devils that may be cast out by spells from their human victim, quoting the authority of the New Testament for their belief : to these they attribute epilepsy and other incurable diseases.

One absurdity has, however, led to the death of many innocent individuals ; all workers in iron, and some others, are supposed to convert themselves into hyænas,



and to prey invisibly on their enemies, and many have been slaughtered in this belief. It is not worth while to enter upon a full account of this singular idea, which is universal and tenacious, and has its parallel in the "loup garou" of France, and the "wehr-wolf" of Germany.

Gambling appears to be unknown, but they are constantly betting; not, however, to gain money, as the judge of the forfeit receives it from the loser, the winner having thus punished his adversary. This is a fruitful source of revenue to the chiefs.

In their houses they are dirty, and generally in their domestic habits, though cleanly in person when their means will permit.

Save the door-keeping I have mentioned, much freedom exists in their society: in one room a beggar jostles a chief, and a dirty rag presses against the white turban of a priest, or a thief, perhaps in chains, is seated next to an honest man; nay, the latter will make way for the former with much politeness if an older man than himself. So indulgent are they, that even a madman is never put under restraint and rarely excluded, though perhaps dangerous. Visiting is unceasing amongst the middle classes, and hospitality is offered with indiscriminate profusion according to the means of the proprietor.

In Abyssinian society no repugnance is even shown to those afflicted with apparent and loathsome disease, and no man forfeits his position by any crime. Theft is in many provinces regarded as an honourable employment; highway robbery as quite excusable, even if accompanied by homicide; rape is venial; and adultery regards only the husband. This has probably been the national character for many ages, and now that misrule and anarchy are superadded, the Abyssinians are uncon-

sciously retrograding to a savage state, and losing all the advantages they may have acquired from the adoption of Christianity. Yet they still nourish the delusion that they are a nation, as when their kings marched armies into the Holy Land and governed Arabia, while their fleets traded to India, and their African dominions were bounded by the White Nile, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

They have in general an aversion to change in their religious observances, laws, and customs; their laws are, however, nearly forgotten, and their manners are changing yearly. This, which is characteristic of the race, is a great obstacle to improvement. Neither the idea of progress nor the word exists; for all absurdities and abuses, even for injustice, the reason "it has always been so" is held sufficient even when the error is admitted. In consequence, as nothing can be stationary, their whole institutions are degenerating.

They are very quick of apprehension and subtle of speech, and as from childhood they are accustomed to select phrases that may be agreeable to the person they are addressing or useful to themselves, are always specious and sometimes eloquent. It is very difficult for a stranger to arrive at the truth by questions.

From constant exercise the Abyssinians have great powers of memory; though a written language exists, they seldom hold correspondence, and when a letter is written it is never signed, sealed, or dated; easy as a forgery would be, I have never heard of an instance. All affairs are conducted verbally; and at a distance by messengers. These messages are usually delivered with fidelity, and the character of the herald is considered sacred.

In the relations of parent and child the Abyssinians are kind and indulgent. The children are obliged by law to share their means with their aged parents, and generally do so voluntarily. No distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate children, and all share alike on the decease of their father. Marriage is a civil contract between the parties, dissolved at pleasure, and it is usual in old age only to take the sacrament together in the church, thereby pledging themselves to fidelity and monogamy. The people of Teegray are less lax than the Amharas, amongst whom women are regarded as toys, without the trouble of secluding them in a harem.

They are fond of litigation, and most of them skilled in the quibbles and proverbs that are essential to success in any dispute. It is the favourite sport of boys and children, and the smallest difference of opinion furnishes matter for a long and sometimes expensive lawsuit. The obstinacy in trifles is a mark perhaps of their Jewish blood. Notwithstanding the abundance of food in Abyssinia, nothing is more difficult or occupies more time than to provide for the daily wants of an establishment. A chief can obtain anything at once, and often without payment, where a stranger infinitely richer would, without his friendship and assistance, run the risk of starving. Nothing can be obtained by money except at a market, and often at a very great distance. Shops are unknown, and almost all trades must be practised in each household. Water must be carried for household purposes from a distant brook, corn must be converted into flour, cookery must be prepared, bread baked, and beer brewed, in every establishment according to its numbers, and to no office of domestic utility will a man put his hand for

any amount of hire. On a journey where no markets can be found, all necessaries must be carried at least to the next large town, involving a very inconvenient amount of baggage.

The Abyssinians, indeed, demand hospitality at each village, and take up their quarters without ceremony, often having to fight for the accommodation.

The personal baggage of a merchant is equal in bulk to his goods. In more dangerous times, when baggage is a serious impediment, this billeting system becomes an imperative necessity for all travellers. On a campaign, the country people having fled from their homes on the approach of an army, money is entirely useless, and the King must either supply the stranger in his camp, which he cannot always do, or the latter has the alternatives of starvation and foraging. Grass is abundant in the country; but some local potentate or band of villagers must in general be propitiated before beasts are allowed to feed, and this cannot always be done by money, nor is the European character usually disposed to the other resource of flattery. An irritable man should not visit Abyssinia.

The greater part of the time of all classes is occupied in eating and drinking. The instant any guest is received, no matter at what hour, he must be fed, and is not allowed to refuse; mead is always produced, or beer, for they love not dry talking, be it daylight or at midnight. The profusion at their meals, and the large number of retainers and daily guests that are fed by men of rank and wealth, bear a resemblance to the customs of our Saxon ancestors. The parallel may perhaps hold good in other points. The gates are open in the evening to all who demand food and shelter in the name of friend-

ship or religion ; rich and poor are seated at one table ; in the house of a great chief public singers chant the legends of their heroes, or receive guerdon for reciting impromptu stanzas in praise of their host and his guests ; nor does the frequent intoxication weaken the likeness. Feasts are instituted a certain number of days after death, being a point of honour with the relatives of the deceased, and encouraged by the priests, who are guests by privilege, and who live principally by these general banquets ; numerous oxen are slaughtered, and for two or three days the streets reel with drunkenness, the white turbans of the pastors being conspicuous. The rejoicings at each wedding furnish equally good cheer ; and as it is not difficult to obtain admission, these festivities are a great resource to the scribes and all the poorer classes. I believe the truth of the remark made to me by an Abyssinian who had visited Rome, "that while the rich in Europe could live more luxuriously, there was no country like Abyssinia for the poor ;" but he did not perceive that this arose from the scantiness of population, the richness of the soil, and the smallness of their towns.

Friendship is measured by gifts. Each chief begs from his compeer ; nay, from his own dependant. Nothing will so much strike a stranger in Abyssinia as their custom of asking without reserve, without shame, for anything they may fancy. They are, however, ready to make compensation ; they may be offended at a refusal of their request ; equally so, if the return be not accepted. They cannot imagine that this is not the custom all over the world. If an Abyssinian returns a gift and says, "I require nothing but your friendship," the phrase is studiously polite, and means your gift is not of sufficient

value. They treat all strangers in the same way. The chiefs beg without ceremony, but in return bestow their friendship, which is necessary, and sometimes more than the value of the gift in their country produce. To specify the minutiae of this custom, practised by high and low, rich and poor, would be fatiguing. An embassy to or from a foreign prince, is a mere calculation of value exchanged. The poor make presents to the rich and powerful, and receive ten times their cost in return, protesting, however, that nothing is further from their desire ; nay, so organized is this custom, that if a person bestows a gift on one of equal rank, and does not receive an adequate compensation, he can bring an action against him as though for debt, and will receive damages by law ; this is the favourite manner in which they attack the purse of a European, and is a pretty and ingenious way to avoid direct begging. An European envoy to this country must, in the present state of society, exchange presents with the great chiefs, or be regarded as an object of charity, and it must be done with tact to avoid the imputation of timidity or folly.

The ties of relationship are strong, from mutual interest, as a barrier to the exactions of rapacious governors and the violence of the soldiery. They count kin to the fiftieth cousinship, and a man with many relatives has much influence. The military governor is constantly changed, but such a man retains a kind of hereditary power. They do not carry their union to the point of sharing their purse ; on the contrary, incessant lawsuits are carried on between the nearest relations for land and property ; but in moments of danger they stand by each other like a Highland clan. They muster in thousands

to bewail one to whom they refused a loaf while living, and they all unite to avenge his death by violence.

They retain two institutions of Judaism, and cling to them with obstinacy. The Saturday in Godjam is held of equal sanctity with the Sunday, so that water cannot be drawn nor wood hewn from Friday evening to Monday morning. Moreover, many animals are considered unclean, as the hare, the goose, in some districts the wild boar, and some other animals.

There are numberless saints' days in the year, on which no work is done; and in the towns they will not even suffer others to work, which is most irksome to the traveller.

As a nation, they have never had any element of progress within themselves, nor do they appear ever to have wished for it. Coinage, and architecture in solid masonry, have never been attempted, though the Ptolemies set them the example of both, as shown by the remains of Axúm, and the gold and copper coins found in those ruins to this day. The Portuguese introduced the art of brick-burning, and built towers and bridges of excellent workmanship; no person in Abyssinia can now make mortar. No purely national antiquities of any kind exist. Their kings and their people, two thousand years ago, must have passed their lives as now—seeking only for daily splendour or enjoyment, and indifferent to the perpetuation of their memory by any monument.

Though difficult to persuade, no people would be more docile under slight coercion. As soon as a chief of firmness governs in any district, quiet and order prevail to a surprising extent without any police. The word of the chief suffices to produce this tranquillity; but it cannot last long, as on his death or removal the means of dis-

order are unfortunately in every hand. To a foreign conquest little resistance would be offered ; they are too imaginative to dream of patriotism ; yet, had they any national spirit, the rugged nature of their mountain passes would offer many difficulties to an invading army. This spirit, which is entirely wanting, was supplied in their contests with the Mahomedans by fanatical excitement, and in warring with neighbouring barbarians, by the hopes of plunder. Individually they are brave, but in masses, being without discipline, are hesitating, and little to be feared.

Having no coinage of their own, the only money that passes current in Abyssinia is the German crown of Maria Theresa. This is changed, in Teegray, into pieces of cloth of various lengths, fabricated from cotton of the country or of India ; and in the Amhara into blocks of salt, which vary in number at each market-place. This salt is cut in the plains of the Taltal, near the Red Sea, and transported far into the interior ; it becomes very valuable in the Galla provinces, where eight small pieces are sometimes exchanged for a dollar, and a hundred will purchase a slave. Gold, which under their emperors was used as a currency by weight, and was abundant, according to tradition, has now almost disappeared. The ruler of Shoa sent some pounds of fine gold to the court of Gondar, moulded in the shape of a mule, in token of fealty. This custom was continued till the last forty years.

The whole dress of the people is of white cotton cloths, spun and wove in the country ; nor do they consider a foreigner as dressed at all unless he throws one of their white mantles over his own apparel. It illustrates curiously the character of this nation—so vain and stubborn in trifles—to see the servants of even a well-dressed



European follow him almost with shame, and the rest of the populace regarding him with laughter or sneers ; nor is this a small matter nor a trifling difficulty. The first impression does much, and ridicule is harder to vanquish than persecution. Socrates, in our modern attire, would scarcely be respected in Abyssinia.

Could difficulties of other kinds be overcome, the disposition of the Abyssinians is, on the whole, favourable to the establishment of relations, commercial or political. Many of them are liberal, kind, intelligent, hospitable, comprehending and desiring justice, and, above all, with no repulsive feelings towards us on the score of religion, except those excited purposely by the priests. If they are lax in morality, it is more from ignorance than a vicious nature ; if they cannot always practise the justice they admire, it is for the want of a strong hand on the justice-seat ; if they are indolent, it is because little is to be now gained by labour ; if vain and conceited, from being in contact with nations inferior to themselves in arts and arms.

Commerce cannot thrive while there is no efficient protection to property, and while their merchants are treated as enemies or regarded as slaves on the coast. Whether they would change for the better or the worse, under the influence of extended trade and European civilization, is a problem that time alone can solve ; but a man of liberal mind, while he regrets their anarchy, their ignorance, their fanaticism, and their vanity, may find something to admire in the individual character, under so many disadvantages.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF ABYSSINIANS.

THERE are no castes in Abyssinia, but the people may be divided into four classes—military, sacerdotal, agricultural, and mercantile: the number that cannot be included in these is insignificant—a few workmen, as tanners, saddlers, and blacksmiths, disproportioned even to the wants of the community, and some idlers who live by the produce of their farms.

The military is the most numerous and powerful. All men, save the priests, are armed, it is true; but those who follow arms as a profession, and roam from the standard of one chief to another, are easily distinguished, though they have no uniform, by their air of military license. The regular armies, or masses of men assembled under chiefs, are numerous, and throughout the country must amount to at least 200,000; and, as their system renders a large following necessary, 500,000 of idlers prey upon the rest. These troops consist of horsemen, armed with lance, shield, and swords; footmen, caparisoned in like manner, and matchlock-men; they have no artillery. In some provinces, as in Edjo, every man capable of bearing arms is a soldier, at least on his own land, where he fights and ploughs alternately. Here is also found the institution of the tournament somewhat simplified. Once or twice a week, by mutual accord,

the youth of the country, with any strangers that wish it, meet at some river on foot or horseback, to fight *à l'outrance*, but also with much chivalrous courtesy. Female singers, in shrill recitative, stimulate them to deeds of valour, and offer their charms as a reward to the bravest.

A constant enmity exists between the military and the population in general. Wages being very irregular, the former indemnify themselves often by indiscriminate plunder. As each chief retains his power by the strength of his army only, the soldiers know their own value, and change masters without ceremony; moreover, any fortunate soldier may hope to rise to the highest dignities. A chief, after a reverse, or even should his adversary obtain a high reputation among the men, is in much danger of being deserted by his army. Certain bands of soldiers are placed under officers appointed by the most powerful chiefs, whom, for distinction, I shall call *Ras*, and these act as his guards and messengers. There is no attempt at discipline or exercises; the names of the men are never registered, their numbers are scarcely ever known. These troops are generally favoured, as they are relied on to suppress any mutiny by the rest. Besides these, the *Ras* having distributed his territories amongst his followers, they raise forces according to their rank and revenues, and follow their feudal chief. With rare exceptions, such appointments are not hereditary; indeed, one man seldom retains one long; but are conferred on any fortunate favourite or soldier. The will of the *Ras* can in a moment deprive any chief of all his power, even of his private property, when, with one or two followers, he becomes a hanger-on at the camp, awaiting with patience some glimpse of royal favour, or,

if of a more fiery temper, will probably throw himself into some wild district where he has family influence, and set his master at defiance.

The army thus composed is directed in its general movements by the Ras. On a march no order is observed; the whole mass presses on to the next camp, baggage and women, horse and foot, in indiscriminate confusion; at a precipitous pass or narrow ford many accidents happen. In the order of camping some regularity is observed, the tent of the Ras being in the centre, and advanced and rear-guards occupying the front and rear. The Ras also holds a council of war, and a plan of attack is laid down and followed up as far as regards the position of the forces of each chief; but that done, every man fights as much as he pleases: the footmen advance or stand still as their courage leads them; the horsemen charge in large or small numbers when and where they think fit; the matchlock men take advantage of the ground and fire when they please, and each man when he has killed an enemy shouts his war-cry and displays his trophies instead of fighting. Plundering begins on the first trifling advantage, and it is often very difficult to discover on which side is the victory. This desultory manner of fighting does not prevent considerable loss of life. The soldiers, when the campaign is ended, are dismissed to roam about their respective districts arms in hand, exacting from the peasantry until again summoned to the field; in return, the country people slay remorselessly all fugitives of either side from a field of battle.

The chiefs keep more or less discipline amongst their troops when on the march or in quarters, according to their personal character. When provisions become

scarce in the camp, some district is ordered for plunder, and the soldiers are very expert in discovering hidden stores.

The military despise all other classes save the priesthood. They love splendour of dress in battle, and some of their costume is rich and tasteful.

In the intervals of international quarrels, the troops are kept in good humour by expeditions against the nearest tribes of barbarians, not generally with any views of permanent conquest, but only in search of spoil, and that the soldier may revel in bloody trophies (the foreskins of the Philistines)—the height of his ambition. These trophies are equally sought for in the battles of Christian against Christian, and I am uncertain if it be an ancient custom or introduced only by the Gallas, but incline to the latter opinion. After an engagement, these disgusting tokens of success are heaped before the tent of the king.

The soldiers seldom receive regular pay, but rewards are distributed to the bravest, and the more fortunate receive appointments from their respective chiefs. On a campaign they are fed by a tax in corn on the friendly provinces that are occupied, and which, as the soldiers are the tax-gatherers, is soon doubled, or by general plunder.

A silk shirt bestowed by the Ras is the distinction of the Abyssinian nobility, and this belongs only to the military class. Once bestowed, the honour is for life. The highest rank in this nobility is that of Dejjajmatch, who is entitled to beat drums before him in the battle, to inflict all punishments save death, and often this also, and who governs one or two provinces almost independently. "Kainajmatch" and "Gerajmatch"

are slightly inferior; then come the "Feetwarari, or chief of advanced guards, with some other titles not worth inquiring into, and then the crowd of "possessors of shirts," who may govern from ten to thirty villages when the Ras pleases to bestow his favour. All this system is the relic of some complicated but exact institutions of the Empire of Abyssinia, wherein the Emperor being the fountain of all honour, every great officer of the household had a title, and with that title a particular province or district. Since the divisions of the kingdom have taken place, the Abyssinians themselves have found it impossible to preserve the rules, and have neglected or forgotten the scrupulous ceremonials of the Court of Gondar. While the lances of the Galla have robbed Abyssinia of its fairest provinces, their manners and customs are superseding all its ancient institutions.

There is something of a chivalrous tone in their international warfare, apart from one savage practice that I have mentioned. An interchange of civilities constantly takes place between hostile camps; messengers are respected and prisoners generally well treated,—if of any rank even with courtesy. So polite are they that a chief will send news to his adversary, if not in the field, of the defeat of his army, and the messenger will receive a handsome *douceur*. Cruelty and brutality are rare; after a battle, as before, all is good humour and laughter, and the vanquished generally share the feast with their victors. No violence is offered to women that are captured; and even the ransom is generally fixed with amenity. Severities are sometimes practised towards those who are regarded as rebels, but in general an Abyssinian conqueror is merciful. With barbarians, indeed, as the Shankallas or Taltals, the word is kill;

but herein they have persuaded themselves that they only exercise an undoubted privilege of Christianity.

To retain the affection of the Abyssinian soldier, nothing is necessary but profuse generosity ; his heart is in his stomach, and the chief that slaughters many oxen daily, and pours out mead in torrents, is the god of his idolatry. Each meal in a camp resembles a feast, and many festivals must also be held, to which all are admitted almost indiscriminately. At these carousals, when gorged with raw meat and excited by huge draughts of mead, they recite their own warlike deeds, make the most vaunting promises of future heroism, and often obtain rich gifts in such moments from their superiors. Though all are armed and intoxication is general, accidents or quarrels seldom occur. These great banquets are the life of the soldier, and their barbarous plenty and military license are not unimposing.

Not being accustomed to rely on each other, they are absurdly subject to panics. I have seen a whole army running at night from a single man, who charged into the camp shouting his war-cry. Disciplined, they would make good soldiers.

They have no distinctive dress, but different ways of plaiting their hair to denote the number of men each has killed with his own hand. Certain ornaments are also permitted only to men of great personal bravery. The slaughter of each dangerous beast of the forest is equivalent to a fixed number of human lives ; and those who have never killed are not permitted the distinguished privilege of plastering their heads with fresh butter.

All the servants of a chief are soldiers ; the terms become synonymous in a camp, and the proudest chief is termed the servant of his feudal superior, and is ready

whenever they meet to perform for him any menial office. In general they are proud, mutinous, and insubordinate; frequent fights occur in the camp of the Ras between rival bodies of soldiers, though a little severity would soon insure obedience. On a late occasion, his guards on the field of battle, instead of marching forward, lay down on the ground, alleging that they had been insufficiently fed for some months. The Ras (Ali), with unwonted energy, led a charge of cavalry over them as they lay.

The soldiers of Teegray are almost all foot, and their matchlock-men are very skilful and brave.

The Galla regiments of the interior are fine horsemen, and, with discipline, would be a formidable cavalry. As it is, they face fire well, and, like the Parthians, dispersing themselves in flight, suddenly wheel round and inclose a rash pursuer. They have a fine breed of horses. The horse and weapons of the soldier, whether given him by his chief or purchased by himself, are his own property. All who can procure them ride mules on the march, the horses being always led on the road. Each soldier that can afford it keeps a lad to carry his shield, a donkey for his provisions, and a small tent, and a wife to bring him water, make him bread, and wash his feet after a march. As he is entitled to a monthly allowance of corn for each of these attendants, besides extracting all he can from the peasantry, and feasting often in his general's tent, or wherever else the door-keeper is his friend, it may be seen that his condition is not disagreeable; and, in fact, it is the most attractive style of life that the country affords. A common soldier with a good reputation for courage is everywhere respected; he is flattered and caressed by many chiefs, who all strive to secure his



services ; his name is sung in ballads, and he considers himself with reason as equal to the proudest in the land. Such a man will enter the tent of any chief on the day of festival, assert his right to the finest portions of meat, and demand the strongest mead, not only without reproof, but with a cordial reception. And it is the passion for such individual distinction, leading to immediate and solid benefit, with the certainty that any one of them may, by good fortune, arrive at the highest rank, and command where he obeyed, that inspires a love for war in the Abyssinian breast. At the same time the pride engendered by this Republican soldiering induces a fiery impatience of control, and an ambition that leads to unceasing rebellions and distraction.

The great chiefs have generally much dignity of manner, and some of them might be models of tact and polite suavity, particularly those who have any pride of ancestry ; but engrossed with the sensual pleasures afforded by their wealth and power, and uncertain how long they may enjoy them, they never dream of improving the condition of their subjects, though often just and indulgent in their rule, as far as the paramount necessity of conciliating their armies will permit.

The Turkish troops have a great dread of the Abyssinians ; though it is probable that 5,000 disciplined soldiers would beat them anywhere in the field, and 10,000 suffice for a permanent occupation of the country. The Abyssinians are convinced that no other nation can compare with them in war. One chief, named Kasoi, has lately introduced some improvements into his army, which I shall notice in another place.

## THE LANDED PROPRIETORS.

WHILE the nobility of the country is entirely military, there is a kind of middle class, composed of the more influential proprietors. These, however, from the exigencies of the times, are also warlike, and must protect their homes and their ploughs, often by the lance and the sword. The most powerful of these are found in the deep valleys of the Nile, the Takazzee, and other large rivers. These rivers form vast clefts in the face of the country throughout their course, of several miles in width, at the bottom of which, at a depth of 3,000 feet, they plough their way betwixt high and precipitous walls of rock. The valleys thus formed are intercepted by rugged water-courses, whose torrents are unfordable in the rainy season. The soil is most productive, and the parts not cultivated are clothed with almost impenetrable jungle. The paths that conduct the traveller through these regions descend along the face of several ranges of precipices, over masses of rock, and frequently through passes that a hundred men might make good against an army.

From these peculiarities that present conversely the difficulties of a mountain territory, the character of the inhabitants is brave and independent, and, led by some great proprietor, they often defy all the efforts of the military chieftains. This proprietor is usually a large cultivator, and possesses numerous cattle. He is judge of the district by common consent, and without appeal. The elders, however, always give him their advice; and as he does not pretend to any superiority, save that of wealth and courage, and is always simple in his habits, there exists a real liberty and equality throughout the society, with the advantage of union under an acknow-

ledged head in moments of danger. Under his orders the youth of the district make predatory expeditions against the Gallas, or other neighbouring nations, or prosecute their endless blood-feuds with some adjacent Christian clan. These agricultural lords are of great importance to the military rulers, who, finding it difficult to seduce or force them to submission, flatter and caress them into an occasional contribution ; but their valleys being rich depots of corn, when provisions become scarce one of them is marked out for plunder, and, by secrecy and surprise, the attempt is sometimes richly successful, though often the troops are overwhelmed and cut to pieces while toiling up the steep and gloomy passes and thorny forests by the equally well-armed and more active peasants. They generally also receive the "shirt" I have mentioned, or robe of silk, to give them military rank, and attach them to the party of some chief. Occasionally they will follow him to war, but rarely on any distant expedition. They are rich, hospitable to a proverb, proud and manly, and usually skilled in the chase, as these provinces afford ample hunting-grounds, abounding in large game.

The peasants of these districts enjoy a genial climate, live almost in the open air, and, though hardy in youth, soon grow old. They manifest the same impatience of restraint and love of liberty as mountaineers in other lands.

There are also rich proprietors on the plains and high lands, with family influence and some wealth ; but these, from their constant contact with the soldiery, who despise and insult them, supply the want of strength by politic wiles, and have not the manliness and simplicity of their compeers of the low country.

The cultivators of the soil—the small farmers and peasantry,—though struggling with many difficulties, form a numerous class. In spite of bad government, military oppression, and the constant devastations of war, they bear directly or indirectly the whole burden of taxation and the large standing armies. Though seldom wealthy, they are rarely in distress, and appear attached to their way of life. Soldiers are constantly quartered on them, except in some districts that always turn out *en masse* to resist, and where the troops dare not venture.

Villages may be seen everywhere in Abyssinia, perched on hills, hidden in most inconvenient hollows, and far from water. There are two good reasons for this. In the valleys the borders of the streams are infected with malaria; and on the plain, if they are too easy of access, they are nightly infested by crowds who demand or exact hospitality. On any frequented high road many a ruined hamlet may be seen deserted by its inhabitants on this account.

In seasons of war and anarchy an influential countryman becomes more valuable as a friend than any chief, and can, through the ties of relationship, forward goods and messengers in safety to a distance, when a soldier dare not quit his camp. These are generally intrusted with the collection of revenue, and are often made responsible for it. They are a kind of zemindars.

A whole province of cultivators, in times when the military are engaged elsewhere, will meet by accord, and some thousands of them will attack another province—destroying, burning, and bequeathing feuds to distant generations. In their culture they would be laborious, were it not for the priestly device of saints' days, which

forces the whole population to be idle for a third of the year. They plough with oxen, and weed with some care; they leave their fields fallow or change the crop as experience or rather tradition has taught them; and dig, where they cannot plough, the sides of the most precipitous mountains. The most productive crops are obtained on the ground most covered with stones, which they are careful not to remove. During the rainy season a rich verdure clothes every part of Abyssinia that has any prospect of reaping the harvest in tranquillity. Irrigation is practised wherever necessary, the numerous rivulets rendering it an easy task. No fences are ever made; and during the night, when corn is ripening, boys with slings keep up a constant warfare with the wild boar, the addax, and the porcupine. In some districts large fires are necessary to scare the herds of elephants, and everywhere the watcher is placed on a high platform, to be in safety from the hyæna and the lion. In general they are intelligent, but ruder than the soldier.

From their present industry, I think that in this matter of cultivation they might improve if they had a more peaceful government and some security for property, and could be persuaded that men may improve upon their fathers—that it is better to cross a river by a bridge than to wade through a dangerous torrent, or that a mill is preferable for grinding corn to a slave-girl. The fields in the neighbourhood of the towns, where military license is in some degree checked by the priests, and the ravages of war are less felt, are highly cultivated. Land there sells at a good price and is eagerly sought, showing that the sweets of tranquil labour are at least appreciated. If, however, the government were not strong as well as peaceful, even tranquillity might have its dangers, especially in Teegray.

As soon as the country people gain large profits, and mead or beer inflames their blood, the violence and pride of their disposition lead them to aim at power, and, without regard to their means, to attack and disorganize society. They express this "inflation" by one word in their own language, which serves as the apology for almost every act of folly, and the inhabitants of Tegray have become a proverb in this respect. I am tempted to give one anecdote to illustrate the phrase. A few years since, seven men of Hamazayn, with no other following, marched through one hundred miles of country to Adowah, to overturn the existing powers and establish their own sovereignty, shouting war-cries and invoking the assistance of the Virgin. This is an extreme case, but describes well enough the disposition of this curious people. Each man considers himself as born to great destinies, and the smallest spark sets fire to his ambition. This is owing to the long-continued weakness of the government, and the absence of any body of proprietors who are interested in keeping order. Here almost every one thinks he has something to gain by anarchy.

The prosperous or adverse condition of a village depends almost entirely upon the rapacity or moderation of its immediate chief; and the ryots of a harsh master would soon leave him to contemplate empty fields, but for a law that empowers him to seize them and force them to cultivate or to give security for their share of all imposts. The villagers are further interested in preventing desertion, as, though only three inhabitants should remain, they must pay the whole sum at which the village was originally assessed. The imposts are numerous, but vary according to the traditionary customs of each village. They pay a certain portion in kind to

the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money. Besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain—say a fifth, and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder. He has rights to oxen, sheep, and goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence. He must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts: he is going on a campaign, or returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.

There is in each village one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order, in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and governors. This humble officer takes one-tenth of all that he collects for his chief. When the latter is changed, he informs his successor what is left of the last year's revenues, of the boundaries of his land, of the amount of imposts, of his various privileges, and all the little secrets of the community, so that in a short time the new governor is as much at home as the old one. The amount of traditional knowledge and memory of these persons is often extraordinary. The boundaries that he has to define are very simple. A brook, a bush, or stone marks the limits of a village; but when their neighbours' fields, as often happens, are interlaced, it is a complicated task, and gives rise to endless litigation, often to violence.

In forest or plain, covered only with grass and jungle, and here and there a heap of ruins, should a village be rebuilt and cultivation resumed, some such ancient peasant is soon found who demands his post, and points out from memory the boundaries. The descendants of the former inhabitants are sought out under his directions, and under a lenient governor all is restored to its former condition. When land or houses are sold, numerous little children are called to receive a handful of peas, and are useful afterwards as witnesses from these juvenile recollections.

#### THE PRIESTHOOD.

THOUGH the feudal power of the military chiefs is so great, it may be doubted if the influence of the priesthood be not more important. That body holds in chains the mind of the people; moulds at will customs, morals, and all the social ties, which have consequently remained almost unchanged, amidst the change of dynasties, the ruinous shocks of international war, and the gradual crumbling away of a wide and Christian empire.

The spirit of Protestantism, or free inquiry, is not more welcome in Abyssinia than in other primitive churches; but from the less eager spirit of its people, it has not been found necessary to check it by any penalties. Going to the fountain-head, they teach but one book to the children of the laity, "The Psalms of David;" and without forbidding other learning, discourage it, confining it as much as possible to the clergy and the scribes. Their great numbers, the almost superstitious reverence of the multitude, and the practice of confession and absolution,



have enabled the priests to pursue this system with success.

All the larger towns are entirely under their control, and being cities of refuge, sacred even from the Ras, are filled with dissolute and dangerous characters.

This institution is probably a remnant of their Mosaic law, and gives them great power over the bodies, as the ceremony of confession and the dreadful thunder of excommunication do over the imagination, of an ignorant race.

The Christianity professed and taught in Abyssinia is much materialized. The religion that is elsewhere the companion of progress, is here made the stumbling-block to improvement; stress, for the most part, being only laid on its ceremonies, and many being added that in no way belong to it.

Though they detest the Church of Rome, and indeed despise all save their own, quarrelling even with the Alexandrian from which they receive their Aboona, or high priest, through their love of contradiction, they may be thought to have taken some good lessons from the former on the means of retaining the population in blind submission.

All church service is conducted in the Geez tongue, unknown save to the learned. The Psalms are also in that language; and the pupil, while encouraged to read them, is persuaded that he should not seek to understand them, but that he fulfils a high duty by gabbling over a number of them daily. No one save the priest himself is ever instructed in the Gospel in any tongue. Great adoration is paid to the Virgin Mary, and to numberless saints and angels. Their churches are filled with pictures, to which, when unveiled, the multitude bows with reve-

rence. Fasting is rigidly insisted on ; sometimes, however, compounded for by money. These fasts embrace nearly two-thirds of the year ; and most of those who keep them are convinced that they will be weighed against their sins, though this doctrine is not officially taught. So much do they attach importance to this and other outward forms, that a man of "Hamazayn" will slay his near relative, and returning home calmly, will be horror-stricken should his wife have ground flour on a saint's day, or prepared his meal before the hours of fasting have expired.

The churches are very numerous, and each church is itself an object of devotion, as it is firmly believed that the saint whose name it bears actually resides in its sanctuary. The stones are kissed with awe, and offerings are deposited, which the priests receive ; vows are registered and prayers are made, with equal fervour, to the Virgin, our Saviour, or some traditional martyr of the Abyssinian church, from which they expect immediate benefit in this world, as well as salvation in the next. Miracles, I need scarcely say, are not unfrequent ; and certain spots or peculiar sanctity perform them almost daily. Whenever offerings slacken, and the numbers that kneel at the shrine decrease, a picture rolls its eyes, a leper is cleansed, or the blind are restored to sight.

Great respect is paid to all who wear the white turban, the mark of priesthood ; they are always addressed as "father," and as superiors in the second person plural, even by chiefs of the highest rank. Any person dying without having chosen a father confessor, is denied Christian burial ; and so jealous are the priests of this great means of power, that they extend the rule to strangers. The confessors of the great men are usually

indulgent, and they are permitted to compound for their frailties by the endowing of a new church, or handsome gifts to an old one. Nor are monasteries wanting to complete the resemblance to the Roman Catholic Church, and to the Middle Ages, where every immorality is practised ; nor solitary hermits, who dwell in gloomy forests, feeding on roots, and exposed to ferocious animals, and who are sometimes as sincere as they are useless. Nunneries alone are absent from the picture ; though vows of celibacy are sometimes taken, if rarely kept, save at an advanced age.

Christianity is reduced to the simple form of obedience to the priest. The Gospel is forbidden in our translations into the modern Amharic tongue, nor is there one man in ten thousand who knows the commonest precepts of his religion. If some few moral ideas are not denied, they are never inculcated or insisted on ; and absolution can always be obtained for money. So blindly devoted is the Abyssinian laity to these astute fathers, that even the almost daily spectacle of their drunkenness, excesses, and immorality—nay, the knowledge that the confessional means “seduction made easy”—excites no feeling of disgust and astonishment.

Thus, it is not wonderful if lying, sexual intercourse, intoxication, or manslaughter, are regarded as venial—things that might be considered curious as the daily occupation of professing Christians, were it not for the ignorance in which they are studiously retained, under meshes too cunningly woven to be burst by any efforts of their own. Their present immorality does not argue a bad nature in the Abyssinian ; on the contrary, I am astonished that good and moral men are still found : and it is certain that Christianity, even thus debased, has hitherto saved them from the wantonness of crime and excess of cruelty

that stains the records of almost all African races, and of some in other quarters of the globe. It is necessary for the strangers in Abyssinia to propitiate the Church, or at least to be very careful how he attacks it in his conversation. Should an outcry be raised on such points as his want of respect for the priests, his not fasting, his eating with Mahomedans (which is regarded with horror), or the like, he will find it difficult to resist the storm, though the Abyssinian persecutor is generally content with banishment. It was by these means that the English Protestant Mission was unceremoniously ejected, when it was found that it was introducing the New Testament to notice in the Amhara language, and announcing truths dangerous to priestcraft.

One-third of the lands was originally set apart for the Church, but this portion is now much reduced, though its share is still large.

The native head of the Abyssinian Church is called the "Tehegee," and resides at Gondar, his house being a place of peculiar sanctity; but the bishop, called "Aboona," who receives a reverence almost amounting to worship, is always a Copt. He is sent by the Patriarch of Alexandria, on consideration of some thousand dollars collected and forwarded by the Abyssinians for his journey. The present Aboona is said to be the one hundred and eighteenth, and is named Salama. His chief residence should also be at Gondar, but there have been fierce disputes in the Abyssinian Church, and the gifts of Sahela Selassie, of Shoa, prevailed on the Ras Ali to banish the Aboona, who has since been living near Adowah, where he has still large possessions. All churches must be consecrated, all priests and deacons ordained by him; crowds of pilgrims are always waiting in his courts, sometimes

intermixed with men of rank, some to obtain a blessing or to be assoiled from deadly sin, a great number to be made deacons. Worn with a journey of perhaps months, priests are there in flaunting red garments, carrying a mysterious box, wherein is kept the "Holy of Holies" of each Church, like the ark of the covenant,—waiting for the blessing of the Aboona, which is equivalent to the consecration of that Church. His sentence of excommunication is much dreaded, and he has great influence in all the political or warlike movements in the country. His residence is an inviolable sanctuary.

From time to time the Church of Rome has made great efforts to induce the Abyssinians to recognize the Pope of Rome as their spiritual head. The Jesuits at one time having nearly succeeded, and having lighted up the flames of civil war in the time of the Emperor Socinius, failed at last, and were massacred or banished. At this time the struggle is renewed by several missions under three bishops to gain a footing in this territory.

The Aboona by interdict, and when that fails by inducing the chief to expel these intruders, carries on a war with them with various success ; as to his prestige, they oppose money. These missions are under the protection of France.

Even the Aboona, influential as he is, finds it difficult to assert his authority over the banded priests when they differ on any doctrinal point ; nor dares he announce a truth that may oppose any strong national prejudice. Should he say that a Christian is permitted to eat what he pleases, he would raise a storm from which his sacred character would scarcely protect him. Priests are permitted to marry one wife, but not a second time, except

the Aboona and Tchegee, who should lead a life of rigid celibacy.

The only interference of the chiefs in church government is in the appointment of a civil officer in each town, who settles all disputes, orders church ceremonials, and receives large profits. He must have some learning, and is called "Alika."

The priests have no pay, but the profits on the land attached to each church are divided in proportion to their several dignities. Then the father confessors extract what they can, according to the wealth of their patients; the pious bestow rich offerings for their spiritual welfare, and the laity are mulcted on the occasions of births, christenings, marriages, deaths, registers of sale and purchase, burials, and the like; so that besides their continual feasting at the public expense, they are usually well stocked with money, and from their numbers have been compared by the Abyssinians to locusts.

It is just, however, to say that they have preserved the Christian faith, impure indeed, but still alive, in the midst of foreign invasion, domestic degradation, and the extinction of Government, and that it is under their protection that agriculture flourishes and villages are built where deserts would else be seen. What learning exists has also been preserved by them from utter extinction. But as they become themselves daily more corrupt, society more disorganized, and the law more inefficient, Church and people will be lost in utter barbarism, unless Providence have preserved those embers of civilization to be cherished into life by some more generous and powerful nation.

Their learning is limited almost to the books of the Old and New Testament, into which some are admitted

that we consider apocryphal; besides these there are some monkish legends, a code of laws, and the chronicles of their kings; containing in a mass of rubbish a few sentences worthy of notice. All these books, written by monks with much labour, were formerly eagerly sought for, but are now neglected, almost forgotten. The art of painting is nearly lost; and ornamental missals may now be found very cheap, as there are scarcely any purchasers; the number of persons that can read and write is diminishing daily, and the code of laws is becoming a mystery to the most learned. There are about four hundred works in the country, of which eighty-one relate to the Bible.

Numbers of Abyssinian priests and monks visit Jerusalem yearly, and it may be deemed singular that these, receiving much kindness at the hands of Europeans, do not awaken their countrymen to some knowledge of the world beyond, and some better feeling towards their fellow Christians than contempt or indifference.

It is one of the difficulties of an Envoy, that while the Turk regards his intercourse with a jealous eye, and the fanatic Mahomedan hates him as the friend of the Christians, the Abyssinian too generally regards him as a man without religion, that is, without those outward forms that he is taught as more important than either morality, truth, or humility. These pilgrims generally disclaim the reception of any kindness, and declare that Franks have no religion. They all eat meat of any kind on their journeys, but are most fanatic on their return against intercourse with the Mussulman, and fervently deny having tasted the abhorred flesh of his shambles, declaring that what is killed by a European is also contaminating, his Christianity being most impure.

Yet these monks have faith, and energy in their faith, though ill-directed; for 1,500 years numbers have worshipped at the tomb of the Saviour, have braved persecution, and devoted themselves to certain death. Many of them now risk their lives to visit some forgotten shrine, once a church belonging to their fathers, and the centre of population and culture, now a few shapeless stones in a howling wilderness, the lair of wild beasts, and surrounded for many a weary day's journey by hostile tribes of Arabs or negroes, who slay the pilgrim that they may not return home with unbloody hands.

Scribes, or "deftaras," are often more learned than the priests, and equally take advantage of the general ignorance. Their principal gain is by writing amulets, and charms against every disease, almost against death: it is believed that some of these men by their spells can invoke demons and spirits from the waters, they being careful to nourish the delusion by juggling exhibitions from time to time. They also profess medicine, and as they do not much analyze the effects of their drugs, many an unfortunate falls a victim to some poisonous plant administered as a love philtre. Most of them are hangers-on of the different churches; they are generally cunning, debauched, and mischief-makers.

Jews are still found in some numbers, and though despised are not persecuted; this may be owing to their poverty. They know nothing of the Hebrew tongue; but some read the Mosaic books in the Geez, and are as scrupulous in their ceremonials as their brethren elsewhere. They are the best masons in the country. They have no peculiar physiognomy.

The Koomants, found only in the neighbourhood of Gondar, are acknowledged by neither Christian, Mussul-



man, nor Jew, and have a bastard creed, a compound of all three. They are skilful carpenters, and supply all Gondar with wood. They are despised, but being very courageous, and having lately shown an inclining towards Christianity; it is not improbable that their distinctions will soon disappear; many even now have ceased a practice which was the chief separating cause. They hung heavy weights in the lobe of the ear of the girls, who were thereby excluded from any chance of marriage with Christians.

The "Wytos" are a small class, who live by hunting the hippopotamus; they eat the flesh, and sell the hide and teeth. They call themselves Mahomedans, but are not recognized by the other followers of that creed. They principally reside near the Lake Tānā, and are a very handsome race. They are regarded with as much aversion as the Jews. But all these classes are permitted the free exercise of their own religious faith.

There are many Mahomedans in Abyssinia, and in all large towns they have a separate quarter, with mosques and public prayers. From the advantage that their commerce in slaves gives them over their Christian competitors, the Mussulman traders are the most wealthy, and are, therefore, generally appointed to the high post of Negadeh Ras, or collector of all customs, literally "head of merchants." To enforce their authority these keep large bodies of armed men, and confidently predict the final triumph of the faith of the Prophet in Abyssinia. The Abyssinian Mussulmans, as distinguished from the Galla, are all traders; they will not eat meat killed by Christians, and are frequently their superiors in morality and intelligence. They live on terms of equality, good humour, and friendship with the Christians, openly

defend their creed, and receive any proselyte that offers, and do not appear to think that the restrictions in the Koran respecting strong drinks apply to them at all. Mahomedans and Christians do not intermarry. One cannot but admire the toleration of this people, though it does not extend to other Christians ; however, no one can be molested on account of his opinions, and a small concession will always mollify the Church. There is no distinction in dress between those who profess different creeds, and are all subject to the same law.

The Mahomedans, like the Christians, do not in general seclude their women ; and the latter maintain in general the important privilege of displaying their charms. This formerly was done by females of all ranks and religions, but lately, to imitate the great chiefs, who secluded their wives, from jealousy, the custom of a harem is being gradually adopted in the towns and by the wealthy. I may add here that, in spite of the prevalence of Christianity, and the abundance of its professing teachers, Mussulmans are not alone in the doctrine of plurality, almost every man keeping as many handmaidens as his means will permit.

#### THE TRADING CLASSES.

THE mercantile community are not very numerous, and are looked on with much contempt by the military, but patronized by the chiefs, whom they conciliate by rare presents, in addition to the duties they pay. The Mahomedans of Abyssinian extraction, not Galla, follow rarely any other pursuit, and three-fourths of the trade are in their hands ; of wealthy Christian merchants, there are scarcely twenty in the whole country. The

rich caravans travel in large numbers, and well armed, and are as well used to hard fights as the soldiery, especially those who reach Enarea. They have no traits which distinguish them from any other class of the community; and the merchant must stuff his followers with meat and mead like the military chief, paying, in addition, regular wages.

The countries richest in commercial produce are the Galla provinces of Enarea, Djimma, and those adjacent. They abound in ivory, zibbad, excellent coffee, wax, and spices; gold is found in the sands, and these districts are accustomed to trade with the Abyssinian caravans. Their products find one outlet through Shoa and the Adaiel, eastward into the Indian Ocean, at the port of Zeyla; another through Abyssinia, by various channels, northward, and passing either through Gondar and Sennaär, to Egypt, or through Adowah and Massowah, into the Red Sea. A third route is frequented by the traders who, following the course of the White Nile, also reach Khartoom, and there meet the caravan from Gondar.

The caravans to the Red Sea are swelled on the route by small parties with the produce of Abyssinia—wax, coffee of an inferior quality, ivory, buffaloes' horns, hides, ghee, honey, and mules. The list may appear limited, but little inducement is offered to the trader, either by his own unsettled and oppressive government or by Turkish apathy on the coast; and provinces are left desert that are capable of growing many valuable articles for commercial purposes, while those that exist are but half-known, and the quantity of those in use might be multiplied fifty-fold by encouragement. Amongst the products of Abyssinia, not considered as of value at

present, I may mention aloes, aniseed, castor-oil, senna, ebony, gum, hippopotamus' teeth, saffron, and sulphur.

Pepper and other spices are now imported from India, while there are numerous districts fit for their growth between the Red Sea and Enarea. The quantity of coffee might be immensely increased under a tolerable government. Among the nomad tribes on the coast, an extensive trade in hides, salt-meat, and horns, might be created. Should means of destruction become more generally known, the quantity of ivory would be much increased. Gold and copper veins might be found. The valuable zibbad, now monopolized by the king of Enarea, might be reared all over Abyssinia, where, though the cat exists in a wild state, no one has ever thought of domesticating it, which would be an innovation.

Cotton cloth is the universal and only dress of the country, and cotton is imported from Cutch, while Abyssinia should be capable of producing largely for exportation of a much superior quality. Besides the tropical rains, the means of irrigation are everywhere abundant; while the excellent quality of the soil and the mildness of the climate would render that resource unnecessary for most plantations. Owing to bad government, fertile lands near the sea have been abandoned to flocks and herds for a breadth of 100 miles between the coast and Abyssinia; and plains of sulphur at seventy or eighty miles from Massowah are unknown to the Turkish governor, that article being imported in small quantities from beyond the sea.

Everything is transported on horses, mules, or donkeys; and the large caravans, moving very slowly, are often a year from Enarea to Massowah, a distance by the road of about 750 miles. The slowness of their

progress is owing partly to the natural difficulties of a rugged and mountainous country, without roads, but still more to the embarrassing institutions of the tribes or nations through which they pass. The despots of the monarchical Gallas, as Enarea—where, as I have said, the richest produce is found, and which town is the great mart of this part of Africa—must be propitiated by presents and flattery. The slave trade is a great source of revenue to those kings; and for this reason the Christian merchants seldom transact business so far in the interior, leaving those wealthy reservoirs to the Moslem traders in human flesh, through whose influence all that part of the country is gradually adopting the Mahomedan creed.

Enarea is frequented by traders from Zanzibar and Sajoora, from Massowah and Khartoom, from Darfoor and Khoordoofan, and, it is said, even from Darsala and Timbuctoo; but even the frequenters of that depot seem to know little of any tribes on the Equator. Constant as are the wars between tribe and tribe, the merchants are protected by all, and escorted to the limits of each province, where they are received under a temporary truce by their friends in the other. Should there be an intervening wilderness, the trader must trust to his own weapons and a stout heart.

When the caravans having left the dominions of the king of Enarea, on the road for Massowah, which most concerns us at present, enter the territories of republican Gallas, not only each tribe, but each influential individual, and each one who has a hut on the line of march, must be paid and caressed. As the best way of effecting this, the merchants camp on the frontier of each district, under the protection of some influential inhabitant,

and there make their bargain with all those who have claims along the line of road. These claims being all settled, which may occupy a month or six weeks, they make a stretch into the next district, and with each tribe the same operation must be repeated. This system continues until they reach Basso, the southern province of Abyssinia on that road. To reach this halting-place, they must cross the river Abbai, or Blue Nile, through which valley is the most dangerous part of their progress. This wilderness, a hunting-ground for wild beasts, hot and desolate, contrasts strongly with the fertile crops of Gooderoo that they are leaving, and the fresh pastures of Godjam that they hope to reach—a hope not always realized. Hundreds of Galla horse lay hidden on the long grass and thorny thickets, and are apprised by numerous scouts of the numbers and quality of the approaching caravan. The Abyssinian Chief of Basso, it is true, furnishes a strong escort, but not unfrequently convoy and caravan are cut off almost to a man, and that fatal spot, yearly the scene of deadly combats, is dreaded by the merchant, and rouses all the energy of the traveller. Such are some of the labours and dangers of the traders to Enarea.

After reaching Basso, the trading depot being named Ayjubay, they are in comparative safety ; but the perils they have passed are almost preferable to the endless vexations and exactions of the Abyssinian institutions.

The system of customs is in fact a struggle betwixt the merchants on the one hand and on the other the Negadeh Rases, who farm the duties in the large towns, and numerous small military governors, who exact what they can at other posts—this system leading necessarily to loss of time, smuggling, and often bloodshed.

A Negadeh Ras, or chief of merchants, is appointed in six towns of Abyssinia—Ayjubay, Derrita, Gondar, Sokota, Doobaruk, and Andowah. In five of these the officer is a Mahomedan ; at Doobaruk, somewhat inferior in importance, a Christian. Paying fixed sums to the great chiefs, they are permitted to screw all they can out of merchants, and keep in their pay large bodies of armed men to enforce their severe regulations. They are also obliged to do feudal service for the chief when called upon. Each Negadeh Ras establishes numerous minor posts, where the merchants are harassed for small sums, and with the military claimants they must compound as they best can. The right of pasturage and trespasses are fruitful sources of contention and delay. It is true that the richer traders are generally on good terms with the great chiefs by constant presents and flattery, and escape pretty easily from his followers ; but those on a small scale are plundered unmercifully, and their whole property sometimes confiscated on the plea of smuggling, true or false. All are despised by the military, and for fear of future consequences are obliged to receive nightly in their houses insolent and riotous soldiers, who, even when receiving hospitality, scarcely deign to disguise their contempt. They are also in constant fear of being claimed by the chiefs to extort money. In the desert parts of the country, if any rebels or robbers are in force, they have not unfrequently to fight in defence of their goods in Abyssinia, as amongst the Gallas ; and the merchants from the Province of Walkait, bordering on Sennaär, have another danger to encounter ; bands of negroes, called Shankalla, in bodies of 500 and 1,000, often occupy the road in ambush, and sometimes succeed in surprising and slaugh-

tering an entire caravan. This feud is uninterrupted, and no quarter is ever given. When the merchant has settled for his vexatious tolls, and averted with success all human enemies, he has also to encounter the difficulties of raging floods, precipitous mountains, frightful roads, and wild beasts that destroy his mules. Their situation would be much better were Abyssinia under one master, instead of being ground by so many chiefs, each of whom frames despotic laws in his own province, and often makes the forced friendship of a merchant for his rival, or the compulsory exactions of a rebel whom he himself cannot subdue a pretext for a heavy fine. The frontier provinces of Teegray towards the sea, Kalagoozai and Hamazayn, are now disorderly republics, save a tribute forced on them by the arms and the fortune of Oobeay, and will probably soon entirely detach themselves from the shaking fabric of Abyssinian society; and here there is no law or protection for the trader, save such moderation as self-interest may teach the villagers on the road. Combats are not unfrequent; but as it is known that the caravans will fight to the death in behalf of their property, being generally all they possess, even the most rapacious are afraid to push matters to extremity. The merchants also make friends of the most influential proprietors. On arriving amidst the Shiho tribes, between these provinces and the coast through which they must pass to reach Massowah, they suffer great extortions under pretence of guides and permission to pass through this territory, inhabited by Mahomedans, who acknowledge no sovereign, either Turk or Christian, and amongst whom each man claims a share of the booty. Having scrambled through these valleys, the produce of Enarea at last arrives once



in the year at Massowah, where the merchants, if Christian, were formerly subject to insult, violence, and injustice; but of late years, if not encouraged, have at least been treated with decency and moderation—a result to which I may, without vanity, believe myself to have contributed.

A caravan at each halt makes a camp near some spring or river. The packages are piled up to the height of four or five feet, with spaces left at intervals; the long sticks with which they drive the mules are laid across these to form a roof, and soft hides are thrown over all, making a series of waterproof cabins, in which the wealthy nestle among their goods; the followers erect temporary huts all round, and in the centre the mules are tied at night. Numbers of young men are sent to cut grass; others to trade with the nearest villagers for supplies. Strict watch is kept all night by the light of large wood fires. At daylight they resume their journey, and a caravan of two or three hundred mules will be off in less than half an hour. The small traders who carry goods from market to market, disperse themselves at night in the villages amongst their friends, as also do those who carry salt.

Great numbers of men are employed in this important commerce, salt being the current money of the kingdom, and found only in the Taltal district, not very far from Massowah. Small blocks are cut of eight inches in length, and slung over the back of a donkey to the number of 150 or more, being first brought by camels from the arid salt plains in Teegray. Hides are placed over as a protection from the rain, and these traders then hurry with great speed to every market in the kingdom, and young girls may be seen on journeys of several hundred miles, carrying sixty pieces on their backs, to

work out a dowry for themselves. The salt having to pay constant toll, becomes rapidly more dear, and while in Teegray 200 pieces can be obtained for a dollar, in Godjam thirty are considered a high rate, and in the Galla provinces salt is one of the chief luxuries of life.

The manufactures in request in Abyssinia are almost all British. Red cloth, calico, silks and velvets of all kinds, printed cottons, &c., are all imported from Bombay, as well as red and blue Indian bunting, raw silk, Surat tobacco, and Indian manufactured silks. English sabres and fire-arms are much in request, but are prohibited by the blockade of the Turks at Massowah. Matchlocks only were admired formerly, but of late years percussion guns are in great demand. In all things they cry out for English goods. Some kinds of Egyptian cloth sell in large quantities, and also American drill. Trieste send glassware and beads, which are required principally for the slave-dealers, and the frankincense of Arabia supplies the Abyssinian churches. I have already furnished an exact list of the exports and imports of Massowah.

It is unnecessary to dwell at present upon the probability of developing the commercial resources of the Gallas. That they possess them in abundance unknown to themselves is certain, but their most important districts are so distant from the coast that no European merchant could risk in person so hazardous a journey. Nothing but the establishment of a firm government and an enlightened system in Abyssinia can much influence the condition of these tribes. The Abyssinian merchants will, however, communicate whatever impulse they may receive from the coast, and push on into the furthest provinces with increased vigour. The Abyssinians are greedy of

gain, and a desire for European luxuries already exists. The stimulus of capital and protection on the coast would soon cause a great change in their domestic policy, convert their grass wildernesses and thorny forests into thriving plantations, and create as large a commerce as can exist in a country where water carriage is hopeless, and even the introduction of waggons must be the task of years, owing to national prejudice, rugged elevations, abrupt valleys, and the utter absence of roads and bridges.

## CHAPTER IV.

## GOVERNMENT AND LAWS.

THE ancient form of government in Abyssinia was a despotic monarchy, with many Persian forms and Jewish institutions. This, while powerful, was preferable to the present state of lawless violence, and afforded an appearance of unity, however ill the law may have been executed, as appears by their records. Long before its fall, the inroads of Mahomedans on the coast of the Red Sea, and of the Gallas on the southern and eastern boundaries, had much reduced the ancient limits of the empire, and the royal family had ceased to be regarded with respect or fear, even in the few provinces that their arms could still defend.

This monarchy was finally overthrown by Ras Michael of Teegray, shortly after the visit of Bruce to Gondar; and that Ras was next attacked and defeated by the Gallas, under pretence of avenging the Emperor. The son of Ras Michael having been afterwards slain in battle by the Mahomedans from Edjo and Worrahaimano, in the general confusion that ensued, a young man of no note from the former province, named Gooksa, seized the province of Begemder, and received from the deposed but still recognized "Ahtiee," or Emperor, the title of Ras. Here the power of the Church was felt, and though by the aid of Mussulman sabres he had over-

thrown Christian forces, and felt himself strong enough to portion out the country amongst his followers, and to contemn the royal shadow at Gondar, he was obliged to profess the Christian faith, not daring to risk the holy war that would otherwise have been kindled by the priests.

He then became virtual ruler of Abyssinia, as far as subtlety and force could confirm his title; but in the north, Teegray acknowledged only its native princes, and Godjam, in the south, kept him occupied in constant wars with various fortune. From that time, nearly seventy years, this Galla dynasty has held Begemder, and if not acknowledged sovereigns, were most powerful pretenders. It is owing to this revolution, and the consequent number of claimants for power, none of whom have succeeded in establishing a permanent and hereditary authority, that relations with Abyssinia have been since so difficult and fruitless.

Ras Ali, the grandson of Gooksa, having received tribute and a professed allegiance from the other chiefs, including him of Teegray, became the sole Ras. Nevertheless, all men having arms in their hands and many leaders heading large armies, the whole period of his reign the Ras was in the saddle, and his palace was his tent; being engaged in pursuing those who fled into impregnable mountain strongholds or pathless wildernesses, or in striking down others who withstood his arms in open fight, during a period of twenty-two years. Before proceeding to a sketch of late events which have hurled the Ras from his throne, I will endeavour to give some outline of his career, the manner of government, and the administration of justice, since the fall of the Gondar monarchy.

Ras Ali has, during his reign, overcome three powerful cabals of the northern and southern chiefs combined. During the government of Ras Gooksa, the Ras Welda Selasee, in Teegray (to whom an embassy was sent by England), and Ras Gibree, in Semen, were independent. Oobeay, the grandson of Ras Gibree, slew Dejjaj Sabagardis, the successor of Ras Welda Selasee, who also contemplated a strict alliance with us; and after that victory, conquered Teegray, which province he has held in subjection for twenty years. Although Dejjaj Oobeay became, by this acquisition of territory, a formidable rival, after several severe struggles he was forced to recognize Ras Ali as his chief, to pay him tribute yearly, and to send a quota of troops as feudal service. All others being apparently vanquished, the Chief of Godjam, Dejjaj Birro, alone held out unconquered through the whole period of Ras Ali's power. After repeated victories over the troops sent against him, an overwhelming force, headed by the Ras in person, drove him for refuge to his mountain, where he remained shut up for five years. During this period was my mission, and while the Ras might thus be said to be, in one way or other, complete master of Abyssinia. But this mastery, however proud a position for himself, secured by a turbulent and licentious army, was necessarily factitious, and the numerous bands of Gallas, his relatives, brought by him to sustain his precarious power, with the difficulty of feeding the immense army he kept up, in no way added to the security of property and the tranquillity of the land. Indeed, he had many troubles even in his camp, for the great chiefs, though from fear (and yet chafing at the obligation) they rendered him feudal service, still asserted almost sovereign rights in their several provinces, and

many of them who claimed descent from the royalty of Gondar, or whose ancestors had held high offices under the empire, considered themselves with some reason his equals. Others, again, of inferior pretensions, plundered the country, or exacted contributions in proportion to their force. The Ras, could all his vassals be united, might have mustered at one time 50,000 men of all arms, and his rival, Oobeay, 30,000 ; yet many a petty adventurer, their equal in birth perhaps, with only 500 or 1,000 followers, trusting to the strength of his mountains or valleys and his local influence, continually braves these rulers ; and though, after much bloodshed, many of them have been reduced to obedience, enough are always under arms to render the roads unsafe without a military force, or the escort of a strong caravan of merchants. It may easily be conceived that each chief, in proportion to his importance, deals pretty much as he pleases with travellers or merchants on his own ground, and in these matters the Ras is too powerless, or too careless, to interfere, inasmuch as it is easy to provoke a rebellion amongst a soldiery that regard inaction as a penalty and war as a delight. Little vigour is shown in suppressing these outbreaks, the Ras generally caring little if his own supplies are not cut off, or his revenues seriously diminished. He generally makes terms with his rebellious vassals, preferring policy to force.

The feudal sovereignty of the Ras having been established by the sword, and depending at any time on the issue of a battle, in appointing a "Dejajmatch," or governor of a province, he is obliged to be attentive to the claims of the great families, who, from their hereditary influence, must be either rulers or rebels in their respective districts ; the doubtful alternative of destroying

them he was always too merciful to adopt. These chiefs follow him to war, and give him a portion of their revenues ; they bestow on their retainers, districts and villages as they please ; and the pay of each is the revenue he can extract from these allotments.

The Ras reserves for himself a number of provinces, to provide for his household officers and troops. The soldiers are paid an uncertain sum of money occasionally, and have a monthly allowance of corn. This corn is sometimes measured out from the Ras's granary ; but more often a half-plundering license to quarter themselves in the reserved provinces is given. This is not always patiently acquiesced in, and bloody struggles ensue, in which the peasantry sometimes succeed in expelling the soldiery ; the weakness of the Ras generally obliging him to overlook such an affair.

The petty household of a chief who has three or four villages, is an exact imitation, on a ludicrous scale, of that of one who musters at a word 5,000 horse. He has all officers, and no servants ; his "king's mouth," his major-domo, his grand butler, his chief of commissariat, his jester, his master of the horse, and so forth ; this, with an establishment of perhaps thirty persons, each system revolving round its sun or candle. Yet, as every military man who is courageous or well connected may hope with reason to reach the highest grade, they practise state without thinking themselves absurd. The Ras is, truly, only the most powerful of a number of competitors ; several of those who acknowledged him as feudal superior, maintaining their right to judge without appeal. It is one favourable trait in this long rivalry, that poison, or assassination, have rarely, if ever, been resorted to ; their warfare being open, often chivalrous.



The chiefs are generally so far just as the paramount need of feeding and conciliating their armies will permit ; and, of course, where their whims and personal interests are not concerned. But though the judgment may be just, the poor do not often profit by it. Almost all the subordinate governors being rapacious, justice must be sought at the fountain-head ; and then with the distance they have to travel, over the worst roads, the net-work of retainers and favourites about the great man, who render it difficult to obtain admission, and the local influence of the chief against whose decision they appeal—they seldom return home without, in some shape, repenting their success. Still it gives them pleasure to succeed ; nor there is any nation that so delights in litigation—a proof that, while under a badly organized military oligarchy, they are obliged to trust often to arms for their defence, they would yield easy obedience to the law when administered with vigour and regularity. It is not an uninteresting sight to witness the Ras's Court filled with suitors of all classes ; the multitude in attendance seated on the grass, no one excluded ; and the highest noble, the meanest peasant, standing, pleading on equal terms before his judges or himself, and using entire liberty of speech. But this well-intended impartiality is nullified by the manner of procuring testimony.

The first step in every cause is to call on both parties to find security. These securities must be persons whom the judge is certain of being able to seize if necessary. If the charge be serious they must be persons of property, and are liable both for the appearance of their principals, and for the sentence whatever that may be. This custom obtains both in civil and criminal law. In default of such security, each party is chained by the wrist ; an

additional expense, as the chains must be hired, and the jailor, that is, the person to whom he is chained, paid a sum fixed by law. This bail is the prop of Abyssinian society; no commercial or market transfer takes place without it. In this manner is insured the payment of debt or interest, and of the king's revenue. The Abyssinian judge or creditor cares nothing for the principal in a cause; the bail is seized, and in self-defence produces his man; and it is an honourable trait that the principal rarely absconds. A friend will thus become security in cases of murder, though rendering himself thereby liable to suffer death, or to pay the price of blood, to them a fortune.

After both parties have given security, the plaintiff only is allowed to produce his witnesses: the defendant can, when they are called by name, admit or reject their evidence; in almost every case great indulgence being shown in this respect. The plaintiff stating then that he can produce witnesses for his statement, demands a "travelling judge." This judge is furnished by the Ras, usually a common soldier of his guards, on rare occasions an officer. His duty is to collect testimony orally, wherever the question may have arisen, perhaps 300 miles distant. The parties travel with him, mostly on foot, chained, if they have not furnished bail, over this extent of ground, and on his return he reports from memory all the evidence he has collected by examination of the witnesses of the plaintiff; the defendant may cross-examine these witnesses. The report is generally faithful. The parties are then severally demanded if it be true, and if they assent, final judgment is given; if they differ, or the chief finds anything suspicious in the case, or if he wishes for more information thereon, they must all start

again, and are sometimes kept travelling for a year or more.

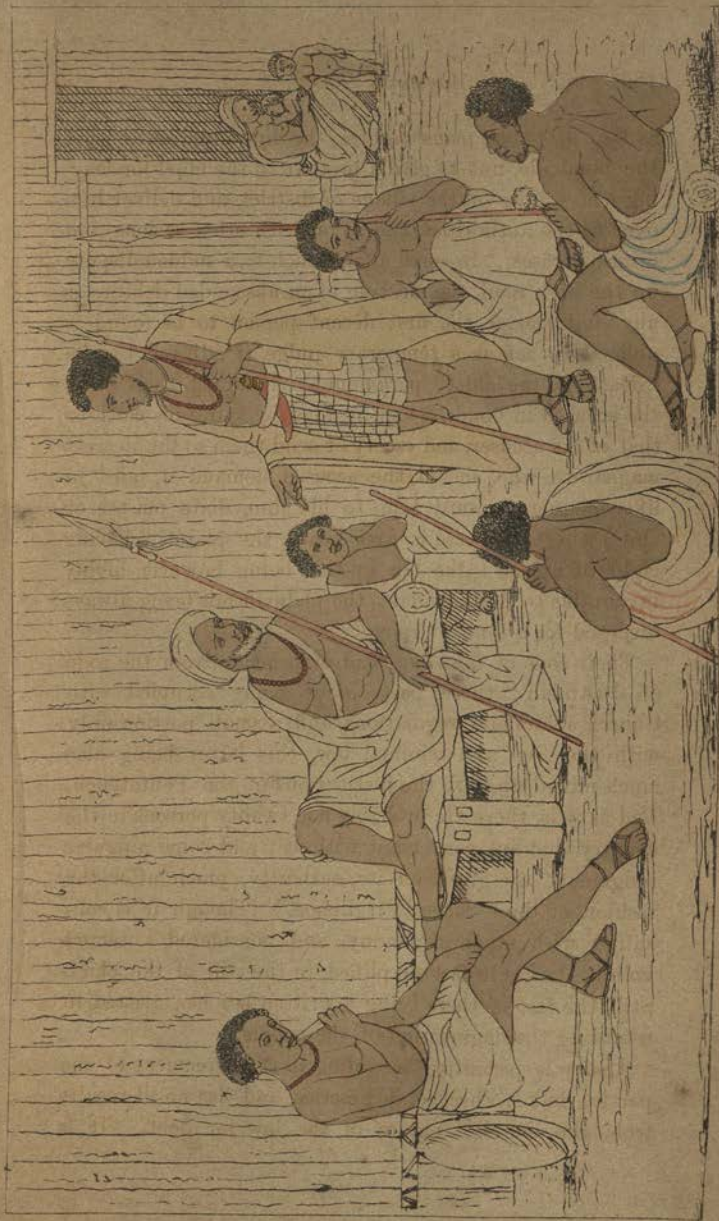
It is clear what advantage the rich have over the poor, by bribery or endurance. As for false witnesses it varies in different provinces ; in some scarcely known, in others proverbial. If the defendant can expose any flaw in his antagonist's argument or evidence, even if accidental, he triumphs at once. An Abyssinian suit is much more a trial of wordy skill than an elucidation of the truth, and the reason is obvious, from the system of "Daignanet" judgment in all tribunals save the highest. This is the sum paid by the losing party to the judge, whether military or civil, and large according to the importance of the case. This is occasionally a safeguard to the poor, inasmuch as it is the interest of the judge to decide against the one that can afford to pay, when other reasons, such as fear or bribery, do not outweigh this. The sum is arbitrary ; and the only check upon their rapacity is the fear that if too exacting, the country people will cease to dispute, or will decide all cases before elders or friends. Moreover the judge has certain perquisites, varying as usual in each province ; on each slip of the tongue, on each oath that is taken on the Gospel, nay, even should excitement cause a movement of the hand or a change of position during the pleadings ; besides this, his retainers gain by messages, by bribery, and many other ways : it is therefore obviously his interest that each case should endure as long as possible, even if he be disposed to give a just decision in the end.

There being no police, it may seem curious how any offender is brought to justice, but in ordinary cases this is easy, although a daring and decided criminal has generally little difficulty in escaping. In a strong case,

as that of public manslaughter, the bystanders will seize the homicide, not to give a pretext to the chief for levying heavy fines on the village or district, and deliver him over to the authorities, and so on with other serious and criminal cases. In small affairs, such as a sudden dispute on the high road, the meeting of an absconded debtor, or any civil matter, the first decent person to be found is obliged to act as a temporary judge, if adjured by the "death of the chief" paramount. He must then place the accused in bonds, which is done by tying his cloth to that of his accuser, and escort or send them to the nearest magistrate, who, should the accused demand it, must in like manner forward him to his immediate master or chief, where the case is first heard, the plaintiff having right of appeal: the law in this being however highly favourable to the defendant, the plaintiff not being always disposed for a long journey.

Their code of laws is a bad translation from the code of Justinian; three parts of it being occupied with Church affairs and regulations, and a small portion only with the civil and criminal law, this latter being also much mixed up with the institutions of the Pentateuch. Bad as it is, there are probably not twenty persons in the country that are conversant with it; and some singular judgments are given on its authority, much after the fashion of the "*Sortes Virgilianæ*." Though it is consulted with much ceremony, and considered a sacred volume, law is in fact simplified to the will of the chief. Still, the fact of there being a written law has assisted in retarding the degradation of the people.

Usury is permitted according to the agreement of the parties, but is checked in practice, and has no ill results from the merciful nature of the law for debt. It is



A COUNCIL OF ELDERS.



generally ruled that a debtor shall pay small sums according to his means, and he cannot be kept in durance when he has nothing. Affairs of this kind, however, are generally on so small a scale that they are settled by arbitration.

The institution of elders that I have alluded to is not perhaps conducive to discipline, but in the existing uncertainty of the law is well worthy of notice, and agreeable to witness. The decision of these elders cannot be reversed by any judge, as both parties solemnly agree that it shall be final; it costs them nothing, and such arbitration is seldom refused, even by the most testy, urged as it generally is in the most good-tempered manner. Their mediation can be employed in every case where blood has not been drawn. Should any of these men be by on the commencement of a dispute, they separate the angry, and after patient investigation give their opinion, and decide the amount of compensation. The decision is usually considered sufficient, and it is a point of honour for the triumphant party not to receive the fine awarded. The conclusion is that the disputants should demand pardon of each other, and accord a mutual forgiveness, which is generally cordial and hearty. This system would scarcely succeed amidst the complicated interests of civilized society, or with the enduring energy of European passions, but it is to me a redeeming trait in the Abyssinian character. It prevents crime and tumult more than their military law; it carries out the precepts of the Gospel; and I cannot believe that the nation practising it merits no better name than savage. Wife and husband, father and son, brother and brother are either reconciled in this way, or if that be found impossible, separated with amenity; and the custom

being bowed to by the highest equally with the lowest, the asperities caused by the inefficiency of the law are much softened. These peacemakers are not appointed by any Government, but by common consent; the influential and wealthy inhabitant, the good-tempered, the most moral, and particularly the aged, take the office on themselves. This custom, though universally accepted by the Abyssinians, Christian and Mahomedan, is of more weight in the Amhara country than in Teegray, owing to the greater good temper and good sense of the former people.

The office of a judge is rather to settle and profit by disputes brought before him than to punish offences against the law. In case of murder, for instance, unless the victim has some relative, who, acting as accuser, seizes the homicide himself, proves the crime, and is ready to slay him with his own hand, the culprit will be untouched—justice furnishing neither accuser nor executioner. The said relative may also compound the matter for money at his pleasure, the judge receiving a similar sum. Add to this the numerous means of escape by joining the first band of robbers, or any rebel chief, or taking sanctuary in the nearest church, and the insecurity to life is easily accounted for.

In the absence of police, should you seize a robber with your own hand, and in so doing inflict on him a fatal injury, however flagrant may have been his guilt, the relatives of the man, everywhere save in Godjam, will demand from justice the right to put you to death in cold blood, so rigidly is the Mosaic law of "blood for blood" interpreted, save when the rare good sense of some chief induces him to interpose an arbitrary veto.

Insufficient and embarrassing as are the Abyssinian



laws, it would be well if even these were always observed. No sooner has a chief turned his back on a distant expedition, than the whole population seizes the occasion for settling private grudges, whilst those who have no particular quarrel amuse themselves by indiscriminate robbery, or by making incursions against weaker barbarians by a republican levy. These disorders may cease on the return of the chief, but inquiry is seldom made, or punishment inflicted. Even in times of comparative tranquillity travellers are obliged to be well armed to insure their safety ; and in periods of disturbance the roads are in a state of blockade, save to large parties of armed merchants.

Strangers of any nation or creed, are freely permitted to settle in Abyssinia, and to purchase land or houses. They have the same rights as other inhabitants, being also subject to the same liabilities. The Abyssinians in general and the chiefs are more jealous of those who pass through their country than of those who remain in it ; but if Europeans were to settle in any numbers it is probable that fear would induce suspicion. It is this theoretical equality of all foreigners in the eye of the law, as well as of Abyssinians of all grades with each other, that renders it difficult for the mass to understand the immunities of a consul or other officer ; though the chiefs comprehend it when they choose to lay aside their affectation of superiority. In most cases there is nothing that delights the Abyssinian more than to assert his equality with the white stranger, and to bring him before a court of justice ; the latter being, however, sure of a lenient, often of a most favourable, construction.

The great chiefs inflict the punishment of death but rarely, except in cases of repeated opposition or rebellion.

More frequently the hands and feet are lopped off, or eyes, tongues, or ears mutilated. Dangerous political opponents are chained often for life in a mountain fort ; but chains are in no case considered as a punishment, but merely as used for security. The most frequent penalty used indiscriminately towards all ranks and classes of the community is flogging ; this is performed with the ox-whip, and is very severe, but no disgrace is attached to its infliction.

#### THE CONFLICT FOR SUPREMACY.

THE wasteful government of a military oligarchy, the incessant struggles for mastery, and uncertain tenure of all power, the careless sensuality of the chiefs, the wretched administration of the law, the utter decay of learning, and the selfish corruption of the priesthood, have ruined a nation that has suffered little from national convulsions or foreign conquest. Individuals are found who feel that their nationality is lost, that internal feuds are fast dissolving them into petty tribes as savage as their neighbours, and that their chiefs still claiming the high sounding title of kings, are no better than powerful robbers. But it is to be feared that this decay cannot be checked by any efforts of their own, and that the boast of the Mahomedan, who points at the few remaining Christian provinces for his, will be verified.

Dejaj Oobeay, governing Teegray and all the provinces to the north of Gondar, in independent state, save a yearly tribute to the Ras Ali, and the latter being, apparently, lord paramount of Abyssinia, having blockaded his last enemy in a mountain stronghold in the south of Godjam during five years, and reduced him to extremity,

matters appeared to have some chance of a pacific settlement under one ruler, when an unforeseen and sudden storm destroyed these hopes, and plunged the land once more into a confusion as great as had followed the dethronement of the royal dynasty.

A chief named Kasai, having great family influence in the provinces bordering on Sennaär, forced his way by the sword into some notoriety, and married the daughter of the Ras Ali. Of a proud and impatient spirit, after alternate rebellion and submission, and having defeated in numerous battles all the troops that were sent against him, he at last threw off all mask, and openly defied the Ras Ali and his adherents. Having in some measure disciplined his troops, for the first time in this country, by the assistance of a few Turkish soldiers, he suddenly appeared, after extraordinary forced marches, in the neighbourhood of the Ras's blockading camp, and fairly challenged him to the combat on the plains of Godjam, favourable as they are for cavalry, the Ras's pride.

A pitched battle took place, in which the Ras was completely defeated, and barely escaped, hotly pursued by his adversary. In a second battle he was entirely driven from the territories conquered by Gooksa, and forced to take refuge in his natal province of Edjo. Dejj Oobeay, in the north, had not even gained time to collect his troops when Kasai threatened him with his whole force, and obliged him to fly to his hill-fort in great fear. The victory, however, obtained by Kasai over the Ras had set free the daring chieftain Birro, son of Gosho, from his mountain; and the latter, to add to the complication, enemy as he was of the Ras, had a still more deadly feud with Kasai, on account of his father's death, slain in battle by the latter.

Kasai, therefore, patched up a temporary peace with Oobeay, and hurried to meet this formidable rival, since when all parties have feared to enter into decisive conflict. A chief of the Teegray dynasty, Balgud Areya, had taken advantage of the confusion to raise the standard of revolt against Oobeay, but the return of this latter has, for the present, repressed any serious disturbances. Affairs now stand in a singular position : the Ras Ali has returned to Devra Tabor, but without any power beyond the range of his foragers. Dejaj Kasai and Dejaj Birro threaten each other in Godjam, with large armies, not having yet dared the encounter ; and Dejaj Oobeay has reoccupied Teegray, after having seen by how feeble a grasp he holds his power. Numerous other chiefs have all their faculties on the alert to seize any chance that may offer ; and it is difficult to say in whose hands the reins of power may finally remain. In the mean time it is certain that the roads are unsafe, commerce checked, justice paralyzed, and diplomatic relations impossible ; and it would be idle to hope that the anarchy consequent on these events will soon cease.

Some notice of the character of the four principal competitors in the present struggle may be useful hereafter.

Ras Ali is a humane man, very vain, too indulgent, but intelligent, agreeable in his manners, brave, averse to change, and of a very whimsical character, affecting, and, I believe, feeling great indifference to most things, including his own power. He is very difficult to lead, as he has no prominent passion to work upon, and will admire no idea that does not appear, at least, to emanate from him himself. He does not care for flattery, is not ambitious, has no pride, is indifferent to reputation, and

can by no means be excited to anger. Good-natured selfishness is his principal characteristic.

Dejaj Oobeay is acute, inflated with pride, far-seeing, and ambitious; disagreeable and overbearing in manner, but straightforward and decided in business. He is cowardly in person, but morally brave, very observing, grave; cruel when he deems it necessary, but not wantonly, and liberal. He is much more feared than the Ras; but being proud and susceptible, is far more easy to deal with, some caution being, however, necessary, as, when roused, he is capable of any extremities.

Dejaj Birro, of Godjam, is the most remarkable, perhaps, of these chiefs; as proud as Lucifer, of surprising talent and penetration, daring, patient, resolute; he has a wonderful command over men's minds for love or fear; he is cruel, reserved in public matters, yet personally gay, noble in appearance, profusely generous and fond of splendour. His untaught intellect may vie with a high European standard; and had his lot been cast in Teegray, where he might have had communication with us, he would, perhaps, have been the regenerator of his country. With but a small province he has preserved his independence; but there his efforts must end, and all his abilities be consumed in ceaseless wars and harassing intrigues, both the delight of his fertile and brilliant mind. His father, Goshō, who lately fell in battle, had well earned the title of "Father of the white men," by his conduct towards the few that enjoyed his society, or were obliged to his unbounded kindness.

Dejaj Kasai is vigorous and subtle, daring to a fault, and, perhaps, more disposed to innovation than any. He has abolished in his army the practice of mutilating dead bodies; taught his soldiers some discipline, makes war

without baggage or camp-followers, and encourages foreigners. Though proud, his manner is all humility ; he is severe, liberal, and usually just, but breaks out now and then into unaccountable acts of violence, which indicate a somewhat unsettled temperament ; he commences enterprises with more vigour than he pursues them, and is much under the influence of prophets and fortune-tellers.

Should any one of these four chiefs attain supreme power, I do not think that he will have the courage to attempt that radical change in their feudal system which must precede all reform, all hopes of order, or of useful foreign alliance. Upon the whole, Dejaz Kasai would be, I think, the most desirable.

The slave-trade is carried on by the Mahomedans alone. Christians buy for domestic purposes, but are not permitted to sell, and the penalty of death by hanging is affixed to the act of selling a Christian child. Slaves, so-called in Abyssinia, are of two races, Gallas and Shankallas. In Egypt and Turkey the Abyssinians themselves are ranked in the same category. The Gallas are the most valued,—the boys for their intelligence, and the girls for their beauty. The Gallas are sold by their despotic kings in the territories of Enarea and Djimma ; but amongst the Republican Gallas no trade is carried on, save when poverty accepts the gold of the merchant ; and even this is unheard of amongst the proud Gallas of Azobo, though so near to Massowah. Female prisoners taken in their constant raids are also sold, the male being never spared on those occasions. The Shankallas are all taken by predatory expeditions ; and on such occasions

the soldiers are sometimes, though rarely, permitted by an Abyssinian chief to sell their booty.

The Gallas seem to adopt the religion of Islam with a fierce avidity, and look back to their own country with an affected contempt, too proud to acknowledge their love for the beautiful land they may no more hope to see. It is singular to see how readily they agree with those who have torn them from their homes, and how they hate the Christian who has never harmed them.

The Shankallas are generally indifferent as to their creed, and very susceptible of kind treatment. They look back with longing to their own land, and often women, as well as men, effect the most hazardous escapes. They seldom become fanatical in the new faith imposed on them. All slaves that are brought to the Red Sea are usually well treated on the road, and the only cruelty practised is when a brutal master, for love of gain, prepares some unfortunate boys to guard the Turkish seraglios, tripling their market value. Those who follow the course of the White Nile, or by Gondar to Khartoum, through countries where water is scarce, undergo great hardships, and perish in numbers. The Gallas being purchased for a few beads in the interior, this traffic is very lucrative.

The Abyssinians are very sensitive to the suspicion of being born of, or descended from, what they are pleased to call a slave, having a shrewd idea of the absurdity of such an appellation from themselves; and since the conquest of Begemder by Ras Gooksa, the Gallas of Edjo and Worrahaimano have been counted as citizens; these, moreover, having fully adopted the Mahomedan faith, and performing duly their pilgrimage to Mecca, are excepted by the dealers.

These latter, however, never omit an opportunity of stealing infants of any creed; and near the coast a regular trade is in this manner carried on by means of the Shihos, who declare that it is lawful for them thus to supply the market, the custom having been bequeathed to them by their fathers.

A firman by the Sultan Abd-el-Medjid was lately publicly read in Massowah, for form's sake, whereby the sale or reception of stolen Christian children was prohibited; as a matter of course, the Consuls were not informed of this, and equally of course, no steps being taken to enforce the order, it was disobeyed the same day, and totally forgotten in three.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE GALLA TRIBES.

THE most important of the other races that occupy this portion of Africa is the Galla. These Gallas have, at different periods, for some hundred years past, seized upon the most fertile provinces of the ancient Empire of Abyssinia, and have spread themselves from the Red Sea and the Blue Nile to the equator. They are divided into numerous tribes, having the one common characteristic of being undaunted horsemen. So strong is this propensity, that the tribe of Azobo Gallas, who occupy a territory between Teegray and the Red Sea, purchase horses from the colder provinces of Worrahaimano and Wallo, and mount 10,000 horse, in a district unfavourable to the existence of the animal, and where it is never bred.

Could these tribes, 50 or 60 in number, unite, nothing could withstand their numbers and impetuosity, and they would trample under foot, like a Scythian host, all the land as far as Khartoom ; but, occupied as they are by intestine wars, there is little probability of such a torrent, unless a chief should arise amongst them like Mohamed Gryne, that famous warrior, who led the armies of Adaiel, renowned for strength and swiftness of foot, even to the vicinity of Gondar ; and would, 350 years since, have extinguished the Abyssinian name and

faith, but for the timely succour of Portuguese skill and valour.

Amongst the Republican Gallas, taxes are unknown ; and each man is lord of his hut and the plot of ground before it, inherited from his ancestors ; he acknowledges no law ; owes no military service ; and in a general assembly, held in the open air, each one, with his horse's bridle on his arm, and scouts watching for the enemy, may freely offer his opinion. Fighting is his delight and daily occupation ; and scenes recounted of the Trojan war may be seen daily enacted, apart the luxuries of gold and chariots, amongst a race not deficient in chivalric courage. Every man who can afford to buy a horse is a warrior ; and each warrior armed, sallies forth daily to protect his crops or his castle. When the cry resounds that the enemy is in sight, those who have lingered at home fling themselves into the saddle, and gallop to the contest, with more or less speed, according to their love of honour or their fear of death.

The Gallas are noble in appearance, more grave and thoughtful than the Abyssinian, eloquent, strong, and generally handsome ; with the pride of a nation of warriors, but very courteous and amenable to reason. Their women are not concealed, and mix freely in society ; they are often beautiful—almost always graceful ; liberal of their smiles and favours to the brave, and scorning the coward. I have heard that those tribes to the southward are more chaste than these Republicans, but I much doubt if they anywhere attach a particular value to the exercise of their virtue. Each Galla takes as many wives as he can afford to keep. Their features, when unmixed with other races, are European. They have no religion, but, without being conscious of it,

retain some forms of Christianity, as fasting once in the year, observing the feast of the Cross and other festival. They perform also some rude pagan rites, and have a superstitious veneration for certain large trees, to which they sacrifice animals. One word serves for God and sky ; and while they believe that a Supreme Being created them and the world, and orders everything according to his will, they have not the least idea of the immortality of the soul, nor any credence of a future state. In the monarchical provinces the faith of Mahomed has made much progress, and the Roman Catholics are making a vigorous effort to plant the religion of Christ amongst those other Gallas who are on their road to Kaffa. As these races have, as yet, no priesthood to blind them, and no strong prejudices to render them deaf, the chances of success are considerable.

The southernmost provinces of the Galla, Enarea, Djimma, Goma, and others, are governed despotically by their several chiefs, and supply, by arbitrary coercion, slaves for the Turkish market. The tribes bordering on Abyssinia are nearly all republics of the purest description, and do not engage in that traffic. South of those Gallas are the kingdoms of Djindjero, Kaffa, and Worata, each having a different language. The people of Djindjero are uncouth in feature, and rude in manners. This province was probably the boundary of the Portuguese trade from Melinda ; and the report is prevalent amongst the Gallas that cannibalism is still practised in those parts, as it certainly is by their neighbours on the confines of Zanzibar. They are said to be very numerous and brave ; they have something of the Malay feature ; they are Pagans, but little is known of their habits or ceremonies.

Kaffa is a wealthy and fertile kingdom ; the inhabitants are proud and handsome ; the women often fair and very beautiful—even in slavery they are remarkable for independence and hauteur. They still retain a recollection and traces of the Christian faith, and still venerate the ruins of their churches. The Gallas, with whom they are incessantly at war, call them, in derision, "Sydama," originally signifying Christian ; and it appears that, being a numerous and warlike tribe, when abandoned by the receding limits of Abyssinian dominion, they must have been strong enough to repel the tide of Galla invasion. It is said, moreover, that they ardently desire priests and instruction in their ancient faith—forgotten, save by name. It is to this point that a special mission of the Church of Rome is now directed ; and they hope, with some reason, to establish a hierarchy in that distant land. So little intelligence can be obtained of any tribes to the southward of these, that I am tempted to believe that towards the equator there must be large tracts of uninhabited mountains and impenetrable forests.

The province of Worata is south-west from Enarea, and extends, I believe, to the White Nile, about the point where the expeditions of Mohamed Ali stopped, and where there is a large mart for traders from Sennaar. This route is, however, practicable only for the Arabs of Sennaar, who are fever-proof, and are received as brethren by the fierce nations that line the banks of the great river.

The despots of Enarea, &c., govern their tribes with absolute sway ; life and death are in their will ; and when in want of money they cut off the heads of some of their poorer subjects, and sell the other members of the family into slavery. The King of Enarea monopolizes the breed

of the civet-cat, possessing about 3,000, and is thus very wealthy. Feasting, hunting, and war are the occupations of the King and his nobles ; while the rich crops, produced with little labour, and the abundance of pasture, combine to cheapen all the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life, and diffuse an air of general prosperity throughout the country.

The Gallas of a district named Follo pay a heavy tax to the King of Djimma, for permission to purchase boys, and prepare them as eunuchs for the Turkish harems ; the Gallas in general looking on this practice with disgust, and being seldom guilty of it, though very lucrative.

It is in the immense forests on the banks of the Deedayasa—a larger tributary of the White Nile than even the Abbai—that the finest ivory is found. Herds of buffaloes abound ; and there the black panther, the fiercest and most beautiful of animals, is slain for his skin, highly prized, even where most abundant.

Smiling as is the climate and fertile the soil of Christian Abyssinia, nature has been still more bountiful to the Gallas. Green meadows, rich cultivation, troops of horses, and brood mares, lofty trees at intervals with magnificent spreading foliage, gentle undulations of hill and dale, a serene air unpolluted save in Enarea by large towns, cleanly and picturesque huts studding the whole landscape, and a salubrity proved by the aspect of both sexes—such are some of the features of these charming lands ; and many a scene of pastoral beauty, of bright streams and lowing herds, is daily defaced by the trampling hoofs of charging horse, and the bloodshed of combats where no quarter is given, and no result obtained.

The southern bank of the immense valley of the

Nile is in the hands of the Gallas, and divided throughout its length into many districts; the difficult passes and steep precipices present an inverse resemblance to a strong mountain country. The inhabitants are usually at peace with the Abyssinian lowlanders immediately opposite, and at feud with all others. The Christianity and paganism of the two races are becoming gradually blended; their languages are spoken indifferently; markets are weekly frequented on either side of the river; intermarriage is common, and these relatives and neighbours alternately hold revelry and meet in mortal fight. Through the bottom of this valley (an isolated kingdom) the Abbai forces a tumultuous passage, receiving many tributaries from either side, till it swells with its flood the White Nile at Khartoom. The bed of the river is from 2,000 to 3,000 feet below the level of Godjam; the soil is singularly productive, though the ravages of fever balance the advantage.

All the Gallas speak the same language with slight variations; it is unwritten, and bears no resemblance to Ethiopic, Amharic, or any tongue with which I am acquainted; it is soft and pleasing in sound, but limited.

Following the course of the Abbai northwards from the Enarea caravan road, which passes through the province of Gooderoo opposite to Basso on the Abyssinian side, are the provinces of Horro, Amoa, and Shinna.

The Amoro Gallas are the most distinguished of all this race for courage, stature, ferocity, and hatred of the Christian name. The commerce with this district is carried on entirely by Mahometans; though nearly all the principal families of Damot and Agowmiddur (where is the source of the Blue Nile discovered by Bruce),

acknowledge their origin from this tribe, and are now under Christian rule.

The Shinna Gallas do not come in contact with the Abyssinians, the Abbai taking there a westerly slope ; a large extent of plain intervenes, occupied by negro races called Shankalla, and the Galla tribes cease in that direction. Further along the course of the Blue Nile mingled with these Shankalla are found the Shageyas, who submitted, after many a bloody struggle, to the discipline of the Egyptian armies ; and the unconquered Shiloks, who still defy them, and who, if description be true, must be one of the handsomest and finest of African races. I may notice here that there is a rumour amongst the Gallas and others that a white race exists somewhere in the interior ; I do not think it at all unlikely that the report has some foundation.

Passing from Gooderoo eastward, and then northward along the banks of the Abbai, the provinces of Kootai, Jarso, and some others, are still republicans ; and the horsemen of Jarso, calculated at 20,000, have set at defiance every effort of the Abyssinian rulers to impose even a slight tribute. The King of Shoa is, however, making large strides in that direction from the eastward, and is much feared by the Gallas in general. On the eastern boundary of Godjam, the Abbai still dividing them, is the vast territory of the Borona Gallas ; their Chief, Ali Wedajoo, has established nearly a despotic authority, and with his numerous cavalry keeps at bay the King of Shoa, and meets on equal terms the armies of Northern Abyssinia. The Boronas are pagans, and call themselves Christians, though in what their faith consists it would be difficult to say. Their northern frontier is occupied by the most formidable of the Galla

rases, the Wallo. Here brown heaths and chilling fogs mark an elevation of 12,000 to 13,000 feet above the sea-level, and the hardy mountaineers, who have engrafted the faith of Islam and the fanaticism of its followers on their native ferocity, wage pitiless war with the King of Shoa and the Borona Gallas, the Abyssinians of the province of Amhara, and the Gallas of Worrahaimano and Worrakallo, their northern boundary. They have placed themselves under five or six chiefs, distinguished for valour or sagacity, and in case of a formidable invasion sometimes unite their forces.

In general, however, they are always fighting with each other; or, as one told me, it is their daily meal. There is still much freedom in their institutions, and their chiefs dare not attempt any arbitrary act. Here, as amongst the Arabs, are found men who have sworn never to fly, and who often suffer a cruel death at the hands of the Shoa Christians, as merciless as they are cowardly, when taken on the field. Though blood-thirsty, they are honest and hospitable in the extreme, but should never be tempted by the sight of fire-arms, for which they have an uncontrollable desire.

The gallas of Worrahaimano, Worrakallo, and Edjo are all Mahomedans, though some Abyssinian Christians still retain their lands here, as in the monastery in an island of the Lake Haik, in the province of Tehuladerree. The present Ras of Begemder having sprung from these tribes, they have become in a measure incorporated with the Abyssinians, and all speak the Amharic language. Their singular tournaments I have elsewhere mentioned. North-east of these follow the Areya gallas; and northernmost of all the gallas of Azobo, betwixt the provinces of Inderta and Wojjerat, in Teegray, and the



Red Sea, from which tribe they are only divided by the tribe called Danakil. These gallas are constantly at feud with the inhabitants of Teegray, whose chiefs have in vain attempted to subdue them. They are republican, and have a similar character to all the others, though almost isolated ; they have not yet become Mahomedan.

From the Shinna gallas, west of Damot, to the gallas of Azobo, east of Teegray, this race sweeps round Abyssinia in an unbroken semicircle, dividing it from its cognate kingdom of Shoa, and waging with its inhabitants at all points continual war. Had it not been for the introduction of fire-arms by the Portuguese, the whole country would long since have been overrun by them ; and as they are now beginning to appreciate and adopt those weapons, it is not improbable that they will soon succeed in overwhelming the Abyssinians—a conquest necessarily followed by the introduction of the Mahomedan faith. The chiefs of Worrahaimano were at one time in correspondence with Mahomed Ali to this end, and now repeat the assurances of the governor of Masowah, that troops will soon be sent by his master the Sultan to take possession of Abyssinia, his lawful inheritance.

I have stated that a line of country some seventy miles in breadth, or more, separates Christian Abyssinia from the Red Sea, being occupied by more barbarous tribes, and reaching from the gallas of Azobo to the dominions of Abbas Pasha, north-westerly from Masowah.

The northerly neighbours of the Azobo are the Taltals, lying east of the district of Agamee, in Teegray ; they are nomades, as all that I have now to describe, and call themselves Mahometans, though their creed is far from

orthodox, and I do not suppose that there is one that can read the Koran. It is certain that, by their unceasing feud with the Abyssinians, they have acquired a strong hatred of Christians. They eat little or no corn, and never sow, living on milk and the flesh of goats and oxen. These are generally thriving, as they have the benefit of two rainy seasons, and luxuriant pasturage nearly all the year round. The rains of Abyssinia extend to within fifty or sixty miles of the sea in the months of June to September, and the rains of the coast are variable till the end of March, from October or November. They are unacquainted with horses, and are remarkable for bodily vigour and speed of foot. In this province are the plains of salt and sulphur that supply all Abyssinia; the road from thence to the sea is nearly a level plain, and the direct port is Amphylla. This was the road that Mr. Salt proposed to open. It was traversed at great risk by an Englishman, Mr. Coffin, who still lives in Abyssinia, and by him alone. The English Government had, I believe, consented, when the death of the Ras Welda Selasee, and subsequently that of Mr. Salt, prevented the further progress of the affair, which was afterwards lost sight of. Mr. Coffin performed this journey, I believe, forty-five years ago.

The Taltals are now treacherous and bloodthirsty even towards each other; to strangers implacable and dangerous. They are hospitable from pride and custom, but a hospitable reception by no means insures the life of the guest; and when a Taltal enters the hut of his relative, he lays his sabre across his knee, and places his spear and shield ready for his grasp. I attribute something of this fierce character to the heating nature of their diet, and it may be generally observed amongst the tribes who eat no

bread. They are impatient of all yoke, and live independent of all law, with here and there a man possessing, like the ancient patriarchs, some influence from age and wealth in flocks and cattle, or in youth from sagacity and daring.

These people scarcely know the value of money, and the Turkish Government at Massowah, of course, makes no attempt to encourage any communication. They are, therefore, totally ignorant of the world without, save the nearest districts of Abyssinia, but under better management would, no doubt, crowd to the market of Massowah, which is now often unfurnished with the necessaries of life; and their province would soon be as safe to visit as any other part of the country. Their sulphur should form a valuable article for trade, and their territory might be highly cultivated, and would afford much produce for export, besides bread for the inhabitants.

Many years since a small body of Turkish troops were defeated and destroyed to a man by the Taltals of Kherto, having ventured to advance inland from the port of Amphylla. The attempt has never been renewed, and they have no garrison at that place.

The Danakil, who extend along the sea coast for a hundred miles or more, speak a dialect of the Taltal language, and have much the same character, being only poorer, less vigorous, and less courageous than their neighbours of the mountain. Not many years since, both these tribes purchased stolen Christian boys, and sacrificed them in some superstitious rite; and although one of their chiefs assured me that this practice was discontinued, I doubt him much.

Camels are bred in great numbers here, and the cattle and sheep of the Danakil are also numerous and in good condition, but never appear at the Massowah market,

though within six hours' sail by a dull craft. Ostriches abound, but are little hunted, fire-arms being totally unknown. Elephants are plentiful, but are only killed by a few Abyssinian hunters, and in small numbers. The wild asses are numerous on the coast, and the zebra is said to exist in the interior, as well as the rhinoceros. The wild ass is sometimes taken in pits, his flesh being highly prized by the Arabs of Yemen as medicinal food.

The salt lake of Boorree, near the coast, formed of a filtered deposit at a lower level than the sea, furnishes that article for consumption to the Shihos and some provinces of Teegray, but it is not used as a circulating medium.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SHIHOS AND BEDOUINS.

TO the northward of the Taltals is the powerful tribe of Shiho, now divided into two branches, called Assaworta and Torā. Through their territories pass all the roads now in use from Abyssinia to Massowah. Their language is said to bear a close affinity to that of the Adeial, and there are in it many words of Galla origin. Partly through fear of their Abyssinian neighbours, and partly from their love of gain, acquired by being on the direct road for commerce, they suffer merchants or travellers to pass in safety, furnishing guides for a payment proportioned to the wealth of the caravan. The road for fifty miles is in their undisputed possession, and includes lofty mountains and narrow defiles, that only require fire-arms to render them formidable; but though these Shihos are constantly at Massowah, and see the Abyssinian merchants purchase those matchlocks whose force they have often felt, but one instance is, I think, known of one of this tribe possessing a musket.

The mortal fear of innovation afflicts them like all of Abyssinian race, so they invest their money in cows, living miserably that many of these may be slaughtered at their death, and devoured by a weeping assembly upon their tombs. They are scrupulous Mussulmans, not even touching any intoxicating liquor. In keeping faith they

are more scrupulous than the Taltals, and a guide who requires and gives the oath of good companionship may be perfectly relied on. Though thieves by profession elsewhere, they seldom steal in their own district; but they are very pestilent beggars, their begging not being confined to those in distress, but practised by the whole tribe, the most wealthy being the most pertinacious, saying it is a right they have inherited from their fathers. They are annoying, but not dangerous, except if any one attempts to pass through their country without a guide, when he will be lucky if he escapes with the loss of his property.

The name of merchant is a scandalous reproach amongst them, and till very lately, agriculturist also. For the last few years they have been attempting to cultivate barley with success; a wonderful step, still limited to a few individuals. They always eat bread when they can obtain it, exchanging the salt of Boorree for the maize of Kalagoozai; with which Province of Teegray they are usually on very good terms. This is a matter of mutual interest, as the cattle of the two districts thus enjoy the benefit of the double rainy season. They are constantly at war with the Taltals with various success. They also live in a republican fashion, with certain elders elected by themselves to settle disputes, and as the pay of the guides goes into a common purse, these elders receive a large portion. Owing to the influence that riches must always secure, these elections generally fall on the same families, and the office has thus become almost hereditary; but they are obliged to be very careful in exerting their power, and the rest of the tribe lose no occasion of wordily asserting their equality, nor allow any interference in their private affairs.

The Shihos are kidnappers by profession, and avow it openly. Hundreds of Christian children are stolen by them every year ; when they can, they sell them secretly at Massowah, if not, they are disposed of at Zeyla, from whence they are sent to Amphylla, and smuggled across to Yemen, if not purchased by the Taltals. Sometimes they are kept until they forget their origin and religion, or become too resigned to demand any change, and are then sold at Massowah as Gallas. These tribes still have a respect for the Naibs of Arkeeko, who kept them in some order till their own power was destroyed by the Turks, who have substituted nothing in its place. Zeyla is a large village about three hours' journey inland from the ancient seaport of Adoolis, a city probably founded by one of the Ptolemies, opposite the island of Dissee, purchased by Lord Valentia. The ruins of Adoolis are visible. The proper pronunciation of Zeyla may be written thus in German, "Zühla." Its inhabitants pay a small sum occasionally to the Turks—perhaps a hundred dollars, when threatened,—and are then left to smuggle and govern themselves as they please. The Shihos have no camels, and are not so rich as the Taltals, being also less fierce and intractable.

#### THE BEDOUINS.

ON the plains betwixt the Shihos and the sea are the Bedouins ; their name is somewhat used as a term of contempt, as though one should say the "wanderers" or "miserables." These tribes, though unwarlike, are numerous ; but as all their many enemies are superior to them in force, and as they have no strongholds for retreat in their level country, resignation or flight are

their first and last resource under all difficulties. These, like the flying-fish, are preyed on by all. Paying a small revenue to the Turkish Pasha, who, after extorting what he can from their poverty, does not pretend to protect them, plundered or slain by the Abyssinian chiefs whenever leisure or the prospect of booty invites them, and frequently beholding their flocks and herds harried by the Shihos, or the peasants of Hamazayn, they have little repose and no profit. Their days are few and evil, being passed in poverty, degradation, and toil; and when old they are sent by their younger relatives to guard the goats or camels, until death finds them at the task. To these evils they oppose a patient stupidity worthy of their own camels and the fatalism of their creed; they have, moreover, by nature so gay a temperament, that dance and song are for ever resounding through their villages; they are not ashamed to work, and are far more useful than all their conceited neighbours.

This race is the only one in these parts willing to submit to any government, and demanding only protection and tranquillity; acknowledging at once Turk, Naib, or Abyssinian, king or kaiser, as they may offer; they not unfrequently add a sigh in wishing for the mild equity of the English, having, in spite of Turkish jealousy, heard fabulous tales of the splendour of Aden under our rule.

With the exception of some villages on the coast, that serve as a rendezvous for the small traders who supply the island of Massowah with provisions, and whose inhabitants supply by their camels wood, grass, and other necessaries, they are in general a wandering race, camping wherever pasturage is to be found, and stretching



as far as Hamazayn when permitted. The constant exactions of the Turks, if they have impoverished, have at least rendered them mild; and I scarcely think that, had they as much courage and independence as the adjacent tribes, they would be much better; as it is, they are inoffensive and invaluable as a labouring class.

The language of the Bedouins, as of the natives of Massowah, is a corruption from the ancient Geez, with a large infusion of Arabic. Infanticide is common among them, and spoken of with indifference. The Turkish Paşa, of course, does not interfere, as his revenues are not affected. The practice is confined, I believe, to their illegitimate children.

Passing on to the northward from the Shios and Bedouins, we arrive at the last relics of the ancient sway of Abyssinia; shattered and separated from that realm and from each other, the tribes of Memsä, Senhäit, Hallal, Mäira (a corruption from Mary or Mariam), the Häbäb and their subdivisions. All these tribes are shepherds within their own limits, eat not bread, do not cultivate the ground except in Senhäit, are all robbers beyond their own district, and of course are constantly at war with each other.

They are far more wealthy than the Bedouins, possessing numerous camels, herds, and flocks that whiten all the ground. The soil, generally adapted for the richest produce, is left barren from the insecure tenure of all property, and the fact that Senhäit is almost yearly plundered from the attraction of its harvests, is not calculated to stimulate the rest to husbandry. These tribes not having felt directly the pressure or blessing of a Mahomedan government, and being abandoned and regarded as savages, fit only to be despoiled by their

brethren in Abyssinia, their religion partakes of the indefinite character of their position ; their language is, however, perhaps the purest dialect of the Geez now spoken, not excepting the Teegray. They call themselves almost indifferently Christians or Mahomedans, have no scruples regarding their butcher, do not fast with either party, and a Christian may be found bearing the name of Ali, a reputed Mussulman that of George or Paul. A half-ruined church still appears here and there, seeming singularly out of place, but no priest capable of reading, or who knows anything of the faith he professes. In some districts, as Māira, the Koran having slightly the ascendant, Sheiks and Fokeras predominate ; and doubtless the latter will win the day, as the Abyssinian armies regularly ravage and slay their weaker brethren, who are consequently beginning to hate the name of Christianity, which they only see accompanied by fire and sword.

Of all these tribes the three families of Hābāb are the most powerful and warlike ; their territory extends all along the coast, from the confines of the Bedouins, about eighty or ninety miles north of Massowah, to Aggeek, which is the boundary between the Sultan and the Pasha of Egypt. The breadth of this province, from the coast to the river Ansubba, is about sixty to eighty miles, and embraces a great variety of climate and elevation. The tribes of Hallal and Māira occupy a bold range of mountains that stretches out to the northward like a spur from Hamazayn between the deep valleys of Ansubba and Barka. Memsā, Biddayl, and other small districts are nearer to Abyssinia, and are remorselessly plundered by all parties.

The province of Billayn, on the western bank of the Ansubba, comprises the districts of Mogos, Senhāit,

Mugari, Beejook, Halhal, and others ; its inhabitants speak the language of the Agows of Lasta ; but no tradition is preserved respecting the period or the manner of their separation from the present tribe.

This province may be considered as the frontier of modern Abyssinia in this direction ; but the race of the Beni Ameer, that occupies all the low countries and the whole length of the torrent Barka, is also undeniably of Teegray origin, though called Arab by the Egyptian governors of Taka.

The Beni Ameerers do not know a word of Arabic, but speak a dialect of the Geez. Having no mountains to retire to, and being thus exposed to all attacks, they have adopted the Mussulman creed, and now pay tribute to Egypt. They still, however, think themselves entitled to the privilege of private war, and make expeditions against the Christians of Billayn.

Halhal, the northernmost district of Billayn, has been on several occasions ravaged by the Egyptian troops, the villages destroyed, and the women and children sold into slavery ; unassisted by their natural ruler, the chief of Teegray, and having no refuge, it is now five years since they declared themselves Mahomedans. The divisions of Mogos, Senhät, Beejook, and all the others nearer Hamazayn, still hold out after having been twice plundered : the details of the last expedition have been furnished in my despatches.

They are still resolute to retain the religion of their fathers ; and with our assistance the boundary of Mussulman invasion may at least be fixed here.

On the eastern bank of the Ansubba, opposite to Mäira, the district called Aseguddee Bukla is now possessed by the Hābābs. This was anciently the seat

of an Abyssinian governor, whose sway extended to Sowakin, and heaps of ruin still exist, but without any inscriptions or other data.

The Hābābs, as I have said, are converted, and are nominally ruled by the Pasha of Massowah, but are in reality quite independent.

Several chiefs of these tribes have said to me that they would gladly resume their ancient creed, were they assured of protection by the occupation of Massowah by a Christian Power. All parties and all religions in this part of Africa unite in their cordial detestation of the Turks.

To the southward, and on the same spur of mountains, adjoining to Hamazayn, the province of Memsa is exposed to the same dangers as Mogos. On the one hand, the troops of Massowah are close at hand ; on the other, the river Ansubba affords an easy access to those of Taka.

Unless we interfere, this district will soon be rent from the Christian community, Dejj Obbeay being unable to defend these distant outskirts of his dominions. If assured of protection, a few intelligent teachers might soon infuse sounder moral notions into the breasts of the rising generation, and no strong prejudices or associations of cunning priests would here obstruct their efforts, as in Abyssinia Central.

Memsa is so elevated as to produce excellent wheat and barley. In Mogos, maize, Indian corn, and tobacco, are cultivated with success ; under better auspices its surface might be covered with vines ; and it would produce coffee and spices, the climate being even and temperate. Though the mountains at a distance appear abrupt, excellent levels for roads are everywhere found. Wood and water are abundant. What hidden mineral

wealth may exist I am not competent to say. There were two churches in Mogos, one of which has lately been burnt by the Turks ; but no officiating priests. An ancient church, dedicated to the Trinity, still exists on the grand mountain of Tsad Amba, the "White Mountain." This rises square and massive from the valley of Barka, and on the summit reside some monks, who alone possess the secret of the ascent ; all the roads being overgrown with jungle, and the path in one spot passing, it is said, over a rocking and narrow slab that bridges a fissure of immense depth.

The mountains of Devra Sinai, in Memsá, less rugged and more lofty, is also the site of pious devotion and the abode of several anchorites. Here bright and ample fountains water large meadows of pasture, and are sheltered by enormous masses of stone. In one of these stones, forty feet in diameter, two chambers have been hewn and adapted to the purposes of a church ; the holes in the rocks around shelter the hermit from the weather, or are filled with the bones of pilgrims. This spot, and indeed the greater portion of Memsá, would form a delightful sanatorium for residents at Massowah.

These provinces, like all that have been gradually severed from Abyssinia, have no regulated government, and have assumed, from the necessities of their position, a resemblance to the Arab Kabyles. Each tribe, or family, is under some influential man, who, though he cannot order summarily, can generally succeed in persuading, and who is usually the richest and most talented of the race. To him is intrusted the power of inflicting such punishments as the obligations of social life have, by common consent, forced them to adopt, but which, however, are rarely necessary ; he also, with other elders,

decides disputes regarding property and exercises considerable power, though with no state and a disagreeable amount of vociferation; he also takes care of his own cattle, seldom possessing the luxury of a servant. This latter is, indeed, almost unknown to these simple races, each man depending on the assistance of his children, and regarding them as his truest wealth. One trait is honourable to the inhabitants of Mogos; the highest respect is paid to strangers, not outwardly, but in fact. The Hābābs are proverbially treacherous; and the Beni Ameer were certainly so, till restrained by the strong hand of Egypt.

Three hundred men would be sufficient for the government of all these districts.

The people of Māira are of Bedouin race, and claim kin with those near Massowah; other tribes, as those of Barea and Aliguddee, to the westward of Barka, it would be useless for me here to describe. The Hābābs have, for a long period, nominally at least submitted to the Massowah Governor; but I think that the restoration of Halhal, so recently conquered, to its former independence, as a part of the Christian province of Billayn, might be demanded; and that province, with Memsa, should be declared to be a portion of Teegray, under our protection.

The only other race that, on the northern frontier of Abyssinia, intervene between that country and the Arab tribes subject to Egypt, is the Shankalla, partly of negro origin, or Nubian. These Shankallas possess a large and fine tract country between the rivers known in Abyssinia as the Murrub and Takazzee, and called by the Arabs El Gasch and Shayteet; their principal village is on the former torrent, and known as Maidaro or Belga;

they have no form of government, each village being quite independent, some elder selected by the rest acting as arbitrator; nor do they even assist each other against a common enemy.

By nature I think they are docile and intelligent; but long-continued enmity and warfare with all the surrounding nations has rendered them as blood-thirsty as the beasts of prey that abound in their dense forests. Their hand is truly against every man. In spite of the incessant attacks of Turks, Arabs, and Abyssinians, they are so prolific and tenacious as to retain their native land, and often do they inflict injuries as great as those they suffer. Patient, strong, and enduring alike of fatigue or hunger, they proceed many days' journey in search of booty or revenge, and often, from their ambush, cut off a whole caravan. No one has yet been able to approach them on terms of friendship, but in my opinion they have the elements of a more social existence abundant amongst them. In the Egyptian provinces I found many Abyssinians, whose country and family I knew, that had been sold into slavery by these Shankallas.

They cultivate the ground and possess cattle and flocks in abundance; they live also in great measure by hunting and on the wild honey that is found in vast quantities. They have in general no idea of trade, but lately have begun to sell ivory through the medium of some neutral Arabs on their frontier, in return receiving chequered calicos and cloths of native manufacture; money is not in use.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ABYSSINIAN IDEAS OF THE WORLD.

ON all sides Abyssinia is surrounded by barbarous tribes. The monks who visit Jerusalem conceal or falsify their knowledge of other nations ; and the only point at which the merchants can meet with other Christians is at Massowah, during their annual visits ; for they are not permitted to cross the sea with their goods ; the Turks being also interested in preventing too strict an amity with Europe.

Few Europeans have visited the interior, so that it is not surprising that so vain a nation should have a contempt for the Christian races, equivalent to their ignorance of them. The Turks they utterly despise, and having the advantage of fire-arms in their contests with the Gallas and others, they rate themselves as the first, almost the only, nation. In general they have a faint conception that a few white men exist beyond the sea, on a spot of ground not worth mentioning ; but they do not believe that Kings or Kingdoms, fruitful soil or genial climate, are found save in Abyssinia. A few exceptions of intelligent men there certainly are, but these dare not enlighten the rest, and are laughed at if they attempt.

All, even these, are convinced that as a military power, none can approach them. These traits are, it is true, common enough amongst ignorant races, but they are



curious, if we consider that no religious differences separate us, and that the stream of pilgrimage, uninterrupted for fifteen centuries, has brought no fertilizing waters of knowledge to this sterile soil. This shows either singular apathy, impenetrable vanity, or sustained deceit; probably all three in pretty equal proportions.

Europe has almost ignored the existence of Abyssinia. The Abyssinians who formerly ruled Yemen and traded to India, were deprived of their conquests by the immediate successors of Mahomed, and their own sea-coast being soon wrested from them, were shut up in their rugged mountains, before the progress of arms and civilization enabled Europeans to inquire into the affairs of distant nations. Since then no great effort has been made to open a communication, save once for the purpose of establishing the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, which disastrously failed, and the Abyssinian, amidst the abundance of his own country, soon forgot the little he ever knew of others.

It is certain that Europeans are at present but little considered in Abyssinia. An individual, by imitation of their manners, by courage, addresses in warlike exercises, and a perfect knowledge of their language, may gain some influence; but all that is European in manners and dress—often even in ideas—is purely ridiculous in the eyes of this people. For instance, they do not much admire strength of mind or firmness of purpose, even when conjoined with a rare forbearance and suavity. Indeed, the word used by them is also a synonym for obstinate and disagreeable. They admire more a man who yields with courtesy to the entreaties or reasoning of others, whether persuaded or not.

The great difficulty for an European is to steer between

too much decision and too much facility. The former will confer on him the appellation of a brute and general dislike; the latter, of a coward, and general disrespect. They themselves having no pride, though much vanity, are very apt to estimate what we call manly spirit or resentment as ridiculous haughtiness. A man who loses his temper is at the mercy of the cool and witty Abyssinian, who (at least the Amhara) will probably overwhelm him with polite excuses; think of him, if he takes that trouble at all, as one without good sense or good manners; wonder what brought him so far from his own country to get in a passion; and then give orders to admit him no more, unless he hopes to profit largely by him. Directly a white man appears, the chiefs begin to calculate the amount of presents that they may possibly obtain from him, and the best way of extracting them, according to the character of the victim, in divining which they are singularly adroit; and the soldiers, with watery mouths, hope for the day when so rich a booty may become theirs on the highway—a hope which they often express before the party principally concerned. It is no easy task to maintain a dignified position against the combined efforts of ridicule, ill-disguised contempt, and unblushing cupidity; *and an European envoy, unless strongly supported by a native monarch, can hope to reap little benefit from his mission.*

Unhappily the country, a prey to so many masters, offers not this support; and the fall of Ras Ali, who at one time bid fair to obtain a power that might be called sovereign, has again swept away all prospect of stability. Up to the time of Bruce's visit, white men were favoured, provided they did not rouse the enmity of the priesthood by daring to shake the veil of deceit and darkness thrown

around the people with so much art ; but, though strangers were received well, there was always a reluctance to permit their departure. In later days the chiefs of Teegray, the Ras Welda Selassie and Dejjaj Sabagardis, showed themselves friends of progress and entered cordially into the views of Mr. Salt. Death, in both instances, prevented a solid friendship, and probably some lasting fruit.

After these Oobeay, a stranger, conquered Teegray, and adopted a contrary policy. When not contemptuous, he has always been indifferent to foreigners, nor would he listen to tales of improvement and innovation. During this period, the general idea has been to profit by our purses, and to reject all serious purpose or prospect of future benefit. Sometimes, through incredulity or indifference, more often from a sense of the uncertain duration of their own power, the Ras Ali had good intentions ; but sure of nothing beyond his own camp, accustomed to temporize, and govern by policy rather than vigour, he could do little, even in Christian Abyssinia, to assure the position of an Envoy or Consul—nearer the coast, nothing. It is evident that some means must be found, if possible, to furnish the majority of a nation with a more clear idea of the weight of our enmity, the value of our friendship, and the reality of our advances ; to render the wild tribes between Abyssinia and the coast amenable to some authority, and to raise the Turkish blockade at Massowah. These results are only to be obtained by a nearer approach which shall place the Abyssinian in daily contact with the European. It remains to be seen if such approximation be feasible.

As the route *viâ* Sennaar to Egypt does not concern us at present, though at some not distant period it may,

the facilities afforded by the Indian Ocean or the Red Sea must be examined.

The Red Sea, from Suez to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, is a Turkish lake, and the Turks have possession of every harbour worth mentioning on either shore. On the African coast they have garrisons at Sowakin, Aggeek, and Massowah, the only harbours where ships can lie in comfort and safety; some intervening ports may be found, but these can only shelter Arab boats, and are not worth the consideration of an European Power. I consider the harbour of Portuguese Bay, as it is commonly called, one mile and a half north from Massowah, as included under that name.

Massowah is, from its position, the natural outlet for Abyssinian commerce in the Red Sea and the only one.

Amphylla, sixty miles to the southward, is a bad roadstead, and a worse landscape; very unfavourable to shipment of goods, and with little water, and of bad quality. This would otherwise, after some trouble with the fierce tribe of Taltals, be the nearest point of Teegray; and when these were subdued might be rendered the depôt of Abyssinian commerce. But the disadvantages are insurmountable, and the Turkish government claims the whole coast. Of the arrangement between the British Government and the Ras Welda Selassee respecting Amphylla, proposed by Mr. Salt many years since, and I believe partially agreed upon, the Foreign Office will probably furnish more exact records than my hearsay.

It is my distinct opinion that whoever possesses Massowah can command the whole commerce of Abyssinia and the Gallas, in the Red Sea; Teylay, in the

Indian Ocean, being the only other port with consideration, but this latter does not bring the European so closely in contact with Christian and friendly tribes.

The Egyptian Government along the northern frontier of Abyssinia at least merits the name, and rules, in some order and tranquillity, many ferocious and treacherous Arab tribes ; but the Turkish Government at Massowah, dependent on Constantinople, of which I have now to speak, is not a Government but a blockade just sufficient to prevent others from enjoying that which itself cannot pretend to profit by, and to maintain a condition of hopeless stagnation in all the surrounding provinces.

The right of Turkey to Massowah is, so far as ancient conquest can confer it, indisputable ; but their right to anything beyond the island is more to be doubted. The Sultan Selim sent his fleets and armies beyond Bab-el-Mandeb, occupied Massowah, and built a fort at Dohono ; Aden also receiving a Turkish garrison. When the empire grew weaker, the troops were withdrawn from all these places ; Aden was taken possession of by an Arab chief, and Massowah by the Naibs or lieutenants, a powerful family, originally dependent on the Emperors of Abyssinia, who, having partially shaken off that yoke after their adoption of the Mahomedan faith, were again subjected by the Turks. When these latter withdrew, the Naibs became almost sovereign rulers, but were forced to pay a tribute yearly to their powerful neighbours the chiefs of Teegray. One of these Naibs, to increase his importance, or for some other reason, requested from Jeddah a guard of thirty men commanded by an Aga, which request was granted with joy. Bruce's account shows that the Naib acted as an independent ruler at that time. Many years afterwards, in conse-

quence of family disputes, an arrangement was entered into with the Pasha of Jeddah, whereby the latter bound himself to pay to the Naib 12,000 dollars per annum, in consideration of which he was allowed to maintain an Aga and sixty men in Massowah, and to receive all the duties paid by the Abyssinian merchants.

The island was thus again ceded to Turkey, the mainland remaining in the hands of the Naib; so much so that when the French appointed an Agent at Massowah, the Naib refused him permission to land, and demanded large sums likewise from all missionaries proceeding to Abyssinia, nor had the Turkish Governor of the island any voice in these matters.

The Naibs, finding their family feuds becoming more entangled, at last adopted the fatal step of demanding a firman from the Pasha of Hedjaz, insulting one of their number; this took place nearly twelve years since. During this time also the tribute to Dejjay Oobeay, Chief of Teegray, was fixed at 2,000 dollars a-year; the Naib possessing some villages in that province.

Such was the state of affairs when I returned to England in 1847; during my stay there great changes occurred, which I then pointed out to Her Majesty's Government. Massowah was handed over for a year to Egypt. I have reason to think that there was then an understanding for the invasion of certain provinces of Teegray at least; at any rate, Massowah began to rise in importance. Instead of an Aga, with 60 soldiers, who smoked away their time in the island, an energetic Governor, with the title of Bey, and 600 good troops, was sent. He immediately refused the payment of 1,000 dollars monthly to the Naib; and when the latter in return stopped the water supplies, he attacked and

burnt the village of Dohono, built there a port, and proclaimed that all the country along the sea, and for forty miles inland, belonged to his master solely; the Pasha of the Hedjaz still receives his title of Pasha of Abyssinia.

Since that time, the Naibs have become null. The government of Massowah was again handed back to Constantinople, and instead of a Bey a Pasha was sent direct from the seat of government; but the change from the vigorous administration of Mahomed Ali was soon felt. The governors from Constantinople, though of high rank, have but one thought, the extraction of money. They have a Naib, whom they pay 30 dollars a month, and send right and left to demand revenue from the neighbouring tribes; and that done, the country beyond the island is left to its own resources, and to fight its own battles and appoint its own local chiefs. Having destroyed the power of the Naibs, the whole land is without law or security.

The chief of Teegrays, impatient at the loss of his usual tribute (which the Naib could not and the Turks would not pay), several times ravaged the old coast, even within sight of Massowah and the Turkish fort, and has only desisted latterly, owing to my representations.

The state of interregnum thus established renders the road between Massowah and Abyssinia Proper disagreeable and dangerous; every man must there protect himself. Under the infliction of Abyssinian confusion and Turkish supineness, these regions have become mostly gloomy forests without settled inhabitants, without law, and without a judge, and haunted by robbers and plunderers from every neighbouring tribe.

Such is the state of the coast; but as the Pasha of

Massowah must give some account of the twenty provinces supposed to be submitted to his authority, every few months he procures the signature of a number of people in Massowah to a paper setting forth that perfect order and tranquillity reign everywhere in the Sultan's extensive possessions in this part of the world. In a manner hitherto believed to be peculiarly Chinese, this despatch is always sent when the neighbourhood is most disturbed, and when marked disorders have occurred in the town.

The internal administration of the laws in Massowah and Dahono, the only spots really in the power of the Pasha, depends of course on the personal character of each governor.

Under the present one crimes have been unusually frequent ; the town is burnt down three or four times a year ; the soldiers have been repeatedly in a state of mutiny, insulting the Pasha to his face with scarcely even a reprimand, and are now restrained only by the firm conduct of their immediate officers ; many robberies have occurred, and none have been traced ; there is no police ; and his justice may be briefly illustrated by his having put in prison a respectable merchant who complained of a burglary, for the reason that it was impossible such a crime could have occurred under his administration, and therefore the complaint must be false.

The greatest jealousy of all Europeans has invariably characterized every governor ; every attempt is made to discourage merchants that wish to settle ; and every effort that cunning can suggest has been made to lower the position of the consuls in the eyes of the natives and the Abyssinians, and to keep up the illusion that still prevails here that the Sultan is Lord of the world.



The Abyssinians being in contact with the Turks alone of the white races, and these occupying the only practicable approaches to Abyssinia, the foreign policy of that country resolves itself into three questions : whether it is better that Egypt and Abyssinia should be under one sovereign ; whether the Turkish Government should be obliged distinctly to recognize the independence and limits of Abyssinia, and to afford every facility and protection to a transit trade, and to the residence of European and Abyssinian merchants in their territory for that purpose ; or whether, and much better, we ourselves should break through this blockade, and by securing a point fit for the free intercourse of the two races, and where European intelligence, wealth, and enterprise might produce their full effect, should throw open these rich and secluded realms to the efforts of the statesman, the merchant, and the philanthropist.

## CHAPTER VIII.

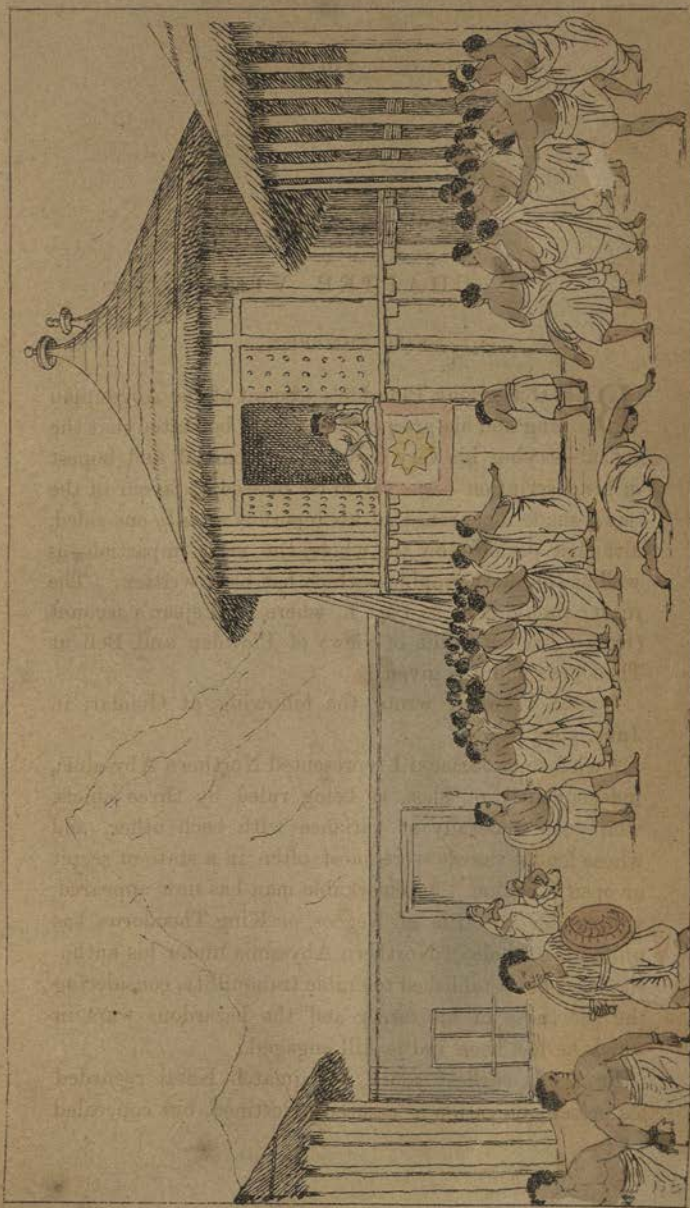
## KING THEODORE.

**B**EFORE giving Plowden's account of the Abyssinian king and his prospects, it should be stated that the consul—trying his very best to be impartial and honest in his description—was yet so far biassed in favour of the newly-made monarch, that his report is *slightly* one-sided, although perhaps, on the whole, the most impartial—as well as the most graphic—which has been written. The reader should turn to Part I., where M. Lejean's account (from a French point of view) of Plowden and Bell at Theodore's camp is given.

Consul Plowden wrote the following at Gondar, in June, 1855 :—

On a former occasion I represented Northern Abyssinia, independently of Shoa, as being ruled by three chiefs, who were generally at variance with each other, and whose feudal vassals were most often in a state of secret or open rebellion. A remarkable man has now appeared, who, under the title of Negoos, or King Theodorus, has united the whole of Northern Abyssinia under his authority, and has established tolerable tranquillity, considering the shortness of his career and the hazardous wars in which he has been and is still engaged.

From his earliest youth, Dejajmatch Kasai regarded his present elevation as assuredly destined, but concealed



COURT WITHIN THE PALACE — THE KING SITTING IN JUDGMENT.



his designs with prudence equal to his daring until ripe for execution. First he denied the authority of the queen, mother of Ras Ali, under whom he governed the provinces near Sennaar ; defeated in succession all the troops she could send against him, and lastly herself, with tenfold his numbers : he protested, however, that he was still the faithful servant of Ras Ali, but refused to surrender, except on certain conditions of peace. The Ras then sent against him an immense force ; the armies camped opposite to each other for some time, the Ras not wishing to drive matters to extremity ; and in the interval Kasai fought several minor battles, detected and punished some traitors in his own camp, and introduced a little discipline into his army.

The Ras having sworn to do him no injury, he surrendered and came to Devra Tabor, where he so completely lulled all suspicion that he received all his former honours and provinces from the Ras ; the Queen being in a measure disgraced. He returned to Kwora and attacked all the low countries towards Sennaar, Shankallas or Arabs accustoming his soldiers to war and hardships.

His projects not being yet matured, on several occasions when it was confidently reported that he had rebelled, he baffled his accusers by suddenly appearing in the Ras's camp, and following him to war in Godjam with about a third of his forces, thus quite winning his heart, though I ventured to point out to the Ras his dangerous character.

At last, about two years and a half ago he threw off the mask, and the Ras having sent against him Dejajmatch Goscho, that Prince was defeated and slain in battle.

The Ras now became seriously alarmed, and ordered

half his army under his best commanders to attack him ; he also called upon Dejjamatch Oobeay, Chief of Teegray, for assistance, and that Prince furnished a very large contingent. Though numbers were so overwhelming against him, Dejjamatch Kasai met these forces and gave them a signal defeat, killing most of the Chiefs ; shortly after he took the daring resolution of attacking the Ras, and arriving by forced marches near the camp of that Prince in Godjam in the rainy season, sent him a defiance and met him, though so far superior in cavalry, in the open plains. The Ras fought with the utmost courage in person ; the loss of life was considerable on both sides, but Kasai's determined valour again won the day, Ras Ali escaping.

He then retired from Godjam, and afforded to Birro Goscho, who had been for five years besieged by the Ras in his mountain fort of Soma, an opportunity of leaving that stronghold.

During some months Dejjamatch Kasai remained tranquil, amusing Dejjamatch Oobeay at first with friendly proposals, afterwards demanding of that Chief the Aboona Salama, who had been banished by Ras Ali, with menaces in case of non-compliance. Oobeay becoming alarmed sent, first, his son with proposals, and, subsequently, the Aboona ; the latter was reinstated in his dignity at Gondar, and a peace was made between the chiefs. Dejjamatch Kasai then pursued Birro Goscho even to the Galla provinces, where he had assembled a large force, defeated and took him prisoner.

He was now strong in guns and troops, and on his return camped in the province of Waggera, from whence he declared war against Oobeay, reproaching him with his falsehood, which was proved, in having sent letters to

encourage Birro Goscho. With some reluctance Oobeay at last put himself in motion to oppose Dejjajmatch Kasai, who had advanced into Semen; the latter, by forced marches, fell suddenly upon his rival, and in two hours defeated him, taking prisoner all his sons and generals with himself; without delay he invested Oobeay's strongholds, which surrendered at once.

The fruits of this last victory were large treasures accumulated for three generations; the submission or imprisonment of almost all the Chiefs in Abyssinia, and the coronation of Dejjajmatch Kasai by the Aboona Salma, under the title of Theodorus, King of Kings of Ethiopia.

Discovering a plot against his life, the King only placed in durance those concerned, displaying in all things great clemency and generosity, and the ransom of Dejjajmatch Oobeay was fixed at 120,000 dollars.

With scarce a week's delay, and in spite of the murmurs of his soldiers, the king marched against Mahomedan Gallas, who had, during his absence, burnt some churches, and assembled all the forces of Christian Abyssinia, Teegray included, in the province of Dillanto, on the borders of Worrahaimano, where I found him.

He may have from 50,000 to 60,000 men of all arms.

Such has been his adventurous and warlike career. I shall now say a few words on his personal character, the reforms he has effected, the designs he is contemplating, and the condition and prospects of the country.

The king Theodorus is young in years, vigorous in all manly exercises, of a striking countenance, peculiarly polite and engaging when pleased, and mostly displaying great tact and delicacy. He is persuaded that he is destined to restore the glories of Ethiopian empire,

and to achieve great conquests ; of untiring energy, both mental and bodily, his personal and moral daring are boundless. The latter is well proved by his severity towards his soldiers, even when these, pressed by hunger, are mutinous, and he is in front of a powerful foe ; more so even by his pressing reforms on a country so little used to any yoke, whilst engaged in unceasing hostilities, and his suppression of the power of the great feudal chiefs, at a moment when any inferior man would have sought to conciliate them as the stepping stones to empire.

When aroused his wrath is terrible, and all tremble ; but at all moments he possesses a perfect self-command. Indefatigable in business, he takes little repose night or day ; his ideas and language are clear and precise ; hesitation is not known to him ; and he has neither councillors nor go-betweens. He is fond of splendour, and receives in state even on a campaign. He is unsparing in punishment—very necessary to restrain disorder, and to restore order in such a wilderness as Abyssinia. He salutes his meanest subjects with courtesy ; is sincerely though often mistakenly religious, and will acknowledge a fault committed toward his poorest follower in a moment of passion with sincerity and grace.

He is generous to excess, and free from all cupidity, regarding nothing with pleasure or desire but munitions of war for his soldiers. He has hitherto exercised the utmost clemency toward the vanquished, treating them rather as his friends than his enemies. His faith is signal ; without Christ, he says, I am nothing ; if he has destined me to purify and reform this distracted kingdom, with His aid who shall stay me ? nay, sometimes he is on



the point of not caring for human assistance at all, and this is one reason why he will not seek with much avidity for assistance from or alliance with Europe.

The worst points in his character are, his violent anger at times, his unyielding pride as regards his kingly and divine right, and his fanatical religious zeal.

He has begun to reform even the dress of Abyssinia, all about his person wearing loose flowing trowsers, and upper and under vests, instead of the half-naked costume introduced by the Gallas. Married himself at the altar, and strictly continent, he has ordered or persuaded all who love him to follow his example, and exacts the greatest decency of manners and conversation: this system he hopes to extend to all classes.

He has suppressed the slave trade in all its phases, save that the slaves already bought may be sold to such Christians as shall buy them for charity: setting the example, he pays to the Mussulman dealers what price they please to ask for the slaves they bring to him, and then baptizes them.

He has abolished the barbarous practice of delivering over murderers to the relatives of the deceased, handing over offenders, in public, to his own executioners to be shot or decapitated.

The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he *has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated.* He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish; thus, in fact, creating generals in place of

feudal chieftains more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility, a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.

To these he gives sums of money from time to time, accustoming them to his intention of establishing a regular pay; his matchlock-men are numbered under officers commanding from 100 to 1,000, and the king drills them in person. In the common soldiers he has effected a great reform, by paying them, and ordering them to purchase their food, but in no way to harass and plunder the peasant as before; the peasantry he is gradually accustoming to live quiet under the village judge, and to look no more to military rule.

As regards commerce, he has put an end to a number of vexatious exactions, and has ordered that duties shall be levied only at three places in his dominions. All these matters cannot yet be perfected, but he intends also to disarm the people, and to establish a regular standing army, armed with muskets only, having declared that he will convert swords and lances into ploughshares and reaping-hooks, and cause a plough-ox to be sold dearer than the noblest war-horse.

He has begun to substitute letters for verbal messages. After perusing the history of the Jesuits in Abyssinia, he has decided that no Roman Catholic priests shall teach in his dominions; and insisting on his right divine over those born his subjects, has ordered the Abyssinians who have adopted that creed to recant; to foreigners of all classes, however, he permits the free exercise of their religion, but prohibits all preaching contrary to the doctrine of the Coptic Church. To the Mahometans he has declared that he will first conquer the Gallas, who

have seized on Christian lands, devastated churches, and, by force, converted the inhabitants to Islamism ; and after that, the Mussulmans now residing in Abyssinia will have the option of being baptized or of leaving the country.

*He is peculiarly jealous, as may be expected, of his sovereign rights, and of anything that appears to trench on them ; he wishes, in a short time, to send embassies to the Great European Powers to treat with them on equal terms. The most difficult trait in his character is this jealousy and the pride that, fed by ignorance, renders it impossible for him yet to believe that so great a monarch as himself exists in the world.*

In his present campaign he proposes to subdue or exterminate the Mahometan Gallas, and perhaps Shoa. Next year he will devote to the settlement of Teegray, including the tribes along the coast, and meditates the occupation of Massowah. After that he wishes to reclaim all the provinces lately conquered by Egypt along his northern frontier ; even Khartoum, as his by right : nor does his military ardour hesitate to dream of the conquest of Egypt, and a triumphant march to the Holy Sepulchre.

Some of his ideas may be imperfect, others impracticable ; but a man, who rising from the clouds of Abyssinian ignorance and childishness without assistance and without advice, has done so much and contemplates such large designs, cannot be regarded as of an ordinary stamp.

The king is now, I hear, wasting Worrahaimano with fire and sword ; the Abyssinians but lately accustomed to his vigorous sway, and in no way comprehending the grasp of his ideas, already fancy that he will not return,

and bring about prophecies and discontents, fostered by Galla emissaries. The country is disturbed ; but there is only one open or dangerous revolt, headed by the son of Dejjamatch Oobeay in Semen, who, owing his life and freedom to his king's mercy, now gives out that he himself is the destined Theodorus. He has gathered together a considerable army, and occupies the road between Gondar and Teegray.

The king is confident in his strength, and with his usual unhesitating courage, looking only to the enemy of most importance and in his front, will not, at present, condescend to notice this ebullition ; but if he returns crowned with victory, no mercy will be shown to the rebels, his enemies will disappear, and tranquillity will be at once restored.

He will hereafter be quite capable of carrying out his views with regard to Massowah, though he will be unable to contend with the Egyptian forces.

Should he unite all the Gallas and Northern Abyssinians, Shoa to Tajoura and Zanzibar, Teegray with the sea-coast and Massowah, into one government as he purposes, and a frontier arrangement be made with Egypt, Abyssinia may, under his rule, rank as a Christian kingdom ; this is the last chance for negotiation and treaties.

*Should he now or at any time fail in his designs, or fall in battle, the misrule and anarchy that must ensue will baffle all human calculation, and render peaceful interference impossible: Abyssinia must then be left to her destinies, until some European Power shall think it worth while to conquer and instruct the most fertile of African provinces.*

On approaching the camp, the intervening country

being dangerous to traverse on account of the Gallas, I requested an escort; the King, to do me honour, sent four of his generals with several companies of gunners, who accompanied me to the camp with ceremony, the King's flutes and drums playing before me, and fired a salute of musketry when I approached his tent. The tent was filled with all his officers in handsome dresses, and the ground was entirely covered with carpets; the King was seated on a couch, splendidly attired, with his crown on the pillow and his sword of state held behind him: the Aboona and the Tchégee were seated on high chairs to the right and left—every one else standing. He received me with great politeness, and caused me to sit down on a carpet near himself. After a short conversation respecting my journey, and on the forms of government in England and other countries, he told me to retire, as I must be fatigued, causing a large tent to be pitched for me.

The next day I saw him again early in the morning. After my visit, an Abyssinian of the Roman Catholic persuasion was brought to trial; this man the King ordered to dispute publicly on his religious creed with the Aboona, saying that if his reasons were the best he himself would become a convert. The monk refused to recognize any authority there present, and said he would dispute only before the Pope of Rome: the King sent for me, and as the monk persisted in obstinate silence, the judges after some discussion gave sentence of death for contumacy to his Sovereign; which sentence the matchlockmen were called out to execute immediately. There were above 1,000 persons present; but even the Aboona, who wished to save the man, dared not speak. I rose

and obtained his life, but could in no way persuade the King to banish him or release him from his chains.

The evening before the day fixed for my departure the King sent to me to know the object of my coming. I replied that I had not come on the part of the Government or in any official capacity ; but that as I was about to visit England, it was important that I should know and report His Majesty's disposition respecting the establishment of a consulate, and friendly relations generally ; I hinted also at what had been arranged with the Ras Ali. The King said, "I know nothing of what Ras Ali may have done ; I am young and inexperienced in public affairs ; I have never heard of a consulate under the former kings of Abyssinia, and this matter must be referred to my council and the principal people of my court."

The next day being sick myself, I sent Mr. Bell, who is much trusted by the King ; and after several messages to and fro the King finally replied as follows, "I cannot consent to a consulate, as I find in the history of our institutions no such thing ; but for anything else that you wish for, now or hereafter, for yourself or other English, I shall be happy to perform your pleasure, and could I receive any consul I should wish for no one more agreeable to me, or more esteemed by me, than yourself."

I had ventured to hint that the sea coast and Massowah might possibly be given up to him on his consent ; but though his ambition was roused at this, he feared the clause conferring jurisdiction on the consul as trenching on his prerogative, and the time for consideration was so short, that though half inclined to say yes, he was too much startled at my proposals to do so.

The next morning he offered me some hundred dollars for the expenses of my journey, and begged me to pass the rainy season in Gondar ; I replied that had he received me as consul I should even have followed him in his campaigns and have shared his dangers ; but that after his refusal, my duty was to return to my country as soon as possible, and that as for the money I could not receive it, as I was paid by my own sovereign. He spoke to me in the most affectionate manner, gave orders for my honourable reception everywhere as far as Massowah, and said, "In refusing your request for a consulate, my only reason is that it appears an innovation ; but do you not forget my friendship for you, and cause your Queen also to regard me as a friend. After the rains I shall send to Her Majesty an embassy and letters, and when these wars are finished I will give every favour and protection to Englishmen who may visit my country : do you also visit me and write to me."

The Aboona Salama tried in every way to assist me in this negotiation ; and it will be seen that the King's refusal is hardly a refusal, and that he does not wish to break off all treaty with us, but rather the contrary, being only startled by the clause about jurisdiction of consuls.

I left the camp with all honour, the King adjuring me twenty times not to forget to write to him constantly wherever I might be, and giving me his own mule to ride as a proof of his friendly feelings. I told him that I should report all our conversation, and receive the orders of my government in consequence ; that I should then report the answer to him, which was all that I was authorized to do.

The matter was much hurried, as the king was on the eve of starting against the Gallas, with whom his outposts were indeed daily skirmishing; and my state of health would not permit of my encountering the fatigues and privations of such a campaign. Neither did I think it advisable to appear too eager at first, as that might arouse his suspicions, and confirm him in an obstinate refusal.

I told him that I was sorry for his decision rather on his account than on mine, but that he was perfect master in his own dominions, and to decide as he pleased.

There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic Mission has caused much jealousy in regard to Europeans, and not unnaturally, as that mission obstinately persists in usurping the functions of the Aboona and the Abyssinian clergy, so the king has an undefined but not unreasonable fear that we wish in like manner, and by friendly appearances, to usurp the political rights of the sovereign; or rather, his councillors wish to persuade him to this effect.

I see much to hope for in these conversations. It is well to find a king in Abyssinia proud of his dignity, alive to his responsibility, capable of considering grave matters, and of replying with decision, not lightly giving assent to a thing he does not understand, and yet seeking for our friendship in all ways that he can understand. Nor is it very important to obtain a direct accord until such a time as his power shall be firmly fixed. Whenever he does sign a treaty, to whatever effect it may be, he will fully appreciate his obligations, and faithfully fulfil them to the extent of his authority. Any other Abyssinian would have temporized in the hope of obtaining presents, as did the King of Shoa,



Sahela Selassie ; but this man has a noble disdain of falsehood or covetousness.

It is apparent, from the honourable and friendly manner in which I took my leave, and from the king's expressions, that he does not regard his refusal as a matter that should break off our correspondence, or give offence. He has refused rather the form than the substance of our proposals.

The Aboona Salama and Mr. Bell, who has ever exerted himself in my behalf with the utmost zeal, will lose no opportunity of explaining to the king the nature of a consulate and of our other propositions ; and I think that the objections he has taken will be somewhat modified ere long. He in fact only wishes to treat on equal terms, and considers that his own laws and administration of justice should suffice for all strangers ; and that a treaty, if made, should be carried out by himself without the envoy having judicial powers, though he would not object to an ambassador to represent the interests of a foreign nation without those powers.

Two of the principal difficulties that we have hitherto had in negotiating with Abyssinia are now in a fair way of disappearing : one vigorous sovereign may replace the feudal oligarchy, the proud and rebellious chieftains, that have hitherto bewildered all my efforts : the interregnum on the coast belonging neither to Turk nor Abyssinian may disappear ; and those wild tribes that acknowledge no law but their will, no faith but their swords, and that hold the passes into Abyssinia, may be taught to acknowledge a lord and master. The one difficulty that will remain is the want of a seaport in the hands of either England or Abyssinia.

In the present state of affairs, there are three ways of acting :—

One, to withdraw altogether the consul from Abyssinia, and to cease all communication with that country.

The second, to consider that the King proposes to attack the Egyptian territory, at least where the Egyptian troops have occupied any portion of the ancient limits of Abyssinia; and also that he will probably seize on Massowah, unless the Turkish government should defend it with such a force as will render it a heavy burden on the finances: therefore to await in silence the course of these events, when probably he will recognize the value of our friendly proposals, and seek himself for a renewal of them.

The third, to accept his proposition of sending ambassadors, and to trust to their report of their reception and of our greatness, which information may very likely induce the king to accord all we wish; he being already half-disposed to listen to us.

On the first Her Majesty's government must decide, after examining this report, which is not so full as I could wish, in consequence of my unwilling detention in Gondar, and the near approach of the rainy season, which makes me fear to delay the departure of my messengers. I trust that this measure will not be decided on at present.

With regard to the second, I think that should the king agree to our proposals hereafter, it would be better for all parties that Massowah should be given up to him on condition that he appoint an European in his service as governor. The Turks cannot keep that island in future, if the king's power increases, without large garrisons; but the king can stop their trade as he pleases,

and can harass them continually. He would reduce to obedience the half-civilized and ungoverned coast tribes, would reclaim the Hababs and other numerous Christians, abolish all interior duties on English imports, would need but a small force there for purposes of policy, and would there learn the value of trade and of foreign intercourse.

On the other hand, should the Turks remain in an expensive and precarious possession, the state of disturbance and anarchy along the frontier will always exist as at present, or be doubled, unless indeed they should follow up their large garrisons with large armies, for which the attacks of the Abyssinian king will soon afford them a pretext, and then attempt the conquest of the country.

As regards the frontier towards Egypt, the King will probably soon receive there a check that will induce him to seek for our mediation, and which will conduce much to the enlargement of his ideas. Egypt may be made to abandon some of her more recent conquests on the frontier, and Abyssinia, with a seaport of its own, a settled boundary, and a king with civilized ideas, will be worth treating with on something like equal terms.

The third proposition as to receiving the King's ambassador may be entertained at the same time with these ideas suggested by the second ; and it is in my opinion the most feasible : always supposing that the King returns with success from his Galla wars, consolidates his authority, extends it over all Abyssinia as I expect, and sends ambassadors of such rank, manners, and intelligence as may conduce to his own honour and subsequent enlightenment.

(Signed)           WALTER PLOWDEN.

*Gondar, June 25, 1855.*



## PART III.

### *THE STORY OF THE BRITISH CAPTIVES IN ABYSSINIA, 1863-4.*

BY THE REV. GEO. PERCY BADGER.



**B**EFORE inquiring into the causes which have led to the torture and captivity of several British subjects in Abyssinia, including Captain Cameron, the resident consul, it will be desirable in the first place to take a cursory view of the political condition of the country.

[\* The gentleman, to whom the Editor is indebted for the following able account of the present Abyssinian difficulty, is thus spoken of by Major-General Coghlan, our late Commandant at Aden, when he submitted his proposal for an armed expedition to Abyssinia: "In the preparation of this scheme I have availed myself largely of the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Badger. The valuable services rendered by that gentleman in connection with the Persian expeditionary force; the frequent mention made of those services in the official despatches of the late Sir James Outram, and their recognition by the Governments of India and Bombay, as also by Sir Edward Lugard, G.C.B., the present Under-Secretary at War, would be a sufficient warrant for my recurring to his aid on a question of this nature; but, in addition to such recommendations, I beg to mention that on several occasions of political importance I have personally learned to set a high value on his abilities in all matters relating to the East."]

Without some knowledge on that head it will be impossible to appreciate the motives which have actuated the outrageous conduct of the king towards our fellow-countrymen and Her Majesty's Government.

Theodorus, the present ruler of Abyssinia, owes his elevation to supreme power partly to fortuitous circumstances, but mainly to his military talents, combined with great personal energy and inordinate ambition. For a long period prior to the commencement of his public career the titular emperor, claiming descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, had become a mere puppet in the hands of rival vassals, who, whilst professing to recognize his authority, deprived him even of the semblance of power, and vied with each other in their efforts to gain the supremacy.

About the year 1847 the four great provinces of the empire were governed as follows:—"Ras Ali reigned over Amhara; Ras Ubie was almost independent over Tigré and Samien; while Shoa acknowledged the sovereignty of Sahela Selassie. In 1849 a treaty of commerce was concluded between the British Government and Ras Ali, as representing the titular emperor, through the instrumentality of the late Mr. Consul Plowden. Ras Ali had also in his interest the services of another Englishman, Mr. Bell, who had long resided in Abyssinia and taken a prominent part in its political and military affairs. At this period he held the rank of general in the Ras's army.

Such were the political divisions of the empire when Theodorus first appears on the scene. His origin and earliest successes are thus narrated by Dr. Krapf:—

"His mother is said to have been a vendor of *kosso*, the well-known medicine against the tape-worm, at

Gondar; while his father, a kinsman of Dejj Comfu (who as governor of Dembea had several times defeated the Egyptian troops advancing from Sennaar), occupied an official post in the province of Kuara in the west of Abyssinia. Kasai, as King Theodorus was formerly called, learned to read and write at Gondar, and became afterwards a soldier in the army of Dejj Comfu, who recommended him to his master, Ras Ali. The latter soon recognized Kasai's prudence and valour, gave him his daughter in marriage, and an official appointment under the superintendence of the famous Waisoro Mennen, the mother of Ras Ali. Kasai soon quarrelled with Waisoro Mennen, defeated her army, took her prisoner, and conquered her fine province of Dembea on Lake Tzana, which he retained, setting, however, the lady herself at liberty. Ras Ali, recognizing the danger that threatened, made over Dembea to the Dejj Borru Goshu the governor of Gojam, who drove Kasai back towards Kuara in the year 1850. Kasai, however, with a band of trusty followers, made an incursion into Dembea in 1852, surprised the camp of Berru Goshu, shot him dead himself, and defeated his army between Dembea and Jangar, close to Lake Tzana. Ras Ali now became uneasy, and marched, in 1853, against Kasai, but lost a decisive battle, and was obliged to fly to the Gallas, whilst Kasai remained master of the whole of Amhara, consisting of the entire country west of the Takassie, as far as the Blue River. After these successes Kasai sent for the Abuna,\* Abba Salama, who then resided at Adowa in

\* The "Abuna" is the Bishop of Abyssinia. The Christians of the country are Monophysites like the Copts, and are ecclesiastically subject to the Coptic Patriarch at Cairo, who consecrates the bishop over the Abyssinian Church. The Abuna is always a

Tigré, his plan being to form an alliance with the head of the Church before he attacked Ubie. The Abuna replied that he would not come to Gondar so long as the Romish priests were tolerated there, which led Kasai to expel the priests, and then the Abuna appeared in Gondar and formed an alliance with him for the restoration of the Abyssinian Church and Empire. Kasai's next step was to summon Ubie, the ruler of Tigré, to pay tribute as subject to the Prince of Amhara. Ubie refused, and rushed to arms, but lost at the battle of Debruski, in Samien, both his kingdom and his liberty, for he was taken prisoner.\* After this victory Kasai, under the name of Theodorus, caused himself to be proclaimed King of the Kings of Ethiopia, clearly with reference to the old Abyssinian tradition, that a king of the name of Theodorus would arise who should make Abyssinia great and prosperous, and destroy Mecca and Medina, the two chief cities of the Mohammedans in Arabia.†

Theodorus was crowned Emperor on the 11th of February, 1855.

Subsequent political events up to the year 1862 are described in the following summary by Dr. Beke :—

“ With the defeat of Ubie, Tigré and his other territories fell into the power of the conqueror, who, however, did not care to possess himself of them at that moment, but marched his army, flushed with victory, southward

Copt. He has great influence over the people, and exercises a power only second to that of the sovereign, of whom, in many respects, he is independent.

\* On the death of his first wife, Theodorus, in 1860, married the daughter of Ras Ubie, on which occasion he was released and made a vassal of the empire.

† “ Travels and Missionary Labours in East Africa,” p. 458.



to Shoa, which country fell an easy prey; and King Haila Malakut, Sahela Selassie's son and successor, having died, Theodorus placed one of his sons in charge of the kingdom—or province as it must now be called.

“Meanwhile a relative of Ubie, named Negussie, raised the standard of rebellion in Tigré, of which province he was recognized as the independent sovereign by the French consul at Massowah, as also by Mgr. de Jacobis, the Roman Catholic bishop (who was still at Halai, on the frontiers of Tigré, whither he had repaired on his expulsion from Gondar by Theodorus).”

It does not appear clear how the British consul and Mr. Bell transferred their support from Ras Ali's party to that of Theodorus. But as the former was a fugitive and the latter had succeeded him in the government of Amhara, the consul was probably instructed to recognize the *de facto* sovereign of the principal province of the empire. Be this as it may, we now find the British consul on the side of Theodorus, and Mr. Bell holding the highest rank in his army.

“In the month of February, 1860, Mr. Consul Plowden, while marching with a small troop of his followers,\* was attacked by a much larger force, under a chief named Gerred, a cousin of Negussie. Mr. Plowden was wounded, taken prisoner, ransomed (by the king),† but died soon after of his wounds. In the December following, Theodorus, accompanied by Mr. Bell, advanced against Gerred, for the purpose of avenging Consul

\* He was on his way to Massowah.

† Theodorus borrowed the money from the merchants at Gondar to purchase his ransom. This noble act having been reported to the Government in India, a valuable present was sent to the King from Bombay, in recognition of his disinterested generosity.

Plowden's death. Gerred, with a force of about 2,000 men, was encamped in Woldabba, when Theodorus's advanced guard, led by Bell, made a furious attack on them. In the conflict, which was brief, Bell slew Gerred with his own hand, but was himself immediately killed by Gerred's brother. A considerable number of the latter's troops having fallen, the rest threw down their arms, and surrendered at discretion, when Theodorus, after putting Gerred's brother to death with his own hand, decimated the troops who had surrendered—butchering in cold blood no less than 150 men\* out of a total of 1,756—and then barbarously mutilated and incapacitated for life the remainder. This frightful sacrifice, offered up by a Christian sovereign to the manes of two unfortunate British officers may appear incredible, but it is nevertheless a positive fact.

“Following up his victory over Gerred's detachment, Theodorus now marched against the main body of Negussie's army, which he completely routed in January, 1861, Negussie himself falling into the hands of his merciless conqueror, by whom he was put to death, together with several of his relatives and principal adherents. On the unfortunate prince himself was inflicted the severest punishment awarded to a traitor and murderer. His right hand and left foot were struck off, and he was then left, exposed to public gaze, to linger till he died. .

“To complete the history of events in the interior, it has to be added, that in the beginning of 1861, shortly after Mr. Bell's death, a Mr. Speedy, formerly an officer in the Indian service, entered that of the Emperor Theo-

[\* The number is given as 1,500 in some reports.—ED.]

dorus,\* and in the beginning of 1862, two years after Consul Plowden's death, his successor, Captain Cameron, arrived at Massowah, his official post, whence, following the example of his predecessor, he has proceeded into the interior, bearing presents from the British Government to the Emperor Theodorus."†

It would appear that the relentless severity practised by the King, as recorded in the foregoing quotations, did not put an end to insurrection within his dominions. Various attempts have since been made to limit his power and to overthrow his authority, but invariably with the same result. And if we may credit the reports which have reached Europe, the king's later triumphs have been accompanied with still greater excesses of wholesale butchery and cruelty.

But there is another side to this portrait of Theodorus, which it would be unfair to omit in attempting to form a just estimate of his character. The following is the testimony of Dr. Krapf, written in 1855 :—

“Although friendly and condescending to those about him, Theodorus never forgets his kingly dignity. What-

\* Mr. Speedy must have quitted the service of the Emperor very soon, since he acted shortly after as consular agent at Massowah; but whether recognized as such by the Foreign Office I am not aware. Being unable to obtain any salary, he left the country for Australia at the beginning of the present year.

† “The French and English in the Red Sea,” pp. 20—22. The foregoing account by Dr. Krapf and Dr. Beke of the career of Theodorus differs somewhat from that given by the Rev. Mr. Stern in his “Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia;” but the discrepancies are not material.

Mr. Flad, one of the lay missionaries, who was present when Captain Cameron reached the royal camp, states that “he received such a reception from the King as no stranger has hitherto received.”

ever he does is done with the greatest quiet and circumspection. His judgment is quick, his replies brief, but decisive. He is friendly to Europeans, to whose advice and information he willingly listens. To the poor, the priests, and the Church, he is extremely liberal. In judicial matters he is exact and just, often giving decisions adverse to the opinions of his councillors, learned in the law; and hence he is continually besieged by persons from all parts of Abyssinia who have lawsuits pending."

And the Rev. Mr. Stern, writing five years later, eulogises the king for having introduced several wholesome reforms into the government of the empire. Among these he instances the establishment of a new code for the regulation of the Church property, comprising one-third of the country, and for the administration of its revenues. These extensive domains had hitherto been free from taxation; but

"The King, unwilling to increase the burden of the peasant for the benefit of the Church, at once sequestered all this property for the use of the state; and instead of swarms of ignorant and vicious priests, who obtained ordination that they might live without labour, he appointed two priests and three deacons for each church, and to these he gave small tracts of land to cultivate for their maintenance."

Another reform equally important in a social point of view is thus described by the same author:—

"According to the canons of the Abyssinian Church the king is bound by the same marital laws as a priest, and, consequently, if his wife dies he dare not marry another. The bereaved predecessors of Theodorus scrupulously evaded such a contingency by substituting

the regularly-stored harem in the place of the one lawful wife ; but from this disreputable and sinful practice the honourable mind of the present ruler shrank, and as he had no inclination to crouch before brainless ecclesiastics to obtain their licence either to break or to obey a Divine institution, he took his Bible, and with the assistance of Mr. Bell carefully investigated the various passages bearing on the question at issue."

The inquiry proving satisfactory to the Royal conscience, the destined queen was brought in state to the Royal bridegroom, and a week after the celebration of the civil marriage they received the Holy Communion together from the Abuna.

In order to estimate the importance of this innovation, we are informed by Mr. Stern that civil marriages in Abyssinia had almost superceded the solemn unions of the Church. An agreement on the part of the man to pay his bride a certain dower was the only requisite to make her his wife ; but this contract left the parties at liberty to separate whenever they chose. "During the past few years many chieftains, in order to please their sovereign, who abhors these licentious alliances, have sought the Church's Sacrament to hallow and confirm their matrimonial vow ;" and it may therefore be reasonably anticipated that the more recent example of the king will exercise a beneficial moral influence on his subjects generally. "If God continues me in life," said Theodorus in reply to Mr. Stern's congratulations on his marriage, "I shall eradicate all that is bad among my people, and introduce all that is salutary and good."

According to the same authority, Theodorus on his accession to power had abolished the traffic in slaves throughout Abyssinia, but had subsequently rescinded

the new law "to spite the French, who were reported to have landed an invading army on the coast in order to re-establish the Jesuits."

Further, the German artizan missionaries, who had resided five years in the country prior to Mr. Stern's visit, "held the king in high esteem for his probity of sentiment, purity of life, and singleness of purpose;" and Mr. Stern himself, at the conclusion of his book, freely expresses his opinion of him in these words:—

"King Theodorus, as is well known, has always manifested great partiality for Europeans; and any project calculated to enhance the wealth of his empire and the stability of his throne is sure to meet with his countenance and support. Since the death of Mr. Bell, whose judicious counsels exerted the most happy influence over the conduct and actions of the despot, some unfavourable changes have characterized his proceedings; still it admits of little doubt that the present ruler of Abyssinia, with all his faults—which the circumstances of his birth and the condition of his country must in some degree palliate—is a man far in advance of his people in ideas and aspirations, and, whether commercial enterprise is to find a new sphere, or the interests of oppressed humanity in Africa are to be promoted, by a little circumspection and proper judgment, these and other desirable objects may be surely advanced while such a man as King Theodorus occupies the throne of Ethiopia."

It seems reasonable to infer from the foregoing testimonies that Mr. Stern's apology for the despotism and inhumanity of Theodorus is well founded, and that his excesses in those respects are due rather to the fact of his being a successful *parvenu*, and to the normal turbulent spirit of the country, than to any inherent cruelty in his

disposition. Doubtless, ambition is the mainspring of his conduct, but that ambition aims at the ultimate welfare of his subjects as well as at self-aggrandisement. Two objects, more or less intimately connected in his own mind with those aspirations, appear to have engrossed his thoughts. First, he believes himself destined to extirpate Islamism from his dominions; and to restore the ancient limits of the empire by expelling the Turks from the seaboard and reconquering Sennaar from the Viceroy of Egypt. It was probably in order to secure co-operation in these designs that, on his accession to the throne, Theodorus sought the alliance of the Emperor of Russia, the hostilities then existing between the Russians and the Turks seeming to point out the former as the nation most likely to forward his views. Animated by the same spirit, he was reported at one time to have ordered all the Mohammedans in the country to embrace Christianity within a fixed period; and this extreme jealousy of the Turkish authorities at Massowah is so notorious that many native merchants, fearing to compromise themselves by exciting his suspicions, have ceased to frequent that port, and its trade has very much decreased in consequence.

The other object of the king's solicitude was to establish his recently acquired position with his own subjects, by obtaining the recognition of the principal foreign powers, and forming friendly alliances with them. He specially coveted the support of France and England, but his sympathies and reliance seem to have rested chiefly with the latter. As early as 1860 he stated to Mr. Stern, on hearing from him how prisoners of war were treated in other Christian countries, "You are superior to us in all things; and, if God permit, I shall soon send an embassy

to England to open the eyes of at least a few of my people." And in a subsequent part of his narrative Mr. Stern incidentally mentions that Mr. Bell, before his death, had expected to accompany the projected Abyssinian mission to London.

These two objects of the King's anxiety must be carefully borne in mind, as they seem to afford the most probable clue to his subsequent behaviour towards the missionaries, and especially towards Captain Cameron.

But before narrating the sufferings of the unfortunate captives I shall attempt to give a brief account of the antecedent position and proceedings of the missionaries concerned.

Protestant missions, after having been prohibited for many years, were again located in Abyssinia through the medium of Dr. Krapf, accompanied by Mr. Flad, who re-entered the country simultaneously with the expulsion of the foreign Roman Catholic bishop and clergy by Theodorus in 1855. Dr. Krapf's object during that visit was to secure the countenance of the new Emperor to the contemplated mission, which was to consist of pious laymen skilled in various handicraft. On being introduced to the Abuna Dr. Krapf "told him that Bishop Gobat proposed to send Christian artisans to Abyssinia, whose primary occupations would be to work at their trades, but who, at the same time, would be the means of spreading the Gospel both by precept and example. The Abuna rejoined that the King would be glad to receive skilled workmen, and that His Majesty had proposed to write to England, France, and Germany for such persons." Subsequently the Abuna commissioned Mr. Bell to tell Dr. Krapf that he was not to "say anything to the King about the religious vocation of the persons whom Bishop



Gobat proposed to send to Abyssinia, but to dwell on the known and secular character of the mission, as religious matters belonged to the Abuna, who was our friend, and would protect and support Bishop Gobat's people as far as he had it in his power." Dr. Krapf thereupon told Mr. Bell "that Bishop Gobat cared not merely for the temporal weal and civilization of Abyssinia, but principally, and above all things, for the religious regeneration of the country. Mr. Bell replied:—"This is very right and good, and the Abuna knows it to be such; but he bids me tell you not to speak of it to the King, but only about the artisans. For the religious aspect of the matter you will have to arrange with the Abuna himself."

On Dr. Krapf's introduction to Theodorus by the Abuna, the latter "read the letter from Bishop Gobat and the Coptic Patriarch. The King immediately asked, 'Is Gobat well? His letter,' His Majesty continued, 'pleases me, and I wish him to send me for the present only three artisans: a gunsmith, a builder, and an engraver. I will pay them well; and if they are content with what I give them, and satisfy me, I will ask Gobat for more workmen.' When the King had said this, the Abuna observed, 'Your Majesty, however, will not interfere with their religion, but will allow them to live in their own belief.' To this the King replied, 'I will not interfere with matters of belief, that is your business; in regard to that I will do whatever you advise me.'" In accordance with this arrangement, Dr. Krapf informs us that four pupils of the Chrishona Institution at Basle, headed by Mr. Flad, were subsequently dispatched to Abyssinia, where they arrived in April, 1856, and were well received by Theodorus. "They forthwith set to work to distribute Bibles, which they had brought with them,

chiefly in Western Abyssinia, and particularly to the Falashas," or native Jews.\*

It deserves to be noticed here that, as regards the King, these missionaries were introduced into the country in the sole character of artisans. All that passed in the above interview about religion simply bound Theodorus to tolerate their individual belief. The original number sent out was subsequently increased, but whether at the express wish of the King or not I have been unable to ascertain. Most of these were unmarried. It also appears that similar agents from kindred societies in England were dispatched to the same field of labour at a later date.

Among the latter was the Rev. Mr. Stern, who had travelled much in the East, and had the reputation of being a devoted missionary. He went out, accompanied by Messrs. Bronkhorst and Josephson, under the auspices of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, and reached the Royal camp at Lamgie, *viâ* Egypt, in the early part of 1860. At his first audience he took occasion to make the following observation on some remarks made by the king: "That Christianity taught us to love and not to persecute; to instruct and not to oppress the unbelievers. '*Avoonat! avoonat!* (true! true!)' he exclaimed, 'and if this is your design in Abyssinia you have my approval to your mission, if you likewise obtain the assent of the Abuna.'" Further, on asking permission to travel in his realm, Theodorus instantly replied, "I am your brother and friend, and you have my full sanction to visit every province in the kingdom."

\* These quotations are taken verbatim from Dr. Krapf's "Missionary Labours in East Africa."

Mr. Stern's interview with the Abuna I give in his own words :—

“ He,” the Abuna, “ at first surmised that I had made the mission to the Jews a cover to tamper more insidiously with the belief of the Christians ; but my reiterated solemn assurances that our sole aim and desire was to bring the Falashas to the knowledge of the Saviour removed all his suspicions, and elicited his full and unqualified permission to preach and hold assemblies in every Jewish settlement throughout the kingdom.”

Having thus obtained the consent of the King and Abuna to commence operations in the country, Mr. Stern fixed on Genda, a few miles north of the Lake Tzana, as the future missionary station, and then returned to Europe.

I must not omit to notice here that in Mr. Stern's published narrative he occasionally mentions Dr. Krapf's lay missionaries who had preceded him in the country. Some of these gave him much useful information about Abyssinia and its population ; some he found engaged in making roads ; while he thus writes of a colony of three of their number who had established themselves at Gaffat, on the hill formerly occupied by the late Mr. Consul Plowden :—

“ Mr. Flad, one of this little exiled band, together with his partner, a well-educated and self-denying deaconess from Dr. Fleidner's excellent institution at Kaiserswerth, were quite an acquisition to our circle. This worthy couple, true to their high and holy vocation, in the midst of many trials, discouragements, and privations, have, during the last six years, unweariedly laboured to disseminate God's Word among the garrison at Magdala and the peasants who, from all parts of Abyssinia,

periodically supply the fort with provisions. They have circulated hundreds of copies of the Scriptures, instructed numbers of Pagans and Amharas in the great truths of salvation, and both by example and precept, by relieving the sick, and by affectionate and persuasive entreaties addressed to the healthy, have been wonderfully successful in removing much of native prejudice, and in scattering far and wide the seed of the everlasting Gospel."

During Mr. Stern's absence in England he published the work from which these quotations are taken, entitled, "Wanderings among the Falâshas in Abyssinia," and returned to that country, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenthal, reaching the missionary station at Genda in the early part of 1863. They entered Abyssinia under the most favourable auspices, for the king had kindly ordered one of his own officials to conduct them from the borders of the empire to their destination. In the same letter in which he announces his arrival Mr. Stern also expresses his confidence in the continued goodwill of the Abuna, believing that that "dreaded prelate would extend the ægis of his spiritual authority over the mission," in case any adverse contingency should call for his intervention.

"The political state of the country," reports Mr. Stern, shortly after his arrival, "is just now exceedingly critical. Conspiracies among the chiefs and discontent among the people have excited the King to a state bordering on frenzy, and pitiless acts of tyranny are daily perpetrated by his orders. Formerly, the despot's insatiable ambition and fiery passions were in some measure tempted by religious scruples, and a humble reverence for God's Word. The army and nation regarded him as a superior being, chosen to restore peace and prosperity to

a bleeding and distracted empire. His moral rectitude and the spotless purity of his life confirmed this impression, and King Theodorus was the idol of his subjects, and the invulnerable hero of the troops. This illusion his present course of life has dispelled; and it will be his wisdom to retrieve past mistakes and to avoid past errors. I have not yet seen the monarch, who is at present on the confines of Gojam; but probably on the return of my messenger I shall receive a summons to repair to the camp. Towards our work he has of late been very friendly, and if our fervent prayers for him are heard on high he will before long return to the path of exemplary virtue from which he has so sadly departed.”\*

The foregoing extract gives a general view of the state of affairs up to the middle of 1863, but it makes no mention of a transaction which had occurred during Mr. Stern's absence in Europe, and which was destined to have an important bearing on the after-fortune of the missionaries and especially of Captain Cameron.

Towards the latter end of 1862 Theodorus carried into effect his long-cherished project of writing to the Emperor of the French and to the Queen of Great Britain. In his epistle to the former, if not also in that to her Majesty, he exhibited himself as the champion of Christianity, and complained that some portion of the ancient empire of Abyssinia was unjustly held by infidel Mussulmans. † In both letters he sought the friendly alliance of the Sovereigns addressed, and in order to cement that alliance proposed to send an embassy to the two courts. How much importance the king

\* See *Jewish Intelligencer* for November, 1863, pp. 275-8-9.

† About this period Theodorus threatened to invade Sennaar, a province now under the jurisdiction of the Viceroy of Egypt.

attached to the reception which this proposal would meet with will appear in the sequel. His letter to her Majesty reached London in February, 1863.

The next advices from Abyssinia brought the startling and most unexpected intelligence that the Rev. Messrs. Stern and Rosenthal had been thrown into chains by the king, and that the former had been beaten to such an extent that his life was in jeopardy. It was also stated that subsequently, other persons had been involved in the alleged offence, and that all the Europeans could only be regarded as prisoners at large, under surveillance. This intelligence reached London on the 17th March 1864.

The London Society lost no time in representing the situation of its missionaries to the Government, and Mrs. Stern humbly implored the intervention of her Gracious Majesty in behalf of her husband. The official steps taken in consequence are thus stated in the *Jewish Records* for May, 1864:—

“Immediately on the receipt of the above news, a week before they reached the committee, Lord Russell directed the consul general at Alexandria to open up communications with Abyssinia, which we hope and pray may result in the liberation of the captives, amongst whom, it is to be feared, we must number her Majesty’s consul also.”

What measures were adopted by the consul general in consequence of these instructions, have not been made public. Thus much is certain, that up to the latest date no amelioration had taken place in the situation of the captives.

Setting aside that subject for the present I shall now proceed to give an account of the sufferings of the captives, of the offences alleged against them, and of the causes which appear to have provoked the hostility of the

king towards Europeans generally, but especially towards our fellow-countrymen. In so doing I shall condense the narrative written by one who was on the spot, and shared for a time in the imprisonment of his brother missionaries but was subsequently released, and reached Europe in safety.\* I shall append a running commentary in brackets wherever allusions are made which may not readily be understood by the general reader.

It appears that in September, 1863, a message dispatched by her Majesty's consul from Gondar to Massowah, was stopped on the way by the governor of Woggera, who seized the letters and sent the messenger back to Gondar. "With the seizure of these letters began the sufferings to which several Europeans, but especially Messrs. Stern and Rosenthal, were exposed."

[It is highly probable that the packet was the consular mail, and contained communications from the Europeans generally, and that the seizure was ordered by Theodorus, whose suspicions had been excited by some treacherous persons about him.]

Captain Cameron having complained of this outrage to the king, the latter took the messenger with him to Woggera and sent him to the governor to demand back the letters. The governor told him that they had been lost, and when the man repeated this to the king his Majesty replied, "He has done you justice ; give him (the servant) stripes into the bargain."

[By this time Theodorus had doubtless become acquainted with the contents of some of the letters.]

It was at this unfortunate juncture that Mr. Stern,

\* The narrative in full will be found in *Christian Work* for May, 1864, a most interesting and valuable periodical, published at *Good Words Office, 32, Ludgate Hill.*

who had not seen the king since his return to Abyssinia, waited on his Majesty, accompanied by a servant of Mr. Flad's, and another belonging to the consul. The latter acted as Mr. Stern's interpreter, but failing to do so satisfactorily, the king was enraged and ordered both servants to be beaten with cudgels. Unable to restrain his feelings, Mr. Stern turned round and bit his finger. This gesture, it appears, is regarded in Abyssinia as indicative of revenge, and the king noticing it ordered Stern also to be beaten. The two servants died that night, and Mr. Stern, whose life also had been in danger, was subsequently taken to Gondar by the king chained to a soldier. His papers were then searched, but nothing condemnatory was at that time found on him.

The English consul sent immediately to Mr. Flad, requesting him to come to him to act as his interpreter. The king, however, refused to admit the consul to his presence, whereupon the latter wrote a letter, in which he referred to the friendship which had long subsisted between England and Abyssinia. Thereat the king ordered him to be asked, "Where are the proofs of this friendship?" He meant the letters that were expected from England.

[Allusion is here evidently made to the letter sent by Theodorus to Her Majesty, proposing to send a mission to England, &c. That letter, as already stated, reached London early in February, 1863. It was now September of the same year, and the king, considering that his dignity had been slighted, was highly incensed at the delay.]

Stern having satisfactorily explained his ignorance of the local meaning attached to the gesture of biting the finger, no more was said on that subject; but other



charges were brought against him of disparaging the king's conduct, and for having taken certain photographic views.

[Mr. Stern had taken out a photographic apparatus with him and used it. What the subjects were which excited the anger of the king does not appear ; but in a semi-barbarous country where superstition predominates, and in Abyssinia especially, where jealousy of foreign surveys is notorious, the practice of sketching or taking drawings by any other process, without the express sanction of the authorities, is highly dangerous.]

While in prison Mr. Stern employed his time in erasing the most obnoxious passages from his journals, but every attempt made by the Abuna and the lay missionaries in his behalf failed, and the king would not endure the slightest interference on the part of the consul.

"It must not be left unnoticed," says the writer of the narrative, "that Stern had once in Europe spoken somewhat one-sidedly on the subject of the labouring missionaries at Gaffat. This was discovered by Stern's papers, and the king thenceforward began to look upon Stern as a common enemy both of himself and of his friends and children, as he named these people. It must likewise have been whispered to the king by some one or other that there were expressions adverse to him also to be found in Stern's papers. These were, therefore, all re-examined in the king's presence, and the Frenchman, Bardel, with the Abyssinian, Beru, were commissioned to translate them, while Stern was forthwith put in fetters. Besides this, several memorials by Rosenthal were also found and translated."

[To explain this : it appears that on Mr. Stern's return to Abyssinia he had found fault with some of the artizan

missionaries for having, as he judged, entirely secularized themselves and their labours, to the abandonment of the higher object of their mission. Moreover, they worked on Sundays in the public service, and several of them had contracted alliances with native women. As Mr. Stern had doubtless expressed his opinions on this matter to the parties themselves, it is most likely that he had also discussed it in his correspondence. It was, however, an affair in which the king had no right to interfere; but the artisan missionaries were evidently much more prized by him than their clerical brethren, and he consequently chose to espouse their cause.

[It has been surmised that the lay missionaries were the first to complain on this subject to the king; but such an hypothesis should not be entertained without the clearest proof of their complicity. So much is certain, that on learning this cause of the king's displeasure, they urgently petitioned his Majesty on behalf of the prisoners.

[With more show of reason the treachery is presumed to rest with the Frenchman Bardel. This person is reported to have entered Abyssinia as an adventurer. He is supposed to have been in league with the expelled Jesuits, and was seeking to ingratiate himself with the king, in the hope of getting the French consulship, which was vacant at the time. Theodorus appears to have made use of him to convict the missionaries, but his true character being subsequently suspected or discovered, he fell into disgrace, and we find his name among those enumerated in Captain Cameron's note as being chained like himself at Gondar.]

To proceed. On the 13th of November, 1863, one Ras Hailu, with 4,000 soldiers, came to Genda, seized

most of the missionaries, including Mrs. Flad, and after binding them conducted them to Gondar, treating them most ignominiously by the way. The day following they reached the royal camp, where heavier chains were laid upon them, and when the Rev. Mr. Rosenthal was also bound. Being literally dragged before the king the latter asked Rosenthal why he had abused him. Rosenthal denied the charge, whereupon the king rejoined, "That will appear ; put fetters on his feet."

It appears by the narrative from which this account is taken that in the indiscriminate seizure of the missionaries some had been apprehended by mistake ; among the latter were Messrs. Flad, Branders, Staiger, and the writer of the narrative—all artizans. These the king sent for, and received in a most friendly manner, calling them his children, and directing all their property to be restored. Meanwhile Stern and Rosenthal were almost starved, and it was only by bribing the gaolers that Captain Cameron and Mr. Flad contrived to supply them with sufficient food to sustain life.

On the 20th of November there was a grand judicial assembly, to which all the Europeans were invited. Many thousand spectators formed a semi-circle. On an elevation opposite them sat the king, and behind him the superior of the monks. On the ground beside the throne were Zandel and Bardel, a German and a Frenchman. In the middle of the open space sat the other Europeans in a row, and beside them the Abyssinian grandees. The two prisoners stood bound by the arm, opposite the king, looking—Stern especially—so wretched and squalid that it was pitiable to behold them.

The chief ground of complaint against Stern was an observation in his note-book on a previously notorious

action of the king. That is, that having gained a victory over the rebel Gerred, who had put to death the English consul, Flowden, the king, partly to punish rebels and partly in his indignation at the loss of his beloved adjutant, Mr. Bell, had caused the captives to be immediately massacred as a sin offering. Mr. Stern had spoken of this as a cold-blooded murder.\* Other remarks made against Flad and the [artisan] missionaries in Darna were read out, and Stern was reproached with them. The complaints against Rosenthal were still more grievous; but the king regarded him as a novice, and did not impute his faults to malignity, whereas he hated Stern.

The upshot of this council was that on consulting with his grandees some voted for putting the culprits to death, that being the penalty prescribed by Abyssinian law for those who revile the king; but others dissuaded his Majesty from such a step. The advice of the latter prevailed, and the two missionaries were freed from their chains and confined in a tent.

Two days later the following event served to heighten the rage of the king, and to add to the peril of all the Europeans concerned:—

“On the 22nd November, 1863, a young Englishman arrived with the long-expected letters. The packet, however, contained no letter from the English Government to the king in answer to the one he had dispatched to England. The consul only got a letter, with a kind of reprimand, and instructions to go to his post at Massowah. This was at the moment a most untoward circumstance. If the consul erewhile had his hands

\* See the quotations from Dr. Beke's pamphlet. Mr. Stern had published similar statements in his book on Abyssinia.

half bound, they were now bound altogether. The king had a right to expect an answer from England; and a favourable answer would, doubtless, have put him into the best possible humour, for he was desirous of the friendship of England. But now it is most improbable that the king will ever liberate the captives, or even let the consul go free, unless the expected letters arrive."

Such is the conclusion of the missionary narrative. The following, from an entirely independent source, and collected with great care from natives and Europeans who had good opportunities of knowing what had actually transpired, confirms much of the foregoing with the addition of several details of some importance:—

"Many causes are assigned for the rupture which has occurred between the king and the Europeans. It is alleged, in the first place, that it had been reported to his Majesty that his so-called European friends were in the habit of going about abusing him and his government to his subjects. Cameron, it is said, had been warned to repair to the coast. He deferred his departure from day to day, and on leaving went to the Egyptian frontier, returning from thence to Gondar. This vexed the king exceedingly\*, but what brought matters to a crisis was the fact that the Rev. Mr. Stern had been seen going about the country taking sketches. The latter gentleman was apprehended and taken to Gondar. On his arrival there the king had some of his servants flogged for not having reported their master's doings. This action having excited Mr. Stern's anger, he had him flogged also. As

\* Bearing in mind the King's jealousy of the Turks, and that about this period he threatened an invasion of Sennaar, such a movement on the part of our consul, if it actually occurred, was likely to excite his suspicions.

ill-luck would have it, a rumour was circulated at this time that a French general, with numerous followers had penetrated into the interior with warlike intentions. It subsequently turned out that the self-styled general was a French adventurer, with a band of about thirty vagabond Italians, Germans, and Frenchmen, whose object it appears was to join the Gallas against their hereditary enemies the Amharas. No sooner, however, did they hear of the king's hostile proceedings towards the Europeans than they betook themselves to the coast, and finally reached Aden and Jiddah in a state of extreme destitution.

“After Mr. Stern had been flogged, all the Europeans with the exception of some artisans who worked for the king, were ordered to be imprisoned, and amongst them the French consul, who had only been three months in Abyssinia. He had provoked the king by protesting against one of his judicial acts; but he was released shortly after, reached Massowah broken-hearted, and finally left for Jiddah.

“It is also currently stated that the king was highly indignant because he had received no answer to a letter which he had addressed to the Queen of England, and because the Emperor of the French had replied to him through the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In the dispatch of the latter, and with reference to a complaint which Theodorus had made respecting the conduct of the Egyptian government, his Majesty was told that as a Christian sovereign he ought to show a good example in the quiet administration of his empire. It is reported that when this letter was read out to him Theodrus tore it to pieces, and trod it under his feet.”

Such are the details of this most distressing episode in

our relations with Abyssinia. From them the reader may form his own judgment of the culpability of the different parties concerned. Fortuitous circumstances, most adverse to the alleged offenders, ruled throughout. Captain Cameron's reported visit to the Egyptian frontier has yet to be confirmed ; but, if true, it may turn out to have been one of duty, or he may have hoped to leave the country by that route, and was disappointed. The Rev. Mr. Stern's use of a photographic apparatus may have been indiscreet, but cannot be held to justify his barbarous treatment by the King. The obnoxious passages in his published writings and private correspondence constitute a more serious charge. The facts stated by him were unquestionably true, but he could hardly have anticipated the probability of their being brought to the notice of Theodorus. Those who were guilty of such treachery deserve the highest reprobation ; but although the King's anger at the discovery may be excused, his excesses of cruelty towards the unwary writers, who had moreover eulogized him for his many praiseworthy qualities, cannot be palliated. It was most unfortunate that no answer was sent from this country to his Majesty's letter, and more unfortunate still that instead of the expected answer orders were sent to the consul to repair to the coast, which orders were seized and read by the King while Captain Cameron was a prisoner at his court. Of course, such a contingency could not have been foreseen ; but this fresh blow to his wounded dignity very naturally exasperated the already highly offended despot. There cannot be two opinions, however, on his conduct towards Her Majesty's consul. It is characterised throughout by a wanton disregard of the sacred position attached to the represen-

tative of a friendly power, and constitutes a deliberate and most outrageous insult to the Sovereign and Government of Great Britain.

The latest intelligence received direct from the captives is contained in the following note, which Captain Cameron succeeded in despatching to Massowah. As Mr. Speedy, to whom it was addressed, had previously left that place, it did not reach Aden till the end of April :—

“GONDAR, *Feb.* 14, 1864.

“Myself, Stern, Rosenthal, Cairns, Bardel, and M’Kilvie, are all in chains here. Flad, Staiger, Branders, and Cornelius,\* sent to Gaffat to work for King. No release until civil answer to King’s letter arrives. Mrs. Flad, Mrs. Rosenthal, and children, all of us well. Write this to Aden, and to Mrs. Stern, 16, Lincoln’s-inn-fields.

—“To C. SPEEDY, Esq., Massowah.”

The above note reached London on the 25th of May last, and steps were immediately taken to intervene in behalf of the captives. It is stated on reliable authority that a letter from Her Majesty was addressed to Theodorus, and that other letters were procured from the Coptic Patriarch at Cairo to the King, and also to the Abuna of Abyssinia. Mr. Hormuzd Rassam was charged with the delivery of these letters, and in the prosecution of his

\* Most of the above are missionaries, but two of the names have not been recognized. Bardel, as already mentioned, is a Frenchman. “Cairns,” or Croire, is supposed to be a French baker, who was employed by Captain Cameron.

“Sent to Gaffat to work for King,” does not imply punishment. It was the ordinary avocation of the artisan missionaries named to work at their different trades in the royal service. Mr. Cornelius, a colporteur, is since reported to have died of natural causes.



mission reached Massowah in a steamer belonging to the Indian government on the 20th August.

A more judicious selection could not have been made. Mr. Rassam is well known to the English public as having co-operated with Mr. Layard in the excavations at Nineveh, and was very successful in keeping up a good understanding between the Arab tribes. For the last nine years he has been assistant to the Political Resident at Aden, and in that capacity has been employed by the Bombay government on several important commissions. His tact and discretion may be relied on implicitly, and we may be assured that nothing will be wanting on his part to bring the mission with which he has been entrusted to a favourable issue.

It is to be deplored that thus far his efforts have been unsuccessful. On arriving at Massowah he immediately communicated with the King, apprising him that he was the bearer of letters from Her Majesty. Intelligence had reached him that the messenger had arrived safely at Gondar, but as late as the 4th of November, after having been at Massowah for two months and a half, he had received no reply whatever from the King. He had subsequently despatched another messenger, and by the last advices was waiting anxiously for a favourable answer, in order that he might proceed at once on his mission. Should his visit to Gondar be sanctioned by the King a great point will have been gained. It will then depend very much on the tenor of the letters of which he is the bearer whether Theodorus will relent and release the captives. That, of course, is the primary object to be desired, and that secured it will then rest with the British government to decide how they will vindicate our Sovereign's insulted dignity and a nation's honour on the

haughty despot who has dared to outrage both in the person of Her Majesty's representative and other of her loyal subjects.

Having thus stated the whole case as regards our captive fellow-countrymen in Abyssinia, I shall conclude by quoting the following extract from a recent letter written by Dr. Krapf, and published in *Christian Work* for December, 1864 :—

“England has shown herself of late very weak in Europe, for which, however, she may be praised, as by her conduct in continental affairs she has prevented a general European war. But will she allow herself to be insulted by barbarous and uncivilised nations, merely from a motive of saving money rather than her honour? Will not only European but even uncivilised nations say—The English lion has grown old and lost his powerful teeth? England may be sure that she will lose the respect of Eastern nations if she allow an unprincipled despot to ill-treat her own representative and subjects with impunity. Neither France nor Russia would endure such an insult.”

*The Standard*, December 23, 1864.

*CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF THE  
BRITISH CAPTIVES IN ABYSSINIA.*

NOVEMBER, 1864, TO JULY, 1867.

BY THE EDITOR.

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**M**R. BADGER having brought the story of the captivity down to the end of the year 1864 the editor has attempted a continuation to the present time.

It will be remembered that Mr. Rassam was still waiting at Massowah after having despatched two messengers to the King, informing his Highness of his arrival, and requesting permission to proceed into the interior. This gentleman arrived here in August, 1864; and here he remained until the latter part of the August following. The King, although made acquainted with his arrival, did not immediately trouble himself about the new envoy. It is said that he was not pleased with Mr. Rassam's letter, which he interpreted to mean that the presents would only be handed over to him when the captives were liberated; and he was annoyed at the fact of common messengers being sent with the document. Whether true or not, it has also been stated that two sharp Abyssinians from Theodore's court were despatched to Massowah to report to the King the character of the embassy,—in other words, the apparent importance of the people composing it. At any rate, the monarch took no

notice of Mr. Rassam ; and as the rebels were to be met with on every road leading to his court, and no escort was forthcoming to conduct the envoy through disaffected Tigré, the British representative thought proper to stay at Massowah, under Egyptian protection. The Queen's letter, too, which Mr. Rassam had to deliver, was found to be without the royal signet, and another one properly signed had to be sent for from London.

In the meantime, little or no intelligence was received from the captives. Occasionally they appear to have smuggled a letter to Mr. Rassam, of whose mission they had heard ; and sometimes a letter from Mr. Stern would reach England ; but the information contained in these is very scanty, and we scarcely know anything of what transpired with Cameron and his fellow-captives betwixt November, 1864, and July, 1865. It would seem that for some months after Mr. Rassam's arrival out, all matters affecting the prisoners were in a state of suspense. The King was undecided what course to pursue until Rassam's mission had either been accepted or declined. Up to July, 1865, Consul Cameron and the missionaries were still in chains ; the King had scarcely noticed them ; and their hardships appear to have been increased or diminished, along with those of the other prisoners, according to Theodore's temper, rather than from any outbursts of the monarch specially directed against them.

A passage in one of Mr. Stern's letters gives us some idea of their prison life. It was during this time also that the King expressed so much curiosity concerning the pictures in some of our illustrated journals which had fallen into his hands :—"Settled down into regular prison habits," says Mr. Stern, "our days were idled away in listless inactivity or anxious care. Now and

then our evenings were varied by a quarrel with the guards, who, reckless about space, thronged in groups into our tents, and impregnated the already stifling atmosphere with the putrescent odours of their fœtid garments and buttered heads. The Negus, too, occasionally relieved the dulness of our existence by a message to the Consul, or the gift of a cow or a few sheep. Sometimes he also sent and requested to know the meaning of a sketch in the *Illustrated London News*, sometimes of a Bible picture, sometimes of an illuminated advertisement torn out of an unfortunate Monthly ; *but most of all* was the inquisitive descendant of Solomon interested by the caricatures of *Punch* ! ”

The home Government, finding that Mr. Rassam had up to this time accomplished nothing, now began to think of sending another Envoy. Accordingly Earl Russell requested Mr. Gifford Palgrave, the Arabian traveller, to undertake a mission to King Theodore. In August, 1865, Mr. Rassam was recalled to Aden, his previous residence ; but having just at this time received intelligence from the Abyssinian Court, he started for Suez, and telegraphed to Colonel Stanton at Cairo, that the King had written him a letter, and Cameron had been released, and he now wished to know what further should be done. The news of the release was at once flashed to England, Mr. Palgrave's mission was stopped, and on the following morning all the London papers gave the telegram ; but it was not long before an interpretation of the telegram was published in the same papers :—*“Consul Cameron had been released from his chains only.”*

How this mistake occurred is not now very clear ; a fuller despatch informed our Government of the nature

of the correspondence which had passed betwixt Theodore and our Envoy, and of the arrangement that the latter should set out for the Court as soon as the rainy season was over. It may be mentioned that during his absence from Massowah the Embassy had been strengthened by the arrival of Dr. Blanc and Lieut. Prideaux from Aden.

In October, finding that the disturbances around Kassala (going in which direction they would avoid the rebels of Tigré) were at an end, they started for Matemmeh, and in the despatches sent from thence we learn, under date "Nov. 27th, 1865. *Matemma*.—Rassam, Prideaux, and Dr. Blanc arrived here from Massowah by way of Kassala. Great attention paid to the party by brother of the Nayab. Display of military at Kassala in honour of Mr. Rassam. Abouna still imprisoned by the King. Magdala roads very insecure. King Theodore has been prowling about between here and Debra Tabor for a week, searching for rebels: he is going to Gojam. Mr. Eipperte (missionary) says King expects Rassam; and that of late he entertains utter contempt for all Europeans, and has taken into his head to nickname them all by a certain insulting epithet." Prisoners at Debra Tabor in same fettered condition. Mr. Rassam makes one strange entry in his despatch:—

"I am sorry to say that slavery is carried on in these parts on a most extensive scale. I am told that during the next two months thousands of unfortunate Galla girls and boys will be brought down to the fair, which is held here annually at this time of the year. It is reported that even missionaries do not scruple to deal in this inhuman traffic. How far this assertion can be relied on, I am unable to say; but I can vouch for







one fact, and that is, there are certain lay missionaries who have been purchasing slaves for the purpose of bringing them up in the Christian faith, which proceeding is not only scandalous, but a disgrace to the name of any Christian society."

Already, and before he had seen them, Mr. Rassam appears to have had no small difficulty with the captives themselves. Cameron had been "spending money heedlessly," and a spirit of dissension had sprung up amongst them. It is amusing to remark the particulars in some of Cameron's hurried notes to Rassam: "Send me more money," he writes to the latter, "and a cuckoo clock, and a carpet for the messenger's master, who runs great risks for us." The King at this time was in the Gojam mountains, pursuing the rebels. Bardel, the Frenchman who is said to have acted treacherously to the English captives, "would have starved but for money given him by Cameron." Both Cameron and his fellow-captives were chained hand and foot, but the King of a sudden recollected them, and sent them a cow apiece. The missionary, Flad, was at Gaffat (Nov. 1865), and in communication with Mr. Rassam, advising him as to the hoped-for interview with the King, to whom Rassam had again sent messengers announcing his arrival thus far (he had previously despatched messengers from Kassala asking for an escort), but without having as yet received any reply.

At last, however, the King wrote to Rassam. This was late in December. He said he would be glad to see him if he came to Debra Tabor. Accordingly, our envoy started to meet his Majesty, and expected to come up with him near the lake Tzana.

The letter was civil if not friendly, and it was thought

that, notwithstanding the delay and disappointment which had occurred, the object of the expedition would after all be accomplished. Mr. Rassam wrote home at the time :—

“The messengers give great hopes as to the success of our mission ; and from the munificent way the King has treated the whole (seven in number), the aspect of matters looks more cheering. He dressed them all handsomely, and presented each of them with a fine mule. It is currently rumoured that the King had been heard to say that he would try the European prisoners again in my presence, and that he intended to constitute me a judge between him and them on the charge of treason.”

The King had also directed a carriage to be prepared to conduct the visitors to the Royal Guard in waiting. This is the opening of the King's first letter to Rassam :—

*King Theodore to Mr. Rassam.*

*(Translation.)*

*In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God, praise be to Him for ever. Amen. To the beloved and noble Hormuz Rassam.*

*After offering to you salutations, and asking after your good health, we praise God abundantly that we are well and in the best of health. We inform you that we have received your note dated the 22nd November, and understood it to the letter, and we thanked the Creator for your friendship. Now, oh beloved, we have explained to you that the omission of our name to this letter has been occasioned by the people whom I used to love, and who used to sit on my bed [i.e., at my board], but who had reviled us.*

Lieut.-Col. Merewether, who had recommended Mr.

Rassam's mission, wrote off joyously to his Government from Aden :—"I am glad to be able to give excellent reports of Mr. Rassam's progress ; as I expected, he had only to push on and reach Matemma to find everything smooth before him."

With respect to the moneys which Cameron was distributing so nobly amongst all the European prisoners alike, an act that had brought upon him the censure of both Mr. Rassam and Lieut.-Col. Merewether, the latter, overjoyed at the prospect of a release of the prisoners, now expressed himself—"Charge to her Majesty's government *all* disbursements; any moneys sent up to the captives were intended for the benefit of the whole, and to be distributed by Captain Cameron as he found best."

April 18, 1866.—Matters continued to look very cheering with Mr. Rassam and his party. A letter from our envoy at this date says :—

"We are all now staying at the King's court as his guests, and not a day passes without his showing us marked civility and attention.

"On the 16th instant all the released prisoners were brought before him, and after some charges were read before the Ministers of State and nobles to different prisoners, they all confessed their faults, and begged his Majesty's forgiveness. The Emperor very graciously pardoned them, and said that henceforth he would love them and show them the regard which he has shown me and my companions. We all had another meeting with his Majesty yesterday, and nothing could exceed his courteous and polite behaviour on that occasion. He told me that he wished to see more of me, in order that I might benefit him with my friendly advice.

“From my letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, you will perceive that he wishes to have some artisans and instructors of artillery ; and I send, in conjunction with him, Mr. Flad, one of the released prisoners, to carry the letter to England, and bring back an answer. Mr. Flad is a very good man.”

After giving all the captives their liberty, the King expressed a wish that Mr. Flad should proceed to England as his agent, and obtain artisans and tools. That the home Government might render every assistance, Mr. Rassam wrote that he had sent Flad “in conjunction” with the King.

Consul Cameron, too, wrote off to a friend in the joy of the moment—“Mr. Rassam will have imparted to you the good news of our deliverance from imprisonment, and of our having been formally reconciled with his Majesty the King Theodore since our arrival here ;” and most of the other prisoners announced the good tidings of their release to their relations at home.

From Dr. Blanc’s letter, written two days after, we can, however, just begin to discover Theodore’s policy. Dr. Blanc writes :—

“His Imperial Majesty has just given us some very handsome presents, and continues to treat us with the kindness he showed us since our arrival in the country. A few days ago I sent you an account of the handsome hospitality and reception we had met at his hands. *The Emperor desires, for the sake of friendship, that we should stay a few months longer in his country ;* if it was not for our families at home, nothing could be more agreeable to us.”

The desire that Mr. Rassam and his friends should not leave *just yet* was the first intimation of the King’s intention in the future.

After this nothing more was heard direct from Mr. Rassam for some weeks, and the rumour at Alexandria that Cameron had tried to escape without saying "good-bye" to the King—which the latter had particularly requested—was the only news of any kind that arrived in this country from the captives up to the end of June.

Mr. Flad, who had been despatched to England for artisans and tools, reached Aden, on his way to London, June 21st; and as "he had not a change of clothes," and was without money, the consul there gave him some.

It was from Mr. Flad that the story of Rassam's failure in negotiating the release of the captives, and the subsequent imprisonment of all the Europeans, was obtained. From him we learnt that, on the very day the King had appointed for the captives to leave on their return journey, the whole of the party, including Mr. Rassam, her Majesty's envoy, and his companions, Prideaux and Dr. Blanc, were suddenly made prisoners by order of the King. Mr. Flad, too, was seized and imprisoned along with the rest. The alleged reason was that the captives had started without bidding his Majesty farewell. Rassam tried to explain that he had come himself to say good-bye, but that his Majesty had given the others permission to depart at once. This was of no avail. The King did not really want them to go, and he only trumped up the best excuse he could for detaining them. Rassam and his two companions were treated with some show of dignity. They were allowed to sit on the carpet, and when ordered from the King's presence were taken to a tent; whilst the missionaries and other captives were sent to a new prison, *built a fortnight before, to hold Mr. Rassam and his friends!* The natives now began to whisper that *a month previously* the King had made up his mind to keep

Rassam, in order to get a "kasa" (a ransom) from the Queen.

On one occasion the King asked the European artisans what he should do with Mr. Rassam. "Let him go," they said, "and make friendship with England." "But," replied the monarch, "if they are gone, what have I? An empty hand!"—in other words, no hostages.

In Abyssinia, if a man is troublesome or obnoxious, the fashion appears to be for the monarch to have him killed; if any money or influence can be made out of him, he is kept as a hostage. The personal effects of the prisoners were registered; part was kept by the King, the rest was handed back to the owners. Cameron's party, at Korata, were made to mount their mules, and taken to a village to hear a King's letter read. All their clothes and goods were taken from them, and they were chained two and two. Mr. Flad says—"In the evening we were brought in two different houses, the ladies and children together with us. We had no bed and nothing to eat—everything was taken from us. It was something heartrending to hear the poor little children weeping and crying, one asking for a bit of bread, another for milk, and another for his supper and his bed." The fearful night passed; they were taken to the other side of the Lake, and then conducted to their prison, a mile off. On the day after, they were all brought before his Majesty. Rassam's party was sitting on the carpet. To the soldier who had to take Cameron's chain off, the King jestingly said, "Take care, don't touch him [Cameron]; he is unclean." Bardel, the Frenchman, was also released. The King now commenced questioning: "Why did you wish to go from my country before you took leave of me? To those who had none, I wished to give money and a

mule for the journey ; but you [Mr. Rassam] said you had mules and money enough. For your sake, now they are in chains again. From the day you said you wished to send them by another road I got suspicious, and thought that you wished to do so in order that you might say in your country you had released them by your prudence or by your power. Who are you ? Are you a king ? Or are you only the servant of the Queen of England ?”

The King then cross-questioned Cameron, Flad, Stern, Rosenthal, and the rest ; all of whom pleaded “ Guilty,” as their wisest course. Mr. Stern suggested that, as St. Peter had in a bad hour betrayed his Master, and was forgiven for the act, so King Theodore might forgive him ; but the latter did not seem to think so.

“ Did you not call me a wild king, because I killed that man at Gondar ?” asked the King of Rosenthal.

“ Yes, I did.”

“ Well, then, that man was a murderer ; and in your country they put murderers to death,” retorted the King.

They were now all requested to rise ; and Rassam was told that as the guilt of the whole party had been conclusively shown to him, he must stay as a hostage, and send to England for mechanics “ to open the King’s eyes.” After this, the King appeared to be extremely anxious to prove that he was of noble blood, although his mother was poor [she sold tapeworm medicine]. Fifteen witnesses were immediately called to show that his mother came from the line of the ancient kings ; the whole of which family history Mr. Rassam and party having patiently listened to, the King was again entreated to let the prisoners go. “ Not now,” was the answer.

On the following day they were all called up to hear

Dr. Beke's petition read, which had just arrived from Massowah. [Dr. Beke having offered to take a petition from the relatives of the captives to King Theodore, he reached the coast just at this juncture.] Cameron read the document, and the King seemed somewhat softened. It alluded to Plowden, and the time when Theodore was fighting for the crown ; and the latter broke out, "It is the devil who made me angry with you. From my childhood I liked the English. By the power of God ! I will fight the Turks, but I never thought of fighting the English. Mr. Rassam, you are the best man I ever saw in my life ! I pray you all to forgive me." They all knelt down and asked the King to forgive them. He replied, "For God's sake, I do forgive you !" He then gave them all liberty to write to their friends, and promised shortly to release them.

For the moment, Dr. Beke's appeal seems to have touched the better nature of the King, but he soon relapsed to his old idea of a substantial ransom before liberation, and the workmen and implements from England he was determined to have. The King again told Rassam that he wished him to stay with him until his friend the Queen of England would send him a "kasa," *i. e.*, artists, tools, machines, &c. ; for which purpose he (Rassam) should write letters, and send one of the Europeans, as previously arranged, who would bring back the "kasa." The King himself dictated this second letter, and he again selected Flad to carry it, for the reason, he afterwards said, that "to a European, his heart is his wife, and his eyes are his children. Mr. Flad has a wife and three children, whom I will keep here, and then, I am certain that he will return and bring me an answer." Mr. Flad left at the end of April,



the King making a great show of friendship and courtesy to Mr. Rassam on the day when he took his departure, giving him presents, on purpose that the missionary might carry the news to Europe. The King sent away all the soldiers who had been hitherto watching the captives day and night, saying, "Get off, you naughty people; it is not necessary that you watch my friends and my brother Rassam."

Mr. Flad then started, after "taking a heartburning leave" of "his wife and dear children, leaving them in the hands of the savage Theodore, the cruel, inhuman, and sly despot." The missionary ends his letter by begging that "no public use may be made of it;" but the Foreign Office thought differently, and published the document three months ago. If, as they say, Theodore gets a great many more books and papers concerning himself than is generally believed, it is to be hoped that the report of Mr. Flad will not fall into the King's hands, or mischief may ensue.

In due course the missionary reached London, when he sent to our Government a most interesting account of the origin and progress of the captivity, from which the following passage may be worth reproducing here:—

"Captain Cameron, when he first came to Abyssinia, brought with him M. Bardel, a Frenchman, as secretary, a man of very equivocal character; quarrelling with him and separating, he made him his constant enemy. I believe he is one of those who put suspicion against Mr. Rassam and the English Government into the heart of the King, and who advised him to take hostages from England, else they would revenge themselves, after they had liberated their subjects.

"M. Bardel, after having been dismissed, entered the

King's service. The King sent him with a letter to the Emperor of France. The contents of the letter were similar to that sent by Captain Cameron to the Queen of England.

[It is now well known that this letter was a *forgery*. M. Bardel obtained an audience with an inferior French official, but finding that he could gain no admission to the Imperial presence, he concocted a reply to Theodore and dabbed a large imitation official wax seal on the outside.]

"After nine months, M. Bardel returned with an answer to the King's letter. Though his Majesty was not much pleased with the answer of the Emperor Napoleon, he gave permission to the French consul, M. Lejean, and Dr. Lugard, who had been kept for three or four months as prisoners, to leave his country. [They can scarcely be called "prisoners," as they were allowed to go at large, to do what they liked, and have what they wanted,—only they were told not to leave without the King's permission. They were never treated like the British captives.] At that time M. Bardel reported in Abyssinia that the English Government would send no answer to the King, because they like much more the Egyptians than him. From whence M. Bardel had received this information I don't know. I must say, the Government, the newspapers, and societies like that who sent Dr. Beke, acted very imprudently since our capture began. If some of those letters and despatches should be sent by one of our enemies to King Theodore, they would be enough to provoke him to kill in one day, not only the English, but every European. Until the Government has succeeded in procuring their release, the newspapers should write no articles regarding them. This

is now especially necessary, because M. Bardel is again on very friendly terms with Theodore, and he has his correspondent, Pater Delmanty (Roman priest), at Massowah and Hallai. M. Bardel is a man who would not care much if all our people should be killed in one day."

Mr. Flad then gives a particular account of the causes which led to the captivity; and ends his paper by saying that, "if England takes a hostile position against Abyssinia, there is reason to fear that a fatalist like the King would at once slaughter all our people, together with his European workmen; or, as soon as hostile troops enter Abyssinia, he might take our people, and retiring to any distant Galla country, he would torture them, in order to force them to write, that the troops shall leave his dominions. Therefore, it is most desirable to finish with this man in peace." Both Flad and the other Europeans, however, advised a different policy soon after this.

Just at this time it was reported that the Egyptians had determined upon a descent into Abyssinia, in the Bogos country, to settle an old boundary quarrel; but both Mr. Flad and Colonel Merewether begged of our Government to request Egypt to abstain from such a course at this juncture, as it would certainly be construed by Theodore as the result of English interference. Whether true or not, the authorities at Cairo denied any such intention on their part.

For some time after Flad left, the King was "more kind than ever," inviting Mr. Rassam out on a shooting excursion, presenting him with a handsome gun, and giving his friends fine horses and saddles. To mark further his respect for England, he gave a grand entertainment on the 24th of May, and fired a royal salute in honour of her Majesty's birthday. The occasion was

kept as a general holiday, and nothing but feasting was thought of. It is such freaks as these which make the present Abyssinian difficulty so incomprehensible.

When Mr. Flad had gone, Rassam found that the King had a great number of European workmen engaged for him, making small cannons and mortars, which, however, were so imperfectly formed that the gunners could not hit anything with them. Rassam wrote to Colonel Merewether, at Aden, to send him some books upon artillery practice, and begged him to include "a dozen pieces of shirting, and no end of buttons!"

After he had been a few weeks in England, Mr. Flad obtained an audience of her Majesty, and he wrote to Theodore that he hoped to be back at Massowah in October. "Of her Majesty," he wrote, "I have seen nothing but friendship. Once I had dinner at her Majesty's castle. Queen Victoria is a little grieved, saying, 'Why has the Emperor Theodore not sent over to me the prisoners, whose relations are daily weeping before me?'" In conclusion, Mr. Flad gives the King a little European news: "There is a great war in Germany; the King of Prussia humbled himself before God, and was earnestly praying, out of which came that he got the victory over Austria. Throughout Europe is great sickness, and a number of people die every day. In Persia sixteen villages were swallowed up from the earth."

In the next communications from the captives we learn that cholera had broken out in the royal camp, and the King had removed his army to Debra Tabor, and sent Rassam with his companions on to Gaffat. They were all well treated up to July 8, but after that the King's manner suddenly changed. Their property was taken

from them; they were put in irons, and sent off to Magdala. "*M. Bardel accompanied them, but apparently more as a soldier of the King than as a prisoner.*" Mrs. Flad wrote to her husband, "Samuel has made all this mischief, and certainly he has been influenced by M. Bardel, who is in the King's favour." The missionary's wife, however, was told by Theodore not to be alarmed, as she "was the wife of *his son Flad.*"

Whilst the King had been so earnestly looking after his prisoners, Tussoo Gobezi had conquered the country as far as Gondar. Agowmeder, too, had been taken. Waksham Gobezi had entered Adowa, and all Tigré was expected shortly to be under his rule.

It may be remembered that attention has been called in various parts of this work to certain French influence which from time to time has interfered with English interests in Abyssinia. We have now to mention a matter which may or may not have had a great influence upon the jealous and susceptible Theodore. Count du Bisson, a French adventurer, who proclaimed himself "founder of the French colony in Abyssinia," published in August a most impudent and false account of affairs in Abyssinia in the *Journal de Nice*, which account was afterwards copied into Egyptian and other papers. After stating that the Emperor had an army of 200,000 warriors devotedly attached to his cause, who are anxious to be led against the rebels in Tigré, he asserts that an English company has sold arms and ammunition to Gobezi, a crazy negro, the leader of the rebel army. He also charges the governor of Aden with having sent large quantities of materials of war for the same purpose. But the most astounding assertion of Du Bisson is yet to come. Without any qualification whatever, he declares

that England has made enormous concessions to the rebel chief, for the purpose of possessing herself of the country. If, the Count proceeds, the Negus is defeated, she alone will profit by it : she will become the mistress of the Red Sea, and the centre of Africa—the richest country in the world. The Red Sea will become but an English lake, and England will reap the benefit of the works at Suez. But if victorious in Tigré, the rebels will have to descend to the plains, where they will meet the Amhara centaurs, and a battle of Titans will be fought, in comparison with which the petty wars of Europe will be mere child's-play—a battle in which no quarter will be asked or given, no prisoners taken, and from which no fugitives can escape.

The black face of Theodore turned pale (*sic*) with rage on hearing of the successes of the rebels, and their English allies. He gave immediate orders to massacre the English prisoners, and it was only through the intervention of the “belle” Empress their lives were spared.

Commodore Rassam's embassy, writes the Count, has been attended with the most disastrous results. All the members which constituted it are in irons. The King refused to release Mr. Cameron, except on the following conditions, which Rassam readily agreed to :—

1. The immediate return to Calcutta of all the English troops collected at Aden.

2. The relinquishing of the Egyptian territory north of Abyssinia, and the dissolution of the Soudanian army of the Viceroy.

To these points he willingly acceded, but Theodore informed Mr. Rassam that he must remain in the country until the complete execution of the treaty. Mr. Flad was accordingly despatched to England with this ultimatum,

and on leaving the King threatened him that if he did not return his wife and children should be sold as slaves.

Such is the substance of this false report. It is difficult to see what advantage Du Bisson could expect from publishing it, unless it was the hope that Theodore might engage him as a French agent to assist in putting down the rebels of Tigré, and represent him at Massowah or elsewhere. That the article was written for Theodore's eye there can be but little doubt.

The question of taking vigorous measures against Theodore was now (Sept. 1866) beginning to be warmly discussed in London political circles. Col. Merewether was in England counselling the Government: "The threat of punishment having been passed, should be strictly adhered to. To ensure success, not less than 9,000 to 10,000 troops should be employed, and for these the India Office should be consulted." However, as a first measure it was determined to send a Queen's letter by Mr. Flad. This letter was firm but friendly, and was decorated with the "largest seal," that its appearance might be sufficiently imposing to Theodore. Cameron had advised the Government that "it would not be a bad thing if a strong-minded man, with courage and firmness to face consequences, were sent with the next letter—not an officer of rank," but as the King had despatched Flad, it was thought that he had better carry the Queen's answer.

Lord Stanley instructed Mr. Flad to say that, "fearing lest evil-disposed persons, seeing their own downfall in the establishment of a good understanding between the British Government and the King, may have endeavoured to infuse suspicion in the mind of his Majesty, England would not encourage Egypt to disturb King

Theodore in the peaceable possession of his dominions, and in return for this they should expect him to liberate the captives forthwith."

The artizans, with the presents, were sent on to Massowah under the care of Col. Merewether, with instructions to await the result of the Queen's letter sent by Mr. Flad. When the captives arrived from the interior, the presents were to be despatched.

On returning to Massowah, Flad heard gloomy news from his wife and friends. The King's conduct, as we have seen, became harsher soon after he left. All the Europeans, workmen and captives, were confined in the natural fortress of Magdala, and employed upon the King's work. The women captives were set to making shirts for his Highness. Some of the artizans were engaged upon cannon of a very large size, and at the foot of the mountain the King had his camp. The Tigré country being in the hands of the rebels, Flad sent on her Majesty's letter, and waited the result. He, however, began to think that the letter would not have the desired effect,—it was too cold in its friendship for Theodore, promised too little, and asked too much; and he wrote home the advice of Captain Cameron which he had just heard, "Go to war at once!" Theodore, too, began to think that he might not get all he asked, for he was heard to say, "Mr. Flad is bringing either something good or something very bad." It seemed, wrote Mrs. Flad, to be his intention to irritate the English Government until they conquered back for him all the lost provinces of his empire, and for this purpose he took such great care of Mr. Rassam, thinking he could make good use of him. "I know," he once said, "Mr. Rassam is a great man, and some one will come to ask for him."



As the state of affairs did not seem encouraging, Mr. Flad expressed a desire to return to London, or at least to Suez, but the Consul very properly objected to this. The next news from the captives was to the 17th of September. Mr. Rassam complained of the harsh treatment of the King, the result of false reports which had been circulated about the intentions of England towards Abyssinia.

"If I live to see you again," he wrote to Colonel Merewether, "you will be more than surprised to find that through the foolish talk of some fools and mischief-makers, the good understanding which I had established between the Emperor of Abyssinia and England are destroyed. It is a melancholy affair altogether, and I trust that I shall have it in my power one day to write fully regarding it."

After a few days, the King found, as before, that there was no foundation for the reports; the chains were then taken from their legs, and he once more became "friendly." In this way the King's attentions vacillated: sometimes he persisted in laying the carpets for them to sit upon; then he ordered them to be double chained and put into a dark room. This change of feeling was doubtless the result of French and other sinister reports circulated against the captives. Of course this continual variation in the monarch's affections was attended by many absurdities, and when we learn that he shortly after made his appearance at Rassam's tent with a bottle of spirits and some wine, suggesting that they ought to drink each other's health, and act as Christians—being always ready to forgive each other—one cannot help smiling at the bottle friend and the Christian King. "Don't look at my face," Theodore said to Cameron one

day, "but look at my heart." Ten days after this they were all in chains again, two and two, bread only being allowed to three of them.

It may be imagined that this confinement had begun to tell upon the captives. Dr. Blanc, in a most interesting letter, written when he was double chained, says:—

"Abyssinian prison life is a curious one: we are silent prisoners, still the friends of his gracious Majesty, and treated with the favour only shown to a few privileged captives. Want of exercise is a great privation; it is very difficult to walk any distance with our irons. A ring is hammered on each leg (anything but a pleasant operation), and three links passed in the rings keep the legs in close proximity to one another; the iron resting on the ankle is very painful, so that every morning we put some bandages above the ankle to avoid the friction. Still it is a nuisance, as with all care vermin do get into them. We have altogether a curious aspect—nothing of the officer, the consul, and the reverend; some of us, I amongst them, without shoes or stockings (and that for the very good reason that having only a pair of shoes I keep them in case (!!) we should ever go out), with trousers ripped on the side and buttoned so as to be able to put them on, or else made of a very thin Abyssinian cloth, so as to be able to pass between the rings. Clothes more or less worn out, with straggling beards and shaven heads, sunburnt, and altogether seedy-looking, we have more the appearance of real criminals than of hostages. Mr. Stern is rather breaking down; he worries too much. Cameron is picking up wonderfully—eats like ten men, and absorbs liquid in the same proportion. Mr. Rosenthal is quite well; and Rassam is fat and well, though much older. Prideaux is well too; and I am in fair

health, though I have suffered much from neuralgia. We are all getting grey, even Prideaux, though it does not show much on account of the natural light colour of his hair.

“ Before coming here, we used to say that a good glass of ale and a good cheroot were amongst the blessings of civilized life we most regretted ; now we only long for a walk, our ambition not reaching even to a ride.”

In December, 1866, Sir Andrew Buchanan reported to our Government a suggestion made by an Armenian at St. Petersburg, that the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople could, if applied to, obtain the release of the Abyssinian captives. A communication was at once made to Lord Lyons, and the Patriarch wrote a very flattering testimonial to the “ manifest virtues with which God has endowed King Theodore,” and concluded by begging the release of “ his Majesty’s slaves—the English consul and his companions.” The letter was duly despatched ; but, as is now well known, only produced one or two false telegrams of the liberation of the captives.

At the end of January, 1867, Mr. Rassam found means to send to our Government a full relation of all that had transpired betwixt himself and King Theodore, including copies of nearly forty letters written by the latter. The hopelessness of obtaining a release of the Europeans by civil means now became apparent to Col. Merewether. The prisoners themselves had long before advised sharper measures ; and he wrote to Lord Stanley, “ I feel it my duty to state my conviction, that the last chance of effecting the release of the captives by conciliatory measures has failed.” Another letter was then sent to the King by Col. Merewether from Aden, although but little

good was expected to come of it. In cypher, Mr. Rassam had added at the foot of his last communication [he was afraid to say in plain language what he thought, as the letter might be laid before the King], "Emperor has scarcely any country left, so he is desperate." It was known, too, that every day his army was becoming smaller, and that only the superstitious feeling with which he was regarded prevented the surrounding chiefs from falling upon him at once. "Abyssinia is wearied of him," said one of his own officials.

During this time of suspense the artizans and presents remained at Massowah. Two French prisoners, it is understood, after having been liberated by Theodore, entered his employ. A Mr. Kerens also asked for his liberty, that he might engage himself, but he was refused "because he was an Englishman." This last act indicated to the English prisoners that they were again in disfavour.

The next intelligence (February 15) came from one of the missionaries confined at Gaffat. Mr. Staiger sent a long gossiping letter which gives an admirable picture of their prison life, and the hopes of the captives, but it is too long to reproduce here. The pith of it was that the captives were becoming heartily tired of the suspense, and trusted that vigorous measures would now be taken; they only "feared that Mr. Rassam will admit [permit] the King again to humbug him."

Mr. Flad having left Massowah for the interior, had now started to meet the King at Debra Tabor, taking with him the articles purchased with the King's money.

In April of the present year, as will be remembered, Lord Stanley addressed an ultimatum to King Theodore, giving him three months to liberate the captives,

or to take the consequences of not complying with that request. Since this time further particulars have reached us from the prisoners; but the information is of that varying kind which has characterized all previous intelligence: now the King is friendly and attentive; then he manifests enmity, and half starves them. Bardel had been making more mischief—enticing Staiger and four others to run away with him, and then revealing the project to the King, who rewarded the Frenchman, and put the others in chains. It was Staiger's wife who wrote to Col. Merewether that the King had received a letter from a European at Massowah, informing him that the intentions of the English towards him were bad.

A spy of the King's was in this town at the end of April 1866; he visited the Catholic (French) Mission, and saw there a priest named Delamonté [or Delmanty], who had a copy of Earl Russell's despatch to Colonel Stanton. This Delamonté was a correspondent of Bardel, and most probably communicated the essence of that despatch, which was used by Bardel to promote his own views. Of course there is such a thing as unreasonable prejudice; but when particulars of this nature come from a variety of independent sources, it would be absurd to disregard them.

News up to the end of March only represent the country as in a still worse plight. The captives were treated pretty much the same, but the King's army had dwindled down to 5,000 men, and when several deserters had been captured, the King had them all put into a hut and burnt alive. Owing to the rebellion, he held only one province, Begemeder; but now that had revolted, and, to add to the general confusion, Tigré was in a state

of rebellion against itself. [There is, doubtless, a little exaggeration in these two statements.] We are also told :—"His seventy-seven concubines are lodged here (Magdala). German workmen employed by him are at Gaffat, close by, making implements of war and strong drink for his majesty." On May 3rd, Mr. Rassam found means to despatch another letter. From it we learn that the King had, on this occasion, vented his temper upon all the European workmen at Gaffat, suspicious of their having held secret intercourse with the Turks. Some rebels, too, having heard that Flad was coming with valuable presents and 3,000 crowns, were lying in wait for him.

It is curious to observe the guarded way Mr. Rassam writes : "The temper of *our friend* is getting worse every day ! May the Lord save us !" "I only hope the Government will settle the account with *our friend* 'promptly.'" The expression "our friend," if the letter should fall into the King's hands, would at least seem respectful, and the inverted commas to "promptly" might be understood as the Government saw fit.

Lately Tussoo Gobezi intercepted a messenger from Massowah, who was proceeding to the British prisoners with 4,000 dollars. "Holloa !" said Tussoo, when the man was brought before him, "you look rather heavy. Where do you come from ? where are you going ?" The man had to tell the truth, and Tussoo replied, "Well, the English were once friendly with Theodore ; now they are offended with him, and can't be sending *him* money ; neither is it right to send money to his prisoners. The English don't know me, nor I them ; but I know myself. I want the money ;" saying which, he took it.

The news since May 3rd, given in the captives' letters to their friends, may be summarized as follows :—

“The King is getting more desperate every day.” “Samuel\* is very gloomy about the future. A crisis is imminent. A few days ago the King gave orders to burn all the prisoners at Debra Tabor, but postponed the execution until after Easter. Should he put his threat into execution, he will also kill the prisoners on this amba [hill], including the Bishop, and perhaps ourselves.” “He knows that he is lost, and cares little for what he does.” [This story of burning alive, with some of the other statements, must be received with caution. The captives themselves are, doubtless, so embittered against the King and his country, by reason of their unwarrantable imprisonment, that they cannot altogether be considered as impartial observers of what is taking place around them.] After begging the Government to send out a force at once, the writer concludes, “Action is, for us, life ;—delay, death !”

18th May, 1867, *Magdala*.—Flad has arrived at Matemmeh, and seen the King, who has been informed that unless he released all the prisoners according to the Queen's letter, there would be war with England, if not with France and Egypt. Theodore replied, “Let them

\* This Samuel (the Emperor's steward) is Samuel Georgis, or Hussein, the servant of Dr. Beke when on his journey to Shoa in 1840. He joined Major Harris's mission to the King of Shoa in the following year ; and has since been in the employment of Bell and King Theodore. Widely different opinions are entertained of Samuel's profession of friendship for the British captives. Some of the missionaries attribute most of their misfortunes to his treacherous conduct ; while Mr. Rassam thinks they might all have been killed long ago but for his friendly intervention in their behalf.

come." [Before Flad returned, the King had been uneasy at the success of his mission to England. He had said to the artizans—now his prisoners—"When Flad comes, *if all is right*, you will return to Gaffat; if not, know that you are my enemies."] The whole of the workshops at Gaffat had been destroyed. Flogging was going on at such a rate in the royal camp, that the servants, before entering the King's presence, always recommended their souls to God! [As before remarked, these statements must be received with caution. The same may be said of the following.]

*20th May, Magdala.*—All communications with Debra Tabor stopped. Rebels are within sight of the royal camp, and as far as Djeddah, thirty miles from here. No news from Gaffat for many weeks. We hear they are all in chains, including the women.

*11th June, Magdala.*—Servants sent to Debra Tabor to fetch M. Flad's things, seized and plundered by an officer who had run away with 200 horsemen from the King's camp. The peasants all in arms between this [Magdala] and Debra Tabor. We cannot get a messenger to venture out. Ras Adeloq Tamaroo, one of the King's greatest chiefs, has deserted with all his troops, which are about half the entire camp. He has gone to Yedjow, his own province. The country is in the greatest alarm, and the King is on his last legs. Tchelga has also rebelled; and Dâoont and Talanta, both close here, and the former on the Debra Tabor road, expected to go any day. All tolerably well in health.

*30th June, Magdala.*—An ultimatum has been sent to the King that unless we are at the coast by 17th August, other measures will be used. If willing for us to go, he can't see us safe out of the country, as it is full of rebels.



General opinion is he will stick to us to the last. Our health still pretty good, except colds. Trying to make ourselves comfortable for the rainy season. Our house repaired, and made water-tight. We have got a little garden,—beans, peas, and such like.

*4th July, Massowah.*—Gondar in possession of the chief, Tussoo Gobezi.

The latest account from the prisoners at Magdela is down to July 27. They were then all well. "Rains had commenced. The most recent dates from the King's camp at Debra Tabor were of the 11th of July. At that place there was heavy rain. All the captives were pretty well, and were being well treated. The King's conduct to them was cold and indifferent. The country round about was in a disturbed state. Direct communication between the King's camp and the coast was entirely cut off, and communications were sent *via* Magdela. There were no letters from the King."

This brings the "Story of the Captivity" down to the present time. It will be seen that the prognostications of the King's immediate downfall, made in May, had not been realized in July; there is, therefore, not much doubt but that the intelligence we have been receiving of late has been very one-sided and imperfect—as, indeed, it would necessarily be when collected by the captives only from around their prison.

## PART IV.

### *SUGGESTIONS FOR AN EXPEDITION, WITH ROUTES.*

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IT is understood that the Government has received more unsolicited advice upon what is commonly known as the "Abyssinian Difficulty" than upon any other question of politics which has engaged public attention for some time. During many months past the newspaper press has teemed with editorial articles and letters from correspondents, making comments and offering suggestions of every conceivable character. Three "Blue Books" have already been issued, and amongst the hundreds of documents therein printed are some very valuable and practical suggestions, and some just as absurd and impracticable.

For instance, one gentleman, in order to obtain a release of the captives, suggested that he should be sent out as a "Medicine Man," or as an "Acrobat," or "Merry Andrew," if he found the Abyssinians preferred to be amused rather than cured. Of course, the Government replied to the proposition that "they would not avail themselves of the offer." Other gentlemen have volunteered going single-handed, trusting to their bravery or to good luck, for accomplishing the release of the

captives. But amongst all this advice are some suggestions of great practical value, and the more important of these—those which have influenced the Government in the preparation of the expedition now fitting out—are here given.

## SIR SAMUEL W. BAKER'S SUGGESTIONS.

### THE KHARTOUM AND CASSALA ROUTES.

[Lord Stanley having asked this eminent traveller to assist the Government in appointing and directing an expedition against King Theodore, the following suggestions were sent to the Foreign Office.]

*July 13, 1867.*

Having been requested to offer a written statement of the difficulties that would attend an attack upon Abyssinia to effect the liberation of the captives, I have the honour of laying before your lordship an outline of the principal features of the frontier, followed by certain suggestions that would reduce those difficulties to a minimum.

The east and west coasts of the Red Sea are claimed by Turkey and Egypt. They are arid and desert, generally devoid of fresh water, with a burning temperature, from March to the end of September, of  $105^{\circ}$  to  $120^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit in the shade.

The two principal ports on the west coast are Souakim, north latitude  $19^{\circ}$ , and Massowah, north latitude  $15^{\circ} 35'$ . Both afford good harbours. Souakim is the most central station, from which radiate the regular

caravan-routes to Cassala, the capital of the Taka province, from sixteen to twenty days' journey for a heavily-laden camel; and the same distance to the town of Berber, on the Nile, in latitude  $18^{\circ}$  north.

Souakim is under an Egyptian governor, who can collect any number of camels from the Arab tribes, with the necessary water-skins for the Desert journey; thus it is the direct route to Cassala for all military operations from Egypt. The troops are delivered in four days from Suez, with their supplies prepared in Cairo; thus in four days and a half they can be supported from head-quarters with stores and reinforcements, transported by railroad to Suez, and from thence by steamers to Souakim.

The water at Souakim is brackish (similar to that of Aden); therefore a large supply of Nile water should be brought in tanks from Suez, at which place the fresh-water canal delivers an inexhaustible store.

As the Egyptian authorities are in the habit of transporting troops direct to Cassala by Souakim, that route is free from all difficulty.

Throughout the Desert route fodder for the camels is afforded by numerous mimosas; thus a supply of corn is unnecessary. Water is found every second or third day.

Cassala, the capital of Taka province, is on the extreme limit of the Egyptian frontier, bordering the Basé (enemies of Abyssinia), through which country a route is practicable into the heart of Abyssinia. The town of Cassala is fortified, as the principal arsenal and garrison of Eastern Upper Egypt. From 6,000 to 8,000 troops are usually quartered in the district. The surrounding country is inhabited by numerous tribes of warlike Arabs subject to the Egyptian Government.

Cassala is situated upon the river Gash or Mareb, which although dry during the hot months, affords an unlimited supply of good water from wells dug in its sandy bed. During the dry season, from 15th November until 1st June, the climate is healthy, but at all other seasons the country is extremely dangerous.

The rainy season commences early in June, and continues until the middle of September. A peculiar fly appears with the first rains, that destroys all domestic animals, and would utterly vanquish an army by annihilating the beasts of transport. The Arabs migrate with their flocks and herds at the commencement of the rains, and congregate in the desert about Gozerajup, ninety-six miles north of Cassala, which at that season abounds in pasturage and is extremely healthy, and free from the fatal fly.

The great Nubian desert ceases at Gozerajup, which is the extreme southern limit of sterility; from that point the country is under the influence of the periodical rains; the soil is extremely rich as we approach the south, but in the wet season it becomes utterly impassable, the mud being several feet in depth.

At the cessation of the rains, on about September 15, the country is a dense mass of high grass and rank vegetation; the torrents are serious obstacles, and no military operations can take place until November; at that time the grass becomes parched, and the prairies are cleared by fire.

From November 1 until June 1 the entire country is most favourable to military movements; no tents are required, as there is no rain for seven months; the ground is perfectly dry and so free from dew from December until May that the guns do not rust when resting at night

upon the ground ; the men simply require a light blanket to protect them from the chill of the night breeze.

Throughout this country any number of camels can be procured for transport ; cattle, sheep, and goats are plentiful ; corn, "dhurra" (*sorghum vulgare*), is abundant, at the low price of 15 piastres per rachel (3s. 1d. for 500 lb.). Thus, throughout the southern frontier of Upper Egypt there are abundant supplies, and a favourable climate for an army from November until June, after which a residence in the fertile countries would be fatal to man and beast ; accordingly, they must fall back with the Arabs to the healthy deserts.

Accepting Cassala as the base of operations, the communication would be as follows :—

Letter post to Souakim, five days, equal to ten days' post to Cairo.

Supplies and reinforcements, twenty (or twenty-five days from Cairo.

Khartoum, the capital of the Soudan provinces, is situated at the junction of the Blue and White Niles. The population is about 30,000, and it generally contains a garrison of about 8,000 troops, while 5,000 or 6,000 additional regulars and irregulars are scattered throughout the province.

From July until October, the Blue Nile is navigable for large vessels to the 11° north latitude at Fazoklo.

There are five steamers at Khartoum, and numerous vessels that would in a few days transport an army of 3,000 men to a position within about five days' march of Gellabat (Metemma), the principal market town of the west of Abyssinia : thus Khartoum would be a base, from which ammunition, &c., could be supplied either direct to the camp at Gellabat, or to a point still farther

south of Fazoklo, that would cut off the retreat of Theodorus.

The difficulties and the advantages of climate enumerated in the description of Cassala are equally applicable to the position of Gellabat and the Blue Nile, with one important exception. Should operations be necessary during the rains, there is no healthy retreat for the troops, such as the desert of Gozerajup, but they must push into the high and healthy lands of Abyssinia for the wet season.

It will therefore be apparent that great advantages are afforded for an invasion of Abyssinia from the entire line of the Egyptian frontier; *i.e.*, seven clear months of dry weather, with a healthy climate, and two distinct bases for operations, Khartoum and Cassala, both of which are free from interruption, and are in direct communication with Cairo. Thus, the entire forces can be engaged in offensive movements, as no protection is required to preserve the line of communication in the rear; while the entire frontier is rich in supplies, beasts of burthen, and friendly Arabs. On the one hand, there is water communication between Suez and Souakim; on the other, a navigable river (Blue Nile) and a line of steamers between Khartoum and Fazoklo.

Massowah has been suggested as a favourable base of operation. I cannot see the slightest advantage in this position to counterbalance the numerous and serious obstacles presented to an invasion from that point. Upwards of 300 miles from the capital, this entire distance must be traversed through an enemy's country. An immense force will be necessary to keep open the communication with the rear; there will be no means of transport; neither supplies, as the natives will drive

off their flocks and herds to the interior upon the approach of our troops; and the King Theodorus will be daily apprised by spies of their advance. His first movement will baffle the expedition: with his rear open, he will retreat with the captives to mountainous fastnesses in the distant Galla country, as a fox will steal from a covert.

An invasion of Abyssinia may be effected in three methods:—

1. By an alliance with Egypt.
2. By independent British forces.
3. By the employment of 4,000 Indian troops, in conjunction with a paid Egyptian contingent, commanded by a British officer. The Viceroy to hand over 6,000 troops to British service.

In all cases the attack must take place from the Egyptian frontier. Souakim to form the *point de départ* for troops acting in the East.

1. "Alliance with Egypt."—This would secure the object of the expedition without delay. Troops would be sent from Khartoum to Fazoklo and Gellabat, and at once cut off the retreat of Theodorus to the Galla, while a division from Cassala would cross into Tigré, and place the king between two fires. At the same time a British division would occupy a position in advance of Massowah, and send an ultimatum, allowing a specified time for the safe delivery of the captives at head-quarters, or, in default, the combined forces would invade the country and close in upon the army of Theodorus from three points. In case of an alliance with Egypt, a British Commissioner should accompany the Egyptian forces to treat with the King Theodorus—to guarantee the retreat



of the Egyptian troops should the captives be liberated—but to order their advance into Abyssinia should harm befall them. The threat of letting loose the Turks, as they are called, upon Abyssinia would compel Theodorus to terms, as the entire country would unite in revolution against him should he incur the risk of an Egyptian invasion for the sake of the prisoners.

The reward for the co-operation of Egypt should be that portion of Abyssinia hitherto contested between the great chain of mountains that forms a natural boundary, and the Atbara River on the West.

2. "Independent British forces" would succeed in conquering Abyssinia by an advance as proposed through Souakim; and the occupation of a position inland from Massowah, but I do not think they would succeed in liberating the captives, as, the rear being open, Theodorus would retreat with them to the interior. They would also have many difficulties to contend with, as the Egyptians would not afford them that active assistance in procuring supplies and means of transport that they would if themselves allied in action.

3. "The employment of 4,000 Indian troops in conjunction with 6,000 men of an Egyptian contingent in British pay" would render the expedition entirely independent, and would avoid all ulterior complications with Egypt.

Orders would at once be sent to Khartoum to prepare boats and stores, and to expedite 6,000 men, in two divisions, to arrive in the last week of October—2,000 at Gellabat and 4,000 to the east of Fazoklo, in the rear of Magdela, the head-quarters of Theodorus and the captives. The troops at Gellabat would be supported by

thousands of the Dabaina, Shookeryiah, and Kunana Arabs, with unlimited means of transport in camels and supplies of all kinds ; while the Indian forces at Cassala would be equally supported by the Haddendowa, Hal-longa, Bishareen, and Hamran Arabs—the latter being the most magnificent swordsmen of the border tribes.

The Indian force would consist of 4,000 men landed at Souakim, and marched to Cassala as a base for future operations. Should reinforcements be necessary, they could at once be forwarded from Aden, three days' steaming from Souakim.

A division of 2,000 men (Indian troops) would be disembarked on the coast opposite Massowah, and would afford a demonstration upon the eastern frontier.

Abyssinia would thus be commanded at three points. Theodorus would be taken in the rear by the division at Fazoklo, and his retreat cut off ; while an advance of the 4,000 Indian troops from Cassala into Tigré would form a nucleus for the rebels already in arms against the king, to rally around. Arrived in Tigré, the division from Cassala could march to the west upon Magdela ; as the 2,000 division on the coast of Massowah would hold the rear and keep open the communication.

Theodorus would at once be surrounded ; the Egyptian division from Fazoklo would march direct upon Magdela, from which there would be no retreat. Abyssinia would be in the possession of the British forces before the expiration of the dry season.

A British Commissioner would accompany the Egyptian contingent to direct the operations and to treat for the liberation of the captives prior to the general advance of the three divisions.

Abyssinia would be compelled to pay the cost of the expedition, and would be occupied by a portion of the British forces as a material guarantee until the final settlement of our claims.

## MAJOR-GENERAL COGHLAN'S SUGGESTIONS.

### MASSOWAH AND OTHER ROUTES.

[THIS gentleman, who was formerly our "Political Resident" at Aden, has had considerable experience in Abyssinian affairs. It is understood that in the preparation of the present armed expedition many of his suggestions are being adopted by our Government. General Coghlan believes his "scheme" would cost less than the last Persian campaign.]

*March 19, 1867.*

On hearing of the projected expedition, King Theodorus may—as he is known to have declared—sacrifice every British subject within his grasp; or, on the other hand, he may liberate the captives, offer every satisfaction in his power, and sue for pardon.

A year ago the royal army was estimated at 50,000 fighting men. It is now conjectured not to amount to a fourth of that number, said to be restricted to the province of Begamider, while several of the other provinces, notably those of Woggera, Wolkait, and Tigré on the north and north-east, Gojam and Shoa on the south, and Lasta on the east, are in open rebellion against him. Further, it is imagined that some of the insurgent chiefs

are capable of coping with Theodorus single-handed, but that one and all shrink from the attempt owing to a superstitious belief in his invulnerability.

Whether such hesitation is to be attributed to that motive or not, it is clear that no great reliance can be placed on those statements which represent the power of Theodorus as tottering to its fall. Similar prognostications have been made for years past, and, thus far, have not been verified by the result.

In order, therefore, not to run the risk of underestimating the possible resistance of Theodorus, the more prudent course would be to organize a force capable of meeting any army which he may be able to bring into the field.

Consul Plowden, who may be regarded as the best authority on all matters connected with the military resources of the different chieftains, was of opinion that 5,000 disciplined troops would beat their combined forces, and that 10,000 would suffice for a permanent occupation of the country.

But that statement was made in 1854, one year prior to a later despatch which reported the brilliant achievements of Kasai, the future Theodorus, who had already "united the whole of Northern Abyssinia under his sway," and inaugurated a variety of measures calculated to consolidate his authority, and greatly to increase his military power.

It would be well-advised, therefore, to assume, in estimating the probable means of resistance on the part of Theodorus to a foreign invasion, that the defection of some of the prominent feudal chiefs has been counter-balanced by the strenuous efforts which he has made for years past to equip his soldiers with superior weapons, to

have them better drilled and disciplined, and to add to the number and efficiency of his artillery.

Taking this view of the case, the British expedition should not consist of less than 10,000 men of all arms.

A smaller force would probably suffice if full advantage were taken of the actual unsettled state of parties in the country, to enlist one or more of the insurgent chiefs on our side ; but whatever use may be made of native co-operation, it would be highly undesirable that the commander of the British army should not be in a position to dispense with it, or to avail himself thereof on his own terms, or, in case of need, to punish any treachery on the part of such auxiliaries.

Besides, it would seriously detract from the moral effect which may be assumed to form one of the primary objects of the expedition, to afford the Abyssinians any ground for believing that Great Britain could not obtain the desired satisfaction without their concurrence.

Another consideration which should not be overlooked is, that most of these insurgent chiefs have separate interests, and the greatest discretion will be required to avoid exciting a jealousy between them, which might induce the discontented to side with Theodorus rather than with rivals whose co-operation had been preferred to theirs by the invaders.

The same reflection should be borne in mind under another aspect. It can scarcely be doubted that the gloomy anticipations of Consul Plowden twelve years ago would be intensified in their fulfilment at the present time, in the event of the overthrow of Theodorus by the British arms. Writing of the King at that period, he remarks,—“Should he now, or at any time, fail in his designs, or fall in battle, the misrule and anarchy that

must ensue will baffle all human calculation, and render peaceful interference impossible. Abyssinia must then be left to her destinies, until some European Power shall think it worth while to conquer and instruct the most fertile of the African provinces."

Taking for granted that the Government entertains no such designs as those indicated in the latter clause of the above quotation, and that we should retire from Abyssinia as soon as our legitimate objects were secured, it would be most undesirable in every way to aggravate the intestine strife which would be certain to follow upon the departure of the British force, by fomenting fresh rivalries, or by specially favouring one or more chiefs, who might, owing to their temporary alliance with us, secure a predominance in the country to the prejudice of more rightful competitors. Of course, this subject would assume a different phase should it be intended to establish order prior to our departure. But that supposition gives rise to a variety of considerations which need not be discussed here. One precautionary remark, however, seems called for, namely, that the abandonment of Abyssinia to anarchy will, in all probability, precipitate an attack by the Egyptians from the north, and from Massowah, at which latter place there is a much larger garrison than there has been for many years past.

It is by no means intended by the foregoing remarks that native co-operation is to be dispensed with altogether. It will be advisable, on the contrary, to take every advantage of the friendly overtures of the principal chiefs occupying the line of march, and, if need be, to secure the neutrality of others during the operations of the British army, whenever those objects can be secured without compromise. They may be made useful as convoys in

collecting supplies, keeping the roads open, obtaining intelligence, and in many other subordinate ways most serviceable to an invading army in a foreign country. The selection of such auxiliaries, and their employment, must be left to the discretion of the officer in command of the expedition.

The next subject of importance is the route to be adopted, in order to reach the high tableland of Abyssinia. Of these there are several :—

First, that by Tajoarra (opposite to Aden) to Shoa, which has been recommended by Dr. Krapf. But the road is rough, desolate, and barren, and in several parts almost destitute of water. The French traveller, M. Rochet, who traversed it four times, describes it thus :—  
“Je crois pouvoir dire . . . il y a peu de voyages plus fatigants pour l'esprit et pour le corps, plus périlleux à la fois et plus monotone que de parcourir les déserts des Adels.” Moreover, it is by no means the nearest route to Begamider, the head-quarters of Theodorus; and although the Shoa people would undoubtedly be ready to co-operate with the British, and might furnish a respectable contingent, nevertheless, as a wide extent of country interposes betwixt them and Begamider, inhabited by warlike Gallas, who would be as jealous of Shoa ascendancy as they may be disaffected towards Theodorus, by contracting any alliance with the Shoans we may run the risk of evoking the antagonism of their Galla rivals, and thereby dispose the latter to gravitate towards the royal party.

The nearest route is unquestionably by Amphila (Hanfila), situated on the western shore of the Red Sea, opposite to Hodeida; but Moresby describes it as “one of the most wretched places on the coast. The village,

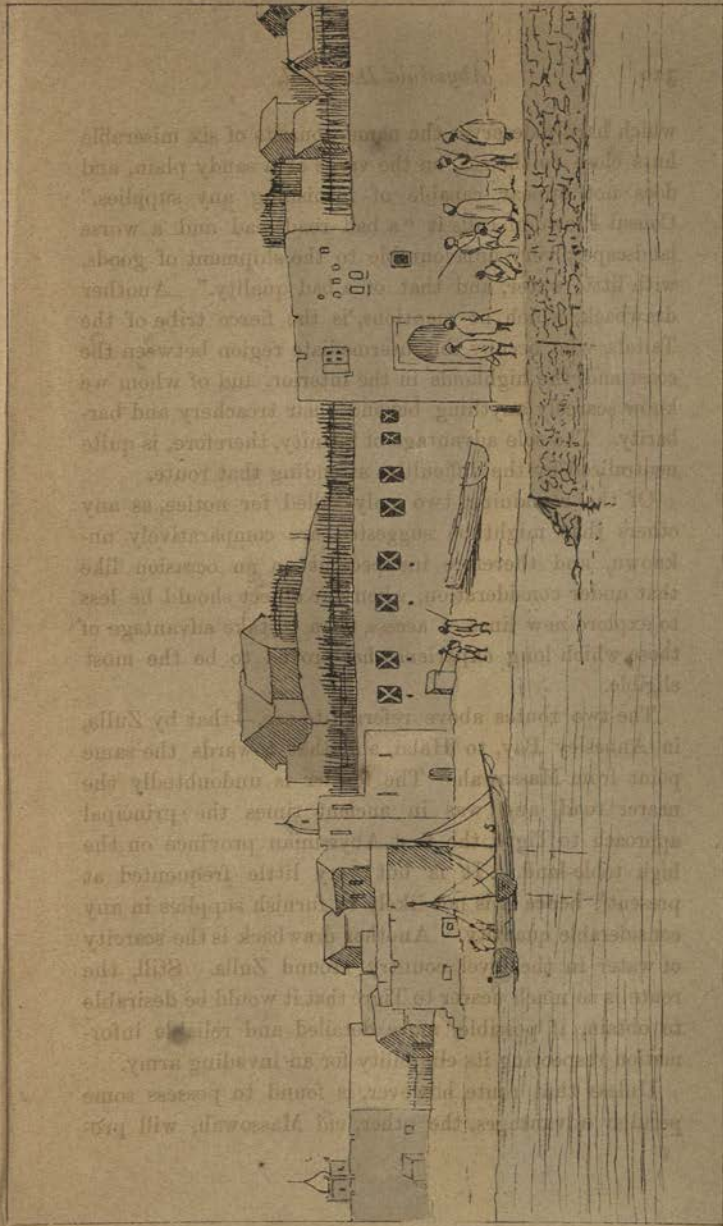
which hardly deserves the name, consists of six miserable huts close to the sea, on the verge of a sandy plain, and does not appear capable of furnishing any supplies." Consul Plowden calls it "a bad roadstead and a worse landscape; very unfavourable to the shipment of goods, with little water, and that of a bad quality." Another drawback, which he mentions, is the fierce tribe of the Taltals, who occupy the intermediate region between the coast and the highlands in the interior, and of whom we know scarcely anything beyond their treachery and barbarity. The sole advantage of vicinity, therefore, is quite neutralized by the difficulties attending that route.

Of the remaining, two only called for notice, as any others that might be suggested are comparatively unknown, and therefore inexpedient on an occasion like that under consideration, when our object should be less to explore new lines of access, than to take advantage of those which long experience has proved to be the most eligible.

The two routes above referred to are,—that by Zulla, in Annesley Bay, to Halai, and that towards the same point from Massowah. The former is undoubtedly the nearer road, and was in ancient times the principal approach to Tigré, the first Abyssinian province on the high table-land. It is but very little frequented at present; hence it is not likely to furnish supplies in any considerable quantity. Another drawback is the scarcity of water in the level country around Zulla. Still, the route is so much nearer to Tigré that it would be desirable to obtain, if possible, more detailed and reliable information respecting its eligibility for an invading army.

Unless that route, however, is found to possess some peculiar advantages, the other, *viâ* Massowah, will pro-





PORT AND ISLAND OF MASSOWAH.



bably be found the most eligible. It is the ordinary cafilah road to and from the interior, and Consul Plowden calls it "the most practicable" and "the only one desirable." The country for fifty or sixty miles inland is inhabited by the Shihos, who are accustomed to furnish guides to all travellers, and are nominally under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Massowah. The lofty mountains and narrow defiles within the above-named district are in their undisputed possession, and as the passage is regularly traversed by heavily-laden mules, it cannot present any serious obstacles to the impediments of an army. The Shihos, though a powerful tribe, have no fire-arms; but instead of opposing, there is every reason to believe that, for adequate remuneration, they would be most ready to facilitate the march of our troops through their territory.

Massowah has a good harbour, and being the principal emporium of trade in that quarter, offers facilities for obtaining supplies, which would be looked for in vain at any other point on the coast. The existence, moreover, of a regular government on the island and adjoining mainland is another important consideration, presenting as it does perfect security for disembarcation, for the establishment of a depôt, and for co-operating with the movements of the expedition generally.

As Massowah and the neighbourhood form a part of the Turkish dominions, subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the Viceroy of Egypt, it would be requisite to procure the imperial sanction for the passage of our army through the neutral territory, and for the use proposed to be made of the aforesaid district. It would be politically unadvisable either to ask for or to accept any further concession beyond a general order to the local

authorities to afford such succour as may be consistent with the sovereign's rights and the maintenance of Ottoman neutrality.

The suggested Abyssinian expeditionary force of 10,000 men should be composed as follows :—

Two regiments of Irregular Cavalry, Scind or Sikh.

Three batteries of Light Field Artillery, Armstrong's, all of one calibre, for convenience in respect of ammunition ; and, if the roads are found practicable, add four eight-inch mortars in park, and a supply of rockets.

Two companies of Sappers.

Three regiments of European Infantry.

Four regiments of Native Infantry, one or two of which to be Sikh.

The constitution of the Staff, and the brigading of the force, are matters of detail which need not be discussed here.

Of departmental stores there would be the following :—

Ordnance park.

Engineer stores.

Commissariat stores.

Medical stores.

Quartermaster-General's stores.

As an unusually large number of baggage animals will be required, owing to the comparatively small size of the Abyssinian mules, and the difficulty of some of the passes, it would be desirable that a Land Transport Corps should be organized for that special service.

A competent officer on the Head-Quarter Staff might be placed in charge of an Intelligence Department, to include a line of electric telegraph to be erected as the force advances into the interior, in order to keep up rapid communication with the coast.

The officer in charge of the Commissariat will make arrangements for provisioning the troops on the estimates prepared by the several departments. He will decide, in concert with the Political officer, what supplies may be procurable on the spot and in the enemy's territory.

A good supply of rice from India and compressed vegetables from France should be provided. Bags and packages generally should not exceed fifty pounds in weight; two of which to be carried by a mule. In the event of camels being available, double that quantity would form a load. The same department should be provided with a liberal supply of "mussacks" of various sizes.

The officer in charge of the Land Transport Corps would make similar arrangements with the different departments for the number of animals severally required by them. It would further be his duty to provide muleteers and forage, pack-saddles, and other harness for the baggage mules and camels, as well as suitable equipage for sick carriage. It is conceived that the roads are impracticable for ambulances, and dooly-bearers from India would scarcely be available in sufficient numbers. Our chief reliance in this respect must be on the camels and mules of the country. A "kachava," similar to that used in Afghanistan, but much lighter, would be the equipage best adapted to the purpose, if camels are procurable, and a pad, with stirrups, for mules. This subject should receive early consideration by the Medical Superintendent in communication with the Quartermaster-General's department.

Austrian Maria Teresa dollars of A.D. 1708 are at present the only coin current in Abyssinia, and bricks of salt brought from the district of Taltals the only small

change. Rupees, though refused at first, were eventually received both in Afghanistan and Persia ; but those countries already possessed a silver currency of their own, and were therefore better acquainted with the value of our coin. As a similar result may not follow in Abyssinia, the attention of the Paymaster, in conjunction with the Political Officer, should be specially directed to this important subject.

Commanding officers, both of cavalry and infantry, should take care to provide a good supply of boots for their men, and shoes for the horses, and should be reminded that the climate of the highlands, though temperate, is cold enough to necessitate woollen clothing.

The most rigid economy will be requisite in respect of camp equipage, owing to the inferiority of the mules and camels of the country, and the ruggedness of the mountain passes. With the exception of a few tents for durbar and other public purposes, none should exceed the Indian-pattern soldier's tent. Officers' must double up.

As the roads into the interior are generally difficult, and would occasionally require to be made for the passage of light artillery and heavy baggage, an ample supply of the requisite tools should accompany the expedition.

As the place of debarcation is presumed to be on friendly territory, the camp equipage and much of the heavy stores might be sent on in advance, and located at an eligible point for a camp, at some distance from the coast, where water is abundant. On the arrival of the troops, they could be marched thither at once, and there prepared to advance into the interior.

It is also supposed that prior to such advance the Political Officer will have entered into amicable relations

with some of the insurgent chiefs on the line of march, to secure their neutrality or co-operation. A judicious proclamation might also be issued, setting forth the cause and object of the expedition; that we should discriminate between friends and foes; that all supplies of provisions, labour, and carriage, would be liberally paid for; and that no interference with the different religions of the people was intended.

As regards the quarter from which the European troops should be drawn, it might be urged that as Malta is at about the same distance from Massowah as Bombay, it would be preferable to send them from the former garrison; but there are solid reasons for preferring the despatch of an expedition of this sort from India. In the latter case, the artillery would have to embark and disembark once only—a matter of great importance with respect to that arm of the service. It is true that European infantry might be moved without much difficulty through Egypt, and re-embarked at Suez; still regiments from India are to be preferred, because they would carry with them a portion of their native followers—a class on whom the efficiency of a force on an Eastern campaign very materially depends. Moreover, troops with officers and staff of Indian experience would be more at home in Abyssinia than any that could be despatched from Europe; they would have less to learn.

The foregoing remark regarding followers applies particularly to hospital establishments, which, it is believed, would in that respect be started more complete from India than from the European side; and the probable course of operations renders it important that the medical arrangements should be so efficient as to provide separate

establishments for such depôts as may be expected to be left by the force as it moves into the interior, say, in the neighbourhood of Massowah, at Halai, Adowah, or other places of communication between the coast and the headquarters of the advanced army.

Finally, for the avoidance of those differences and complications which a divided authority is calculated to engender, it is desirable that the military command and the diplomatic functions should be united in one person.

In addition to materially promoting the efficiency and success of the expedition, it is just possible, as was remarked at the outset, that these preliminary arrangements, on coming to the knowledge of King Theodorus, might induce him, through fear of the impending consequences, to liberate the captives unconditionally, and to sue for an amnesty. In such a case, it would be for Her Majesty's Government to decide whether the further progress of the expedition might not be countermanded.

## COL. MEREWETHER'S SUGGESTIONS.

### MASSOWAH ROUTE.

[THE official position occupied by this gentleman at Aden, and his intimate knowledge of Abyssinia, and all that relates to the present unfortunate captivity, give his remarks a special value.]

*Sept. 25, 1866.*

The India Office here having been consulted with, the force to be employed for operations in Abyssinia should undoubtedly be sent from India so as to take advantage



of native troops on account of greater ease of movement, less expense, and sufficient effect. To ensure success it should not be less than 9,000 to 10,000 strong. Speaking briefly, it should consist of three brigades of infantry, —two having one European and three native regiments; the other four native regiments: two troops of horse artillery, one light field battery, a mountain train, and a select body of good native cavalry, a strong brigade. European dragoons, though most excellent in the day, would require too much material to get them easily through a new and difficult country. Such a force under a good general would ensure success. It might be organized and despatched with the aid of the steamers, so as to allow of the campaign being brought to a close before the summer and rainy season next year sets in. One point is most essential, and that is that the command and political relations should be entrusted to one person, the best that could be selected; this selection might be left to the Government of India.

The greater part of Abyssinia is now in a state of rebellion against the Emperor Theodorus; and when it was distinctly proclaimed that war was only being entered upon to punish that monarch for his conduct, that private property and private rights would be respected, and that with the punishment of the king, and the release of the British subjects now in confinement, the army would be withdrawn, and the country handed over to its legitimate rulers, two-thirds of the people would gladly join against Theodorus, who is merely a usurper, and would assist in every way. This would especially be the case in the province of Tigré, through which the force would have to move in the first instance. The distance from Massowah, on the coast, to Gondar, the capital, is only

fourteen good marches, and would easily be done in twenty days. Massowah would be the depôt for supplies, replenished from Egypt and India. At the same time that an English force entered from Massowah, an Egyptian one might be moved to act from that side. It would be a move which would meet with very cordial co-operation from that Government. The manner of it might be described on Government deciding on war.

The above is merely what was mentioned by me this morning, I feel confident that, if Her Majesty's Government decide on severe measures being taken, the whole nation will join in acknowledging the necessity and justness of their adoption. I can speak from certain knowledge that there is a very strong feeling of surprise both in England and on the Continent that such measures have not been before adopted. On the 15th February, 1867, he wrote from Aden :—

More extended knowledge of the country shows that the idea of there being any very great difficulty in carrying out a campaign is purely imaginary. A friendly narrow seaboard lines the easterly frontier of Abyssinia. The approaches to the high plateaux are numerous, and several of them presenting no greater obstacles than could be easily overcome by ordinary energy and good management. Once on the plateaux—and they are reached less than sixty miles from the coast at the north-eastern end—a healthy climate is found, abundance of good water, forage, fuel, and the ordinary supplies of the country, meat and grain ("sowaree," a species of millet, sorghum), obtainable in any quantity. Of course it would be necessary, in the first instance, that full commissariat should accompany the force from Bombay. In the war with

Persia in 1856-57 every supply was sent from Bombay to Bushire and the Euphrates, and never was an army so admirably furnished as that. If operations continued, much would be procured in the country, especially for an army in which the native element chiefly predominated. The Egyptian market would also be close at hand. Camels in any number can be obtained along the sea-coast ; also from Bogos and the Soudan.

If I was required to offer an opinion as to the nature and extent of the force to be employed, I should say that, taking into consideration the existing favourable state of affairs, the following would be ample :—One troop of horse artillery and two light field batteries, or two troops and one light field battery ; a full company of sappers and miners, a select body ; strong brigade of native cavalry ; with one European and six native regiments of infantry, formed into two brigades ; altogether making about 6,000 men. Such a force could be transported with comparative ease, and with less impedimenta than one having more European element. That such a force, under a good general, would do all that is required I am confident ; but to ensure success it will be essential that the command and political powers be entrusted to one person, as was the case in the Persian war. He should be given full powers, authorized to entertain temporarily such Abyssinians as he may find necessary ; in fact, left to act in the manner he finds best suited to bring the campaign to a rapid and successful conclusion.

On a previous occasion it was suggested that an auxiliary force should be moved from Egypt. This I now find would be a grave mistake. It would at once turn from us the rebels, who would otherwise be our greatest assistance. For however much the Emperor Theodorus

is hated, the Moslem is hated ten times worse ; and were it known that the Turkish Government (for so Egypt is styled) would be engaged in the operations, the whole of Abyssinia would band against us, and join Theodore in resisting the detested enemy : not an Egyptian soldier, therefore, should be used, and, at first, too much care could not be taken to prevent the appearance even of employing them.

*March 4, 1867.*

“ M. Messajah, the Missionary Archbishop of the Gallas, a very intelligent old man, who has lived for twenty-five years in the Galla and Abyssinian countries, and knows Theodorus well, assured me he felt convinced Theodorus would carefully preserve the captives to the very last, as his last resource.

“ I put it : might not Theodorus, driven to a stand in Magdela, in a fit of desperate intoxication, cause to be murdered, or even murder with his own hand, the whole of the captives ? He replied, No : the order in the first instance would not be attended to ; in the second, he would be restrained and even killed sooner. There are many friends in Magdela even, he added.

“ The above is the only condition under which it would be advisable that your intentions should be publicly made known.

“ It would, of course, be better if the declaration of war and landing of the troops could be synchronous. But it appears to me an impossibility, now-a-days, to keep the preparation of the force, which would be going on in Bombay, a secret. The press would be sure to get hold of it, and though Theodorus does not see Bombay dailies, there are Bombay merchants at Massowah who would not fail to hear from their friends what was going on, and

get instructions to prepare to profit by the coming campaign. \* \* \* \*

“With regard to the force to be employed, I consider 6,000 men ample to enter Abyssinia with, composed as recommended. Too many Europeans would only trammel, owing to the larger commissariat required, and native troops will be excellent against such enemies as we should encounter. The horse artillery and cavalry will be the most useful and important part of the force. The latter should only be native.

“As a precautionary measure another brigade of native infantry might be prepared and sent to the coast as a reserve, and to help, if required, in keeping open communication; but not more than the 6,000 mentioned should be ordered for the force to enter the highlands at first.

[When at Massowah, in April last, Colonel Merewether went on a short expedition in the interior, for the purpose of seeing what kind of a country our troops might have to pass through. He describes the roads—or tracks—as generally “unsuited to draught artillery, but easy enough for mules laden with mountain guns.]

“A finer or richer country than this,” he remarks, “could not be desired. The scenery and general appearance very much resemble the ‘ghats,’ on the western coast of India, and the verdure is equal to what is seen in those favoured parts immediately after the monsoon. The reason of this is, that the cool season is the rainy one in the portion of the country lying between the Abyssinian highlands and the sea. There is a north-east monsoon; in fact, from October to the end of March there is some rain every day, but never very heavy, nothing approaching the Indian south-west monsoon.

The climate is very similar to that of Mattemma. An April sun during the day was warm, but the heat did not make being out in it unpleasant, and in the open plain or on the hills there was always a delicious, cool breeze blowing from the sea. At night there was heavy dew consequent on the recent rains, and it was so cold that blankets were necessary sleeping inside a tent. Water is obtainable almost everywhere, and wells could easily be sunk. The ascent from Henrote to Fathak, with subsequent descent, is, as it at present exists, undoubtedly difficult; but the track followed went straight up the hill. A zigzag might be made at no very great cost, up which laden camels, and even carriages, might pass. The country is full of game in the cool months. Recent traces of elephants were seen, but the guides said these animals had passed on to higher grounds to escape from the flies, which are very numerous at this season of the year. Tracks of lions, leopards, wild hog and deer, were noticed daily; and of birds, there were abundance of guinea fowl, spur fowl, and quail.

“The great want in the country is population. After leaving Part not a soul was seen. The cultivation at Agametta, though nearly ripe, was unwatched. The land had been ploughed, and the grain sown in October, and the crop left to mature as it might. The splendid grazing-grounds were undisturbed by cattle. From inquiries made it appears that the whole of this extensive and fertile track of country between the mountains and the sea, from the Agadey torrent to nearly twenty miles north, giving an area of some 400 square miles, belongs to one tribe, the Tsanatigli Christians, mustering not more than 800 adults. They also hold lands in Abyssinia, where they reside in the summer months, migrating

with their cattle, of which they have large herds, to the lowlands nearer the sea, from October to the end of April. As they pass down they cultivate patches here and there, reaping the produce as they return. This dearth of population I conclude to be owing to the absence of any one fixed good government as before mentioned. About Eylat the soil is considered to belong to Abyssinia. While the Egyptian Government holds the country, it is nominally supposed to protect the people. The latter have therefore to pay dues to both.

#### DR. KRAPF'S SUGGESTIONS.

##### MASSOWAH AND TAJURRAH.

[DR. L. KRAPF, the learned missionary (whose works upon Abyssinia are described in the 1st part of this book) forwarded the following suggestions to Lord Stanley, in October of last year.\* This gentleman has very recently received the appointment of "Dragoman," or interpreter, to the expedition now fitting out.]

It was to be hoped that this humane measure [the writer alludes to Mr. Rassam's mission to obtain the release of the captives] would be crowned with a happy issue, and for a time it appeared very successful indeed; but some ill-advisers, of whom I know one personally as an intriguer from his childhood, turned the king's mind to thoughts hostile to England, the humiliation of the English having been, in my humble opinion, the king's

\* He was then residing with his family at Kornthal, near Stuttgart.

aim from the beginning. We must remember that every Abyssinian ruler must have performed some feat which the historiographer can note in the annals of the Empire as the peculiar exploit by which the reign of the deceased king was in a high degree distinguished. When Major Harris, whose dragoman I was in 1841, had, at the order of his Government, delivered handsome presents to Sahela Selassie (the King of Shoa), the royal poets and singers immediately pronounced it as the peculiarity of his reign that the Queen of the white nations had sent him tribute. We can, therefore, not be surprised if the haughty monarch Theodorus resolved on striving for the honour of being reported in the annals of Abyssinia as the lion-like king who has humbled the greatest nation of Europe, thereby showing himself, as he thinks, the worthy successor of David and Solomon, from whom he claims his descent.

Having travelled and resided for eighteen years on the East African coast, in Tigré, Shoa, and Amhara especially (as my "Travels," published in 1860, at London, may show), I think I have obtained some knowledge which, under the present circumstances, when a warlike conflict between Great Britain and Abyssinia seems unavoidable, might be turned to some good account.

No doubt the British Government will hesitate to declare war when they consider that the lives of a number of Europeans are at stake in the event of such a declaration, as the reckless King, on hearing of the English warlike demonstrations, might butcher the prisoners and other Europeans upon whom he can lay hold, immediately and in cold blood. The question therefore arises, whether there is no mode of rescuing the prisoners before the King can harm them, and whether there is not some



reason to think that the King will delay the execution of his wrath.

In reference to the latter question I fully believe that the King will postpone his bloody design, especially when he hears that, in case of his killing the Europeans, the English will give themselves no rest until they have put themselves in possession of his person, of his grandees, and advisers. His plan will doubtless be, first, to annihilate, as he thinks, the invading troops, to make as many prisoners of war as he can, and, finally, return victoriously to Gaffat, to slaughter all the Europeans together in the most cruel manner. He of course has no idea of the possibility of being overthrown by the English, as he has never lost a battle in his conflicts with Abyssinian and Egyptian opponents.\*

But in regard to the speedy release of the prisoners at Magdela and the other Europeans at Gaffat, my humble suggestion is that the English should send an armament of about 2,000 men to the Island of Massowah, in the Red Sea, whence the King will soon hear the news, and the rumour will swell 2,000 into 20,000 men. This news will immediately induce the King to march from Western to Eastern Abyssinia to Tigré, there to meet the invading army. But whilst the English land their force at Massowah, and move them in forced marches up to the high land and frontier of Tigré, which is about four days (eighty or ninety miles) distant from the coast, another force of about 1,000 men (chiefly horse) should be sent to the Bay of Tadjourra, opposite to Aden, on the African main, whence they would move inland as far

[\* This is not quite correct. Theodore's arms have more than once suffered defeat at the hands of Tussoo Gobezi, as well as at those of the Egyptian troops.]

as to the place Doosta, where the noble river Hawash terminates in a lake and sand. The flying column would then, as fast as possible, march along the banks (which abound in wood, and grass, and wild animals), as far as to the point where the Berkona, a contributory stream, falls into the Hawash. The Berkona rises in the Wollo country, Wowakallo, near Totola, where I have passed it as a rivulet in 1841. Having reached the Abyssinian high land, near Lake Haik, in the territory of Tehuladere, the flying force would arrive in two days at the foot of the fortress of Magdela, which the Commandant no doubt would surrender immediately on seeing himself besieged at once by a European force, which could throw shells and rockets in case of refusal.

The Adal, or Danákil tribes, occupying as a pastoral people the territory between the Red Sea, Tayouwa, and the Abyssinian frontier, would scarcely object to an English force marching through their country, if the object would be clearly stated and mentioned to them that their own country would not be hurt, and if besides an adequate present were promised, as they hate King Theodorus on account of his having violated their Mahometan coreligionists in the Wollo country, and in other parts of Abyssinia; they would doubtless welcome the English, and supply them with camels, and provisions, and cattle, as they would consider them the deliverers of their Mahometan friends in Abyssinia Proper.

Magdela having been surrounded, a part of the flying division would hasten on to Gaffat to rescue the other Europeans, and to take the Royal arsenal at that place. All this could be effected before the King hears of it in Tigré, and before he can send a reply to his generals at Magdela and Gaffat, in the rear. Neither could he

divide his troops, as he has powerful rivals all around in Godjam, in the Wag country, and more especially in Tigré, whose leader, perhaps, would welcome the English coming from Massowah.

But as the island of Massowah is, together with the country situated between the coast and Tigré, under Turkish sovereignty, the Turkish authorities will, no doubt, protest against the English marching through the coast district, a protest in which they might be aided by the French Consulate at Massowah. Should this be the case, it might be sufficient to keep a maritime demonstration near Massowah, and by this compel the King to remain in Tigré, whilst the whole English force of 2,000 or 3,000 men would march through the Adal country, to which Turkey has no rightful title. Should she object to the landing in the Bay of Tadjourra, England can reply, that Captain Haines, the Governor of Aden, had, in 1840, bought the Islet Mashaikh, which commands the entrance into that large and safe harbour.

Theodorus never expects an enemy coming from that quarter, as he had never to deal with the Danakil, and is entirely unacquainted with the state of things in that direction; so that the English could be in the heart of Abyssinia before the King is aware of it in Tigré, where he will expect the invaders.

I have taken the liberty to enclose my map of travels, which may explain more fully what I mean. The level road along a fine perennial stream cannot but be acceptable to a marching army, whilst the mountainous terrain from the coast of Massowah, in Tigré, and westwards, will present many difficulties, especially in regard to heavy artillery, which in general should be exchanged

for that of the lightest calibre, as it will scarcely be wanted, except in dealing with fortresses. True, the British army, in coming from Massowah, would sooner be in the cool climate than in marching over the hot plain of the Adal country. In every case the time between November and April must be used. From May and June it will be fearfully hot in the Danakil country, and the rainy season will begin in Abyssinia.

As the King's army consists chiefly of horses, rockets and shells will be most effectual against it. I have seen Major Harris throwing one evening the whole Shoan army into confusion by firing a few rockets into the air. There is no doubt, an English force of 2,000 or 3,000 men will completely overthrow the numerous army of the King in the first encounter, provided the English Commandant is on his guard against the stratagems, of which the King is very fond, and in which his main strength lies. If that were not the case, it would perhaps not be worth the trouble and expense to employ 3,000 men against an Abyssinian army, which may best be compared to an immense band of tinkers.

It would, indeed, be most desirable that Abyssinia, which has been harassed by revolutions ever since the time of Mr. Bruce (1772), should be regulated, if not permanently occupied, by a European Power, for the Abyssinians will never be able to elevate themselves independently of Europe. Abyssinia excels every other country in Africa by its healthy climate, its agricultural productiveness, and other capabilities. Extended as the Abyssinian empire already is, yet it might seize all Central Africa without somebody disputing or opposing its conquests. If governed by an enlightened ruler, Abyssinia would easily match Egypt, and prove a

powerful friend or foe even to India, to which it presents the key.

If the Slave Trade is to be radically destroyed in Eastern Africa, it must be chiefly done in Abyssinia, which presents the high road to Central Africa.

I have no doubt that ere long Egypt or France will be mixed up with that remarkable country, which is a compound of physical and moral qualities—a compound of alpine heights and low valleys, of various languages and religions, of human physiognomies of all shades; in fact, what its name shows, a *habeshi* (mixture) throughout.

## DR. BEKE'S SUGGESTIONS.

### MASSOWAH AND RAHEITA.

#### THE CO-OPERATION OF WAAGSHUM GOBAZYE.

[This well-known traveller has, at different times, addressed valuable advice to the Government concerning the best means of effecting a release of the captives in Abyssinia. The following remarks were communicated to Lord Stanley.]

*April 12, 1867.*

Waagshum Gobazye, the hereditary Prince of Lasta, and the actual possessor and ruler of Tigré and North-Eastern Abyssinia, has a *primâ facie* right to the sovereignty of the empire. With a view to the liberation of the captives at Magdala, the British Government should afford that Prince a certain amount of encouragement and support.

A few hundred muskets, with an ample supply of ammu-

nition, and a number of Congreve rockets (transportable where artillery could not be, and better suited for the purpose), and in addition to these a moderate subsidy in money, are all that would be requisite. Perhaps a few European soldiers might at the same time be introduced to fire the rockets and drill the natives in the proper use of the muskets; but this would depend upon circumstances.

But, in addition to this material support, it would be necessary to exert certain moral influences. The Roman Catholic Mission, long established at Massowah and in North-Eastern Abyssinia, is in friendly if not intimate and confidential relations with the Waagshum, or with some of the principal chiefs acknowledging his supremacy; and it is essential to the well-being and success of any negotiations that may be entered into with that Prince or his partisans, that the members of that mission should not merely be friendly disposed, but should be induced to co-operate with the agents of the British Government.

The sympathies of the Roman Catholic missionaries being naturally with France, as the leading Power of their religion, it might perhaps be deemed expedient to act upon them through the French Government, in which case the recognition of Waagshum Gobazye as Emperor of Abyssinia might be made by the Governments of France and England concurrently. Otherwise, some other means of influencing the members of the Roman Catholic Mission would doubtless present themselves to her Majesty's Government.

If, as I believe to be the case, there are several Frenchmen in the employ of the Waagshum or some of his chiefs, their services might possibly be rendered available,

and so might render unnecessary the employment of Englishmen ; and, indeed, unless there should be any political objections to such a course, it might possibly be deemed more prudent, in order to obviate the risk of Theodore's attempting the lives of the British captives, that in the first instance France and Frenchmen should alone show themselves openly.

The Waagshum, thus aided and supported, should be induced to march at once upon Amba Magdala, through the upper country, along the eastern edge of the table-land, the summit of the ghauts. The distance of Magdala from the southern extremity of Annesley Bay, in a direct line, by the way of Senafé, is about 250 geographical miles.

In mentioning this road, it is right to explain that there are three ways of penetrating into Central and Southern Abyssinia from Mañsowah, or its vicinity : viz. (1), the lower road, north-westward, through Bogos, Kassala, and Matemmah ; (2) the middle road, south-westward, through Hamaseyn and Tigré, crossing the River Takkazye ; and (3) the upper road, southwards by Halai Tokuda, or Senafé, along the high land, in, which are the sources of the Takkazye and its tributaries.\*

From the peculiar physical character of the Abyssinian table-land, the third of these roads is by far preferable to the other two, the selection of either of which latter for the march of an invading army would be attended with considerable loss of time, might occasion the illness or even the death of a large number of men, and might even place in jeopardy the success of a cam-

\* These three roads are marked approximately on the map of Abyssinia published in Dr. Beke's work entitled "The British Captives in Abyssinia." Longman & Co., 1867.

paign. It may not be irrelevant to mention that the upper road was taken by Don Christopher de Gama, when he entered Abyssinia in 1541, at the head of 500 Portuguese, to assist the Emperor against the Mohamedans.

An erroneous notion is entertained generally, and even by the captives themselves, respecting Amba Magdala, which Mr. Rassam describes as being "situated on a mountain in the Wollo Galla country;" whereas it is in truth an isolated spur of table-land, by which it is commanded from on high.

By occupying Tanta, at the extreme point of the plateau of Warrahemano, where the high land begins to break down to form Amba Magdala, which is distant from it probably not more than a quarter of mile, the Waagshum would have that fortress completely at command; and as Magdala has no artificial fortifications beyond a few wooden stockades, and the houses and erections on it are principally, if not entirely, of wattles covered with mud, and are all thatched, a few well-directed rockets would soon destroy the whole place. In this I speak on the report of others, and from my acquaintance with several similar fortresses, not from my own personal knowledge of Amba Magdala itself.

It may, however, be not unreasonable to suppose that the garrison, said to consist of only 600 musketeers, and 1,000 spearmen, might be induced to capitulate. Indeed, if the fact be, as stated, that during four months of the year the place is without water, which has to be brought from the plain below, it would seem that by cutting off the supply—that is to say, preventing the women from fetching the water—the garrison might be reduced to extremities, and forced to surrender at discretion.



Still it would not be sufficient to leave matters to take this course alone. Negotiations might be entered into with the garrison, with the captors themselves, and especially with the Abuna or Coptic Bishop, who is confined there, but (as I am informed) not imprisoned ; and means might, doubtless, be devised for inducing the natives to abjure their allegiance to Theodore, and to espouse the cause of Gobazye.

For this purpose, however, it is essential to secure the partisanship of the Abuna, as it is on his consenting to anoint and crown Gobazye as Emperor, and on his actually performing that ceremony, that the final success of the whole enterprise would depend. As long as no rival of his is anointed and crowned, Theodore possesses a prestige which no reverses can absolutely annihilate. He is, and must continue to be, "Emperor by the election of God"—" [The] chosen of God, King of Kings, Theodore of Ethiopia," as he styles himself in his letter to her Majesty the Queen of England. But the moment the Abuna takes it on himself to anoint another Emperor the crown falls as it were from Theodore's head on to that of his substitute ; and although he may retain or regain the throne, if he has the power to do so, still his exclusive right and prestige are gone. It is to prevent such an occurrence that Theodore keeps the Abuna near his person when they are friends, and places him in confinement when they are enemies.

The present Abuna was formerly a teacher in the school of the Church Missionaries at Cairo, and was consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch at their instance ; and he has always been considered as devoted to the English and Protestant cause in Abyssinia. It may, however, be questioned whether his own personal interest

is not most regarded by him. Be this as it may, I apprehend there would be no difficulty in the way of securing the co-operation of this prelate, through the Coptic Patriarch and the British Church Missionaries, as well as by making it worth his while. Whether it would not be practicable to effectuate his escape from Amba Magdala in the first instance would be matter for consideration on the spot.

The foregoing suggestions are made on the assumption that the Emperor Theodore will not be at Magdala, but absent in Godjam on his customary campaign against Tabela Gwalu. Should it happen that he is at Magdala, or that he should return thither before the captives have been liberated by the one method or the other, then it is to be considered whether the aid of a small British force might not be necessary.

In this case, however, I will presume to recommend that an army should not be landed in North-Eastern Abyssinia, so as to have to march through a considerable extent of country, even though the district traversed may be under the rule of Waagshum Gobazye, and their inhabitants well disposed towards the invaders. It would be showing the game too plainly to Theodore.

To me it appears—though on strategical operations it becomes me to speak with great diffidence—that a small body of troops, consisting principally, if not entirely, of cavalry, should be landed at Raheita, and should proceed by rapid marches direct on Magdala. The distance between the two points is 240 geographical miles, of which about 200 are through the low country occupied by various Dánkil tribes, described in my report of December 17, 1864, already referred to, and the remaining forty miles are over the high table-land

of Abyssinia. The road is marked approximately on the map.

The greater portion of this road would be along the northern side of the river Aswash, and at no great distance from that river, where water would be plentiful; and I apprehend there would be no difficulty in obtaining sufficient supplies.

Raheita is chosen as the place of landing, in preference to Tadjurrah, because the country to be traversed is occupied by tribes of the Modiatos (the Assa-himera, or Red House of the Danakil), with whom the people of Raheita are more intimately connected than are those of Tadjurrah, who are a sub-tribe of the Debeni-k-Wama (the Ado-himera, or White House).

These tribes are not numerous, they have no military discipline, and are armed only with spear and knife; consequently they could not, if so disposed, offer any serious opposition to a well-armed and well-disciplined European force, however small. Besides, their friendship and co-operation might easily be secured, as in the case of Major Harris's mission to Shoa, in 1841, which went from Tadjurrah to Alin Amba, with an escort of about only a dozen soldiers. It is true that, when at a short distance from Tadjurrah, two of the party were assassinated; but this was proved to have been the result of treachery, and partly also from a sufficient guard not having been kept during the night.

The foregoing suggestions are respectfully offered, subject to the disadvantage of my not being acquainted with all that has occurred since I left Abyssinia, nearly a twelvemonth ago. The change of circumstances may naturally occasion a modification of the details. I cannot, however, but retain the conviction that, with a view to

the liberation of the captives, and to the safety of their lives in the meanwhile, my plan is in substance preferable either to a formal invasion by a hostile army or the despatch of a diplomatic mission accompanied by a powerful escort, which would be, in fact, only another form of an invading army.

This plan would possess the further advantage that her Majesty's Government would not be pledged to an alliance with a potentate who is manifestly unable "to keep open the avenues of approach between the sea-coast and the interior," but would, on the contrary, be left clear to enter into other arrangements as would tend to promote friendly commercial intercourse with a portion of the globe, the importance of which has too long been lost sight of, both as regards the advantages which it offers in itself, and yet more so on account of its being the natural highway into the interior of the vast continent of Africa.

[The Government having declined to follow Dr. Beke's advice, that gentleman sent a second and a third letter ; in the last, he quotes the following from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in support of his opinion :—]

*June, 13, 1867.*

The "Egyptian Correspondent" of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who sent home the report of the Mohammedan Abyssinians, remarks very sensibly that among the insurgents "we ought to be able to find allies against Theodore in the event of its being at length determined to effect by force the release of the captives ; for I do not believe," he says, "in the success of the mild expedients hitherto resorted to. They have now been tried more than three years without our being one whit nearer the

desired result than when the first letter from the Queen was sent. Fate may assist in bringing about the death of Theodore by any one or more of his many adversaries ; but if we are to wait upon fate, it may bring about the death of the prisoners likewise, and leave us with the stigma on our power of having been unable to cope with a resolute chief of Abyssinia ; and it will be small crowing over a dead lion, who kept us at bay while alive, and whom we had no hand in subduing. The effect would not be lost on Egypt, or along the shores of the Red Sea, and might have its influence in India."

As regards the choice of an ally among the native chiefs, I would beg leave respectfully to repeat my recommendation of Waagshum Gobazye, who is thus described in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, by the Mohammedan Abyssinian already referred to :—

"In Tigré, Wakshum Gobezi, a descendant of the rulers of Lasta, holds his own. He is spoken of as a man of courage and determination, and counts for one of Theodore's most potent adversaries ;" which description, as far as it goes, is entirely confirmatory of that already given by myself in my communication to your lordship of the 12th of April last.

[A letter having appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 11th of July, intimating that the Government had decided upon sending the expedition on to Massowah, and thence to Magdala, by way of Dobarwa, Axum, and Shiré, as "the best and nearest route," Dr. Beke, addressed another letter to Lord Stanley, explaining that, in his opinion, a bad selection had been made, and how an invading army following this road would, in all likelihood, meet with sickness and disaster. Camels having been spoken of as forming an important feature in the

expedition, Dr. Beke assured his lordship, from a three years' personal experience of travelling in Abyssinia, that whilst these animals are used in the low and desert countries, "the general means of transport on the tableland (that is to say, throughout Abyssinia, properly so-called) are mules, asses, and men."]

Dr. Beke does not recommend (July, 1867) camels for travelling in the interior :—

"My own three years' personal experience of travelling in Abyssinia is, that whilst camels are used in the low and desert countries, and bullocks in parts of Tigré near the coast, the general means of transport on the tableland—that is to say, throughout Abyssinia, properly so called—are mules, asses, horses, and men. When I went to Shoa in 1840, my baggage (like that of Major Harris's mission in the year following) was conveyed by camels across the deserts of the Danákil between Tajurrah and the frontier of Shoa; but in all my subsequent peregrinations through most of the provinces of the empire, I used mules and horses, with occasional porters for light weights; and on leaving the country in 1843, I took my mules down to 'Mkuller, opposite Massowah. On my recent visit to Abyssinia, my baggage was carried by camels from 'Mkuller to the fort of Mount Shumfaite, in the valley of the Hadás, when it was taken up to the tableland on bullocks sent down for that purpose by the inhabitants of Halai; and on my return to Massowah, the same people brought it down all the way to Arkiko on bullocks and asses (with also a few porters), without employing camels at all."

## ROUTES :

### FRENCH EXPEDITION, 1839-43.

M. LEFEBVRE AND M. DILLON.

[By far the fullest information concerning the various routes in Abyssinia, the distances of places, and the nature of the country—whether fertile or barren—through which a traveller would have to pass, is that contained in the great French work describing the expedition of 1839-43.]

\* \* \* All the proper names are French renderings. On pronunciation the sounds will be found identical, or very nearly so, with our own. A close comparison of both the English and French orthographies, however, would give a still better rendering of these native names.

#### ROUTES FROM MESSOAH TO ADOWA.

##### 1st ROUTE.

*First day.*—7 hours' march on a mule to Waingous, across a barren and deserted country.

*Second day.*—9 hours, to Medeummar, the country varying in aspect according to the season, withered and parched in dry weather, and covered with foliage and verdure in the rainy season, when innumerable flocks find pasture.

*Third day.*—9 hours to Aye-Deresso, in the valleys formed by the ridges of the Ethiopian plateau ; the air begins to be more fresh, and there is water to be found during the greater part of the journey.

*Fourth day.*—5 hours, to Kayé-Kor. It is the first place after Aye-Deresso, where there is water ; the road runs across a woody plain infested by wild animals.

*Fifth day.*—5 hours to Châah. From Kayé-Kor the road runs over the Ethiopian plateau, and across a well cultivated and densely populated country. Châah is situated on the right bank of the Mareb.

*Sixth day.*—4 hours to Kouda Fellassi. The first part of the road runs across a deserted and woody country, inhabited by bands of the Chohos, who are dangerous to unguarded travellers. The second part runs across the fertile table-land of Seraé.

*Seventh day.*—9 hours to Addi-Hoala, across the plains, watered by numerous streams.

*Eighth day.*—4 hours to Gondet, on the descent of the table-land leading to the valley of Mareb.

*Ninth day.*—4 hours to Addis-Addi. Recrossing the river Mareb. Low-land, woody. Temperature high.

*Tenth day.*—7 hours to Chaâguéné. On cultivated hills; where but a small number of villages is seen.

*Eleventh day.*—5 hours to Adowa; through verdant and well-watered valleys.

#### 2ND ROUTE.

*First day.*—6 hours to Oueia. The road is arid, dry, and so hot during the day, that it is not possible to travel except by night.

*Second day.*—5 hours to Hamhamo. The same country.

*Third day.*—7 hours to Toubo. In the narrow valleys crossed by mountain streams, which are never dry.

*Fourth day.*—7 hours to Dixan or Halaye. Ascent of the Tarenta. Halaye and Dixan are the first Christian villages the traveller meets with after leaving the coast.

*Fifth day.*—9 hours to Eguerzobo. Across a very uneven country, the population of which is one of the least hospitable of the Abyssinian Christians.

*Sixth day.*—9 hours to Eguelu. Crossing the rivers Tserana and Belessa and the mountain chain of Logote.

*Seventh day.*—9 hours to Adowa. Crossing the rivers of Mémene and Onguaye: a rich country.



ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO ATEBI.

For the first four days, see the route to Halaye.

*Fifth day.*—7 hours to Segonnete. On the border of the Ethiopian table-land; the latter part of the journey is a slight descent, crossing many streams of little importance.

*Sixth day.*—9 hours to Bihale. Across an arid and deserted country.

*Seventh day.*—7 hours to Addigrate. Ascending a more elevated level. Rich pasture. Addigrate is the capital of the Province Agamé.

*Eighth day.*—6 hours to Agoddi. A flat open country: at first rich and fertile; afterwards dry and barren.

*Ninth day.*—8 hours to Atebi. An elevated plateau. White barley is the only cereal grown.

ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO ANTALO.

To Atebi. *See above.*

*Tenth day.*—4 hours to Aïkamessal. Following the course of the stream Alecti, which swollen progressively by the waters of the province of Ouomberta, takes the name of the river Agoula. Aïkamessal is one of the points through which the caravans descend to the salt plain.

*Eleventh day.*—6 hours to Dessa. On a fertile tableland, but sparsely populated. Dessa is also a place of rendezvous for the caravans descending to the salt plain.

*Twelfth day.*—5 hours to Kouihaine-Tcheleukot. Following the same tableland.

*Thirteenth day.*—6 hours to Antalo. Crossing two small rivers Guembéla and Antabate; a populous and well-cultivated country.

ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO ABI-ADDI.

For the first 7 days. *See Adowa.*

*Eighth day.*—6 hours to Zoungui. In the uneven country belonging to the region of the Kollas (lower-land).

*Ninth day.*—8 hours to Meretta. The first part of the road is almost deserted, there being no vegetation beyond a few thickets of *Mimosa*; across the river Ouéri, which flows between high banks. Approaching to Meretta the country presents a less savage aspect, the sites are very picturesque, and surrounded by numerous hamlets.

*Tenth day.*—6 hours to Abi-Addi. In a country densely populated and resorted to by a great number of merchants trading in salt. There is a depot of salt for the provinces of Sémiène at Abi-Addi.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO AREZA.

The first 3 days are employed to cross the country of the Chohos.

*Third day.*—17 hours to Ouaky. The first station on the Ethiopian plateau.

*Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Days.*—18 hours to Aréza. In the lower-land, furrowed by numerous ravines. Elephants, rhinoceros, and buffaloes are found here in great numbers.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO DEBAB-GOUNA.

Seven days to Adowa.

*Eighth day.*—4 hours to Axum, across a plain country, where teff and corn are principally grown.

*Ninth day.*—6 hours, to Tambouhh, crossing the stream called Maye-Tchout, which waters beautiful meadows, thence to the hills of Akabsiré, behind which lies the valley of Guerezela, and thence descending to the valley of Tambouhh.

*Tenth day.*—4 hours, to Belasse, having passed the beautiful meadows of Seleuboah, and crossed the little mountain chain which borders on the north the plain of Chiré; the road leads to the district of Belasse.

*Eleventh day.*—5 hours, to Maye Témene, a plain country; cereals and pastures.

*Twelfth day.*—6 hours, to Debab Gouna, a plain country, like the above.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO EGUELA-GOURA.

For the first 3 days, see *ante*.

*Fourth day.*—To Kayé-Kor, the first station on the table-land.

*Fifth day.*—3 hours to Eguela-Goura. On leaving Kayé-Kor there is a rather steep incline, but the rest of the road runs across a plain of corn fields and meadows.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO FICHO AND THE SALT PLAIN.

For the first 9 days, see Atebi.

*Tenth day.*—3 hours to Assote plain.

*Eleventh day.*—3 hours, descending the eastern declivity of the Ethiopian plateau, by very steep slopes.

*Twelfth day.*—4 hours, to the Wells of Saba, across the bed of a torrent full of round pebbles.

*Thirteenth day.*—8 hours, to Mankel-Kelié, descending one level and entering a tolerably extended plain, for the most part deserted. Near to Mankel-Kelié there are a few cultivated places and scattered huts, inhabited by the tribe Taltal of Rorôme.

*Fourteenth day.*—9 hours to Gara. Here the road declines sensibly, and shortly there is nothing else but a burning desert, destitute of every kind of vegetation. The halting place is close to the source of the Gara, which is a boiling spring.

#### 2nd ROUTE.

There is another, and by far shorter road to Ficho, running along the valleys of the shore, the Salt Lake being but at a short distance from the coast, but this road is only practicable to the natives.

## ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO ADDI-ABO.

## 1ST ROUTE.

*Eighth day.*—To Axum, see Debagouna.

*Ninth day.*—To Maye-Touaro, a town situated at the extremity of the valley of Tambouhh, where it opens into the plain of Seleuloah.

*Tenth day.*—To Medebayetabar, an uneven and woody country, with many ravines, and a great number of streams which fall into the river Mareb.

*Eleventh day.*—To Kaye-Beit, a country of low lands, abounding with woods, difficult to travel without a guide.

*Twelfth day.*—To Addi-Abô. Approaching Addi-Abô, there is a great number of villages and well-cultivated fields to be seen, although a great part of the inhabitants follow the chase, which is very productive.

## 2ND ROUTE.

From Maye-Touaro there is another road across the hills of Koyeta and the district of Addi-Onfito, leading in 4 days' march to Addi-Abo. The inhabitants which are met with on this road are more hospitable than those of the districts of Medebaye-Raber and Kayé-Beit.

## ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO AOSSOBA.

See the route to Antalo.

*Twelfth day.*—To Kouihaine-Tcheleukot.

*Thirteenth day.*—To Aossoba, across arable land, abounding in meadows and cornfields. Aossoba is situated in the southern limit of Enderta; the inhabitants have frequent intercourse with the Taltals and the Gallas, from whom they purchase ivory and the horns of the rhinoceros.

## ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO ASSA-KELTI.

*Thirteenth day.*—To Antalo, which see.

*Fourteenth day.*—4 hours to Addirake, across the plain of Antalo and the river Bouillé ; entering the province of Ouodgérate, of which Addirake is one of the first villages.

*Fifteenth day.*—5 hours, to Beit-Maria. Having crossed the plain covered with pastures, and encompassed by high mountains, the road ascends a narrow valley, watered by a large stream falling from the peak of Aladjié.

*Sixteenth day.*—5 hours, to Sessate, along the same valley—crossing the high chain of Ouodgérate by the defile of Aladjié. The village of Sessate is built on the opposite slope.

*Seventeenth day.*—8 hours, to Tsaâfti. Having crossed the valley of Atsalla and the mountain chain, which borders it on the opposite side of Aladjié, the road debouches into a second valley called Aïba, behind which there is a large plain, whence it descends into the basin of Dóba, in the middle of which the market Tsaâfti is situated.

*Eighteenth day.*—6 hours, to Assa-Kelti. The road runs across many valleys, bordered by hills, on which groups of hamlets are to be seen. Many districts are thus crossed, the most important of which is the Menhane, and the Aya, whence, by a steep acclivity, the road leads to the Mount Mossobo, where the village Assa-Kelti, the residence of the Governor of Achangu is situated.

## ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO DEBRA-ABBAYE.

*Eleventh day.*—To Maye-Teméne, see Debabgouna.

*Twelfth day.*—5 hours, to Maye-Chebèni ; a plain country.

*Thirteenth day.*—5 hours, to Tembela. Part of the road across an uneven country, and the other on a plain producing cotton and maize.

*Fourteenth day.*—8 hours, to Debra-Abbaye. A woody country, interspersed by ravines. The principal culture

is cotton. The market of Debra-Abbaye is one of the most important for ivory and furs.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO DEMBELASSE.

*Sixth day.*—To Koudoflassi. See the route to Adowa.

*Seventh day.*—To Dembelasse. Descending the western declivity of the plateau of Seraè. The inhabitants of Dembelasse are almost all hunters, and reported to be cruel and inhospitable.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO SAMARE.

The road runs through Antalo (which see) thence a day's march across the plain of Sahharte, one angle of which touches the town of Samaré. It is the provision market for corn for the greater part of the Tigré; there is also excellent iron, imported by the inhabitants of the province of Bona.

#### ROUTE FROM MESSOAH TO SOKOTA.

The first runs through Achanguí, whence in a day and a half march to Sokota; it is the high land road.

The second passes through Saméré and the valley of Tellaré. This road runs across an unhealthy country, and the temperature is exceedingly elevated.

The market of Sokota is the place of rendezvous for the merchants going to the provinces of the Gallas of the east; it is also the central point for commercial transactions with the Ouadela and the Ouellos tribes, who produce the finest wool of Abyssinia.

#### ROUTE FROM ADOUA TO GONDAR.

*Fourth day.*—To Maye-Temène. See Debab-Gouna.

*Fifth day.*—To Maye-Chebéni. Meadows.

*Sixth day.*—To Maye-Zemkale. A plain country.

*Seventh day.*—To Maye-Aini. Crossing the river Taccazé,

which flows within a deep ravine. Maye-Cini is situated on the opposite side of Maye-Temkate, in the country of Berra-Ouesseya.

*Eighth day.*—4 hours, to Maye-Téclite. As far as Maye-Kessate the country is plain and the soil seems to be fertile ; nevertheless, it is almost deserted, most probably on account of the Chankallas, who make frequent inroads and murder the scattered inhabitants. Between Maye-Aini and Maye-Kessate, the traveller meets the river Sarentia, one of the confluent of the Taccazé. Beyond Maye-Kessate the road crosses many hills, where the population is denser. Half-way it crosses the river Ounguiha.

*Ninth day.*—8 hours, to Debeubaheur. The country is formed by the ridges of the mountain-chain of Semiène, forming narrow valleys between them, in the middle of which flow the rivers Enzo, Bouheia, Ansia, and Zarima. Having crossed this latter river, the road rises considerably, during two hours' march, till it reaches Debeubaheur, situated on the highest level of the Mount Lamalmon.

*Tenth day.*—5 hours, to Debarek. After ascending the acclivity of Lamalmon, the road debouches into a plain country belonging to the province of Ouoguéra. Before reaching Debeubaheur, the district of Oulkefite has to be crossed.

*Eleventh day.*—7 hours, to Chimberazéguéne. A plain country, covered with meadows, and well populated. Climate cold.

*Twelfth day.*—8 hours, to Izâkdebur. The same country : but the more the traveller advances towards S.W. the table-land becomes lower, and is covered with a number of streams, which very often stop communication during the winter.

*Thirteenth day.*—6 hours to Gondar. The road continues to run on a plain as far as the descent of Bambelo. Before reaching Gondar the river Maguetche is crossed by a bridge.

## ROUTE FROM ADOWA TO BASSO.

## 1st ROUTE.

- Thirteenth day.*—To Gondar. See above.
- Fourteenth day.*—To Feurkabeur. Having descended the plateau of Gondar, the road runs along the banks of the lake Tsana, having previously crossed the rivers Kaâh and Dembéa-Goumara.
- Fifteenth day.*—To Ifag. The road continues by the lake, following the plain bordered by a chain of mountains of flat summits, on which the towns of Amba-Mariam, Emfrazze, &c., are built. Before reaching Ifag the river Arnogarno has to be crossed.
- Sixteenth day.*—To Madéramariam. Leaving Ifag the road crosses the plain of Foguera, watered by the river Reb: then it crosses a chain of hills, and the country becomes uneven as far as Madéramariam. There is a small river, the Goamar, to be crossed on this road.
- Seventeenth day.*—To Chimé-Guiorguis. The road passes through verdant valleys; half way the river Gota has to be crossed.
- Eighteenth day.*—To Andabeit. Across a plain; travellers encamp on the border of the ravine leading to the Nile.
- Nineteenth day.*—To Mota. Crossing the Nile, the road reaches Mota, on the opposite bank.
- Twentieth day.*—Ouofite. A plain country; the rivers Azouari and Teguidar to be crossed.
- Twenty-first day.*—To Debraouerck. A plain country, with some hills before reaching Debraouerck; the rivers Ennate-Tché, Guelguel-Tché, Idane, and Feza to be crossed.
- Twenty-second day.*—To Yebourte. A level country, watered by many streams descending from the mountain chain of Telba-Ouaha.
- Twenty-third day.*—To Debeite. Across a few hills which are the ramifications of the chain of Telba-Ouaha. From Debeite the country is generally woody.



*Twenty-fourth day.*—To Dagate. Across the rivers Soa, Mougá, Betchet, and Bagana.

*Twenty-sixth day.*—To Yedje-Oulié. Across the river Yeda.

*Twenty-seventh day.*—To Bassô. Across the river Tchamoga.

## 2ND ROUTE.

*First day.*—To Djenda. A plain country, densely populated and fertile.

*Second day.*—To Takoussa. The same.

*Third day.*—To Denguelbeur. In the province of Agaô-Medeur.

*Fourth day.*—To Atchafeur. On an elevated plateau, with good pasturage. Excellent iron is procured here.

*Fifth day.*—To Metcha. A plain country, in which are the sources of the Blue Nile.

*Sixth day.*—To Bourié. On the declivity of the plateau of Agaô-Medeur.

*Seventh day.*—To Denguelbeur. Across the narrow passage leading to the high land.

*Eighth day.*—To Atchafeur. A country furrowed by ravines. There are two towns bearing the same name in the province of Agaô-Medeur.

*Ninth day.*—To Dembetcha. On the chain of Telba-Ouaha.

*Tenth day.*—To Godera. Close to this town is the source of the river Fetane.

*Eleventh day.*—To Bassô. Across the rivers Fetane and Beur.

## ROUTE FROM GONDAR TO BOURIE.

See the routes from Gondar to Bassô.

## ROUTE FROM ADOWA TO CHARIA.

*First day.*—Zoungui. Across the districts of Addi-Kéré and Serhi. The soil is rich and well cultivated, although mountainous and intersected by ravines.

*Second day.*—To Aouzienne. Across the river of Ouéri, the

bed of which is very deep; the remainder of the road runs across a plain.

*Third day.*—To Aouza. Across the rivers of Selheu and Gueba; the remainder of the road is level.

*Fourth day.*—To Aréna. Across the river Agoula.

*Fifth day.*—To Antalo. A plain country. Across the river Guembela.

*Sixth day.*—To Beit-Maria, crossing the river Bouillé.

*Seventh day.*—To Sessate, across the high mountain chain of Ouodgérate.

*Eighth day.*—To Tsaâfti, crossing the rivers Atsala and Aïba.

*Ninth day.*—To Achangui, one of the seven districts of the Province of Dôba. In the middle there is a lake of two leagues in diameter.

*Tenth day.*—To Late, across an elevated chain bordering the lake of Archangui, and debouching into the country of Ouague, of which Late is one of the border towns.

*Eleventh day.*—To Tsera-Guedel, crossing the two parallel chains and stopping on the other side of the mount Aïna, of which Tsera-Guedel is one of the most elevated levels.

*Twelfth day.*—To Oualdia, chief town of the province of Yedjou. Having left the high lands of the Lasta, the traveller enters a valley the climate of which is temperate. The rivers Ala and Roukour are to be crossed.

*Thirteenth day.*—To Guerado, a Mussulman district in the province of Yedjou. The rivers Edèfe, Ouaha, Mersa, and Guerado are to be crossed.

*Fourteenth day.*—To Sirba, crossing the districts of Sekala and Zétetcherk, and entering the province of Outchalé.

*Fifteenth day.*—To Cossaro, crossing the river Méllé, and ascending the valleys of Djari and Katti.

*Sixteenth day.*—To Entcharô, following the declivity of the chain bordering the valley of Katti on the east.

*Seventeenth day.*—To Madjetié, following the valley of Ouérakallo, in the middle of which flows the river Borkenna.

*Eighteenth day.*—To Chéréfa, crossing the river Toukour.

The road descends from the table land of Guemza to the torrent of Sembelese, the bed of which is then ascended as far as Doulloute ; thence it descends again into the valley of Mouke-Méda, washed by the river Nazaro. The eastern declivity of the high mountain chain along which the road is running is here called Guedme.

*Nineteenth day.*—To Arogouratti, across the plain of Neguesso and the rivers Djari, Saour, and Gacha-Belebdè. Arogouratti is situated on one of the ridges of the great mountain chain in the district of Mengneuste.

*Twentieth day.*—To Goudje-Amba, across the plain of Rôbi. Before ascending the summit of the Goudje-Amba, which is situated on an elevated peak, the river Rôbi has to be crossed.

*Twenty-first day.*—To Tchénno, skirting the plateau of Choa. The valley of Tchénno is watered by the river Aouadi.

To Aliyô-Amba. Having passed the edge which forms the southern side of the valley of Tchénno, the road crosses many torrents descending from the mountains of Ankober. Aliyô-Amba is a place of rendezvous for the commercial exchanges between the caravans coming from the interior of Abyssinia and those coming by the way of Tedjoura, carrying the products of India and Europe.

#### ROUTE FROM GONDAR TO MADJETIE.

*First day.*—4 hours to Ambamariam, across the rivers Sodié and Arnogarno.

*Second day.*—5 hours to Derita, following either the heights of Ouaina-Dega or the plain bordering the lake.

*Third day.*—7 hours to Debratabor, across the river Reb.

*Fourth day.*—6 hours to Estié, following first an elevated plateau, whence the lake of Tsana is to be seen, and then a part of Godjam and Lasta.

*Fifth day.*—8 hours to Tchetchéo, a level country abounding in horses and cattle, crossing the river Tchetchéo.

*Sixth day.*—6 hours to Nebit, a country watered by a great number of streams, the greater part of which are the confluent of the Taccazé.

*Seventh day.*—7 hours to Daonte, a country of high table-land, where beautiful wool is to be found, which forms one of the most important articles of trade with the rest of Abyssinia.

*Eighth day.*—8 hours to Sekala, descending the high plateau by a ridge which debouches into the valley of Yedjou.

*Ninth day.*—5 hours to Sirba. Crossing the fertile plain of Zététcherk, a dependency of Yedjou, and some hills.

*Tenth day.*—7 hours to Kossarô. Crossing the river Méllé, then ascending the valleys of Djari and Katti, the traveller arrives at the peak of Kossarô, in a cold and humid country.

*Eleventh day.*—4 hours to Combolcha, descending the peak of Kossarô into the valley of Combolcha, which is on every side encompassed by high mountains.

*Twelfth day.*—8 hours to Koterme. Debouching through a defile between Aïni-Amba and Igof into the valley of Ouarékallo, watered by the river Borkenna. The town of Koterme is situated on an isolated mountain pass.

*Thirteenth day.*—7 hours to Madjétié, across the river Borkenna and many of its confluent; the country is flat and woody.

#### ROUTE FROM GONDAR TO MELAKSANKA.

For the first 7 days to Daonte (see above).

*Eighth day.*—8 hours to Melaksanka, across the Bachelo.

#### ROUTE FROM ADOWA TO GOURAGUIE.

For the first 22 days to Aliyô-Amba, see *ante*.

*Twenty-third day.*—8 hours to Dililla; ascending many elevated levels, the road enters the province of Boulga, on an elevated plateau, at the foot of mount Meguezazé.

*Twenty-fourth day.*—9 hours to Borra-Addo, following still the high land of the Boulga, which is rich in cultivated fields and meadows.

*Twenty-fifth day.*—6 hours to Aouache, a plain fertile and densely populated; horses are brought from this district.

*Twenty-sixth day.*—7 hours to Soddo, across a country composed of fertile hills and extensively wooded.

*Twenty-seventh day.*—9 hours to Absala ; the road runs across a woody country. A species of tree, called Zegba, is especially remarkable on account of its extreme height.

*Twenty-eighth day.*—8 hours to Ahimelélé, a country covered with coffee-trees.

*Twenty-ninth day.*—7 hours to lake Zouage. This lake occupies the middle of the province of Gouragué. In it there are seven islands, the principal of which is called Debrasina.

#### ROUTE FROM ALIYO-AMBA TO SAKA.

*First day.*—8 hours to Angolola, crossing the torrent of Airara and ascending the rise leading to the plateau of Choa. Beyond this latter the road runs almost entirely across a plain. The country is well-cultivated and produces corn and barley in abundance, but there is not a single tree to be seen. Half-way, one of the confluent of the river Berésá is to be crossed, and two hours afterwards the traveller reaches Angolola, crossing the river of the same name.

*Second day.*—8 hours to Fintchoa, across the river Tchatcha, and along a country thinly populated, although the soil seems fertile.

*Third day.*—7 hours to Messour-Medeur, a level country, crossing some streams of little importance.

*Fourth day.*—9 hours to Roguie, descending to a plain, and crossing immediately the river Guermama, which is one of the confluent of the Aouache. As far as the hills of Roguie the road runs through meadows and fields, where corn, teff, and vegetables are grown. The country is watered by the river Hakaki, which has many confluent.

*Fifth day.*—5 hours to Endodé, descending another step, leading into the valley of Aouache, leaving on the east the mountain of Fouri, and on the west Endotto. At

the foot of this plateau the country is covered with magnificent pastures extending as far as Endodé.

*Sixth day.*—9 hours to Bétcho-Ori. Crossing the Aouache the traveller enters a densely populated country, where barley and corn are grown.

*Seventh day.*—10 hours to Oualisso. The road runs still across a plain, but the country becomes woody, and is intersected by a great number of water-courses which fall into the river Ouahabé.

*Eighth day.*—10 hours to Saka. Crossing the river Ouahabé, which flows south-east, the country lowers towards the south and forms many valleys, separated by low hills, at the foot of which coffee-trees are cultivated. Halfway, the Guibé is crossed, which, by the Abyssinians, is considered to be larger than the Nile.

#### ROUTE FROM ALIYO-AMBA TO THE COUNTRY OF AOUSSA.

*First day.*—6 hours to Tehénno, a hilly country, crossing the river Kaléna.

*Second day.*—8 hours to Mafoude, crossing the river Aouadi, and passing by the defile of Kéraba, through a somewhat elevated mountain chain, which forms one of the edges of the plateau of Choa. Behind this, there is another, parallel to it, which is to be crossed before reaching Mafoude.

*Third day.*—4 hours to Mengeuste. Descending the hills of Mafoude, at the foot of which the river Rôbi is to be crossed, the traveller enters into an extended plain, for the most part deserted and woody. Elephants and other wild beasts are very common.

*Fourth day.*—7 hours to Chéréfa. Descending the hills of Mengeuste and entering the plain of Négusso, where maize and cotton are cultivated. The plain is watered by the river Djaou and three of its confluents, all descending from the plateau of Choa. Having crossed the Djaou, the road ascends as far as Chéréfa.

*Fifth day.*—8 hours, to Saramba. Leaving Chéréfa, the

road descends into a fertile and well-populated plain, the inhabitants of which are Mussulmen. Some hills are afterwards to be crossed, and the road enters the plain of Mouka-Mèva, in the middle of which flows the river Nazaro. The town Saramba is situated on the western border of the said plain, at the foot of the mountain chain of Guedme.

*Sixth day.*—6 hours, to Madjétié, crossing a second time the river Nazaro, the road runs to the rise of Doullonte, to the summit of the valley of Sembelete, and descends there as far as the spot where it debouches into the plain of Chafa. Crossing the river Toukour, and ascending the plateau of Guemzo to Madjétié, which is situated on the first level of the latter.

*Seventh day.*—7 hours to Rékié. Many large streams, descending from the plateau of Guemza, water the plain of Chafa, which the traveller has to follow during this journey. A little before reaching Rékié the river Borkenna is to be crossed.

*Eighth day.*—8 hours to Leide; a mountainous country, and intersected by ravines.

*Ninth day.*—6 hours to Ilala; a cultivated country, inhabited by the Gallas, who are inhospitable to travellers.

*Tenth day.*—7 hours to Kaâb. The aspect of the country is the same.

*Eleventh day.*—6 hours to Taâ. The country is peopled by the uncivilized Odal tribes. These tribes are nomade; their wealth consists in flocks and camels.

*Twelfth day.*—7 hours to Bakarsa, along the banks of the river Méllé, which form two narrow skirts of verdure, beyond which the soil is extremely arid.

*Thirteenth day.*—6 hours to Agamti. Following the river Méllé, as before.

*Fourteenth day.*—6 hours to Méllé, crossing the river Méllé. Halting place on the left bank.

*Fifteenth day.*—7 hours to Arabatessa. The country is in general sandy and arid, interspersed by *oases* tolerably peopled.

*Sixteenth day.*—7 hours to Tchéfi. The same country.

*Seventeenth day.*—6 hours to Aoussa; crossing the Aouche, the banks of which are woody. They are resorted to by nomade tribes, who do not, however, remain there, as the air is unhealthy. Aoussa is the chief town of a small province of the country of Adal. The grounds round about are cultivated, but the inhabitants of Aoussa join to agricultural pursuits the benefits of commerce. They make frequent exchanges in trade with the inhabitants of the high land of Abyssinia as well as with the ports of the Red Sea, as Zeila, Tedjoura, Béloul, and Eide.

#### ROUTE FROM ENTCHARO TO AOUSSA.

From Entcharo to Leide in 5 hours. (For the remainder of the road see the Itinerary from Aliyô-Amba to Aoussa.)

#### ROUTE FROM AOUSSA TO TEDJOURA.

*First day.*—5 hours crossing the Aouache; encampment at Bila.

*Second day.*—7 hours to Kourkoura.

*Third day.*—6 hours to Arho.

*Fourth day.*—7 hours to Dourgourgoura.

*Fifth day.*—7 hours to Kaballé.

*Sixth day.*—8 hours to Rahéta.

*Seventh day.*—8 hours to Arguita.

*Eighth day.*—8 hours to Heigounoul.

*Ninth day.*—9 hours to Tedjoura.

All along this road the country is inhabited by savage tribes; it is, therefore, highly important to be always on the alert against their attacks.



## ROUTE FROM TAJURRAH TO ANKOBAR.

MAJOR HARRIS, 1841.

Names of Stations.	Distance.		Supply of Water.	Elevation above the level of the Sea.	Latitude and Longitude.
	Miles	Furl.			
Tajúrrah ....	—	—	Well	—	{ Lat. 11° 46' 35" N. Long. 43° 0' 20" E.
Ambabo ....	3	4	do.		
Dullool ....	7	—	do.		
Sagálo ....	2	4	do.	—	Lat. 11° 40' 15" N.
Warelissán ..	14	—	None	1697	
Báhr Assal ..	16	—	do.	Below 570	{ Lat. 11° 37' 30" N. Long. 42° 33' 6" E.
Goongoonteh	16	—	Stream		
Allooli.....	9	—	Pool	228	
Bedikurroof..	16	—	do.		
Suggadéra ..	8	—	do.	—	Lat. 11° 19' 3" N.
Murrah ....	4	—	Well	—	Lat. 11° 17' 3" N.
Duddee ....	15	—	Pool		
Gobaad ....	12	—	River	1057	Lat. 11° 0' 54" N.
Sunkul ....	4	—	Pool		
Suggagédan..	7	—	None	—	Lat. 10° 53' 0" N.
Dawáylaka ..	9	4	Pool	1228	
Oomergooloof	8	4	None		
Amádoe ....	7	4	Pool		
Fíáloo .....	3	4	do.	1605	
Barúrudda ..	15	—	None		
Kilullool ....	12	—	Pool	1542	Lat. 10° 34' 33" N.
Waramilli ..	7	—	do.	1752	

Names of Stations.	Distance.		Supply of Water.	Elevation above the level of the Sea.	Latitude and Longitude.
	Miles	Furl.			
Naga-koomi..	15	—	None		
Meinha-tolli	15	—	Pool		
Madéra-dubba	15	4	None		
Sultélli ....	17	—	do.		
Mároo .....	13	—	Lake		
Moolu-Zughir	13	—	None		
Burdúdda ..	9	—	Pool		
Háo .....	15	—	None	—	Lat. 9° 39' 13" N.
Hawash River	11	—	River	2223	
Azbóti .....	12	4	Pool		
Dathára ....	12	4	Stream	2944	
Dinomali ....	5	—	do.		
Fárri .....	1	4	do.		
Alio Amba ..	13	—	do.	5271	
Ankóbar ....	5	—	do.	8200	{ Lat. 9° 34' 45" N. { Long. 39° 54' 0" E.
Total distance	370	—			

By the passage of the Polar star over the meridian, the magnetic variation at Ankóbar was observed, with the aid of a well-regulated chronometer, to be 7° westerly.

The longitude was determined both by a series of lunars, and by the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites; the mean of upwards of 150 observations being taken.

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- \* \* A most excellent work, and highly spoken of by subsequent travellers. See Page 53.
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- \* \* A compilation of 180 pages, with a map from Combes. The work is evidently part of a series.
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\*\*\* Although by the title-page this work seems a joint production, it is to Mr. Krapf that the credit is mainly due, Mr. Isenberg having remained in Shoa but a few months. Mr. Krapf resided at Ankobar for three years, where he completed the translations into Galla of several portions of the Bible, besides a grammar and vocabulary of that language. Mr. Isenberg, on his return to England, prepared and printed several useful books in Amharic. Prefixed to the journals is a clear and concise geographical memoir on Eastern and Central Africa. It likewise contains two maps. See Page 67 for an account of Mr. Krapf's last work.

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\*\*\* The journey of 372 miles was accomplished in 36 days, 174 hours being engaged in the actual journey. Each day's experience is given in the above report.

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\*\* This paper is accompanied by a valuable map, showing the author's routes, during his travels of nearly three years in Abyssinia, from Tajurrah to Ankobar; thence, through Shoa and the Galla districts, across the Abai into Gojan, Damot, and Agahmeda; and returning through Begeneder, Lasta, Tembien and Tigrè to Massowah with two vertical sections of Abyssinia from east to west and from north to south.

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- \*\* Contains several good plates and a map.
- REVUE DES DEUX MONDES. *Paris*, 1864. Second series, vol. liv.
- \*\* Two most interesting and ably written articles on King Theodore, by M. Guillaume Le Jean, late French Consul at Gondar, are contained in the November and December numbers. See Page 93.
- REISE DES HERZOGS ERNST, nach Aegypten und der Ländern der Habab. *Leipsig*, 1864. Fol.
- \*\* This expedition was undertaken in 1862 by His Highness Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, accompanied by a numerous party of friends and attendants. They landed at Massowah, and, taking a north-westerly course for about 60 miles, reached Keren. The book is elaborately got up, with coloured plates, photographs, &c., but relates more to sport than to science. Dr. Brehm had given the scientific results of the expedition in a work published the year before.
- A LECTURE on the Sources of the Nile, and on the means requisite for their final determination. By Dr. Chas. T. Beke. *London*, 1864. 8vo.
- OST-AFRICANISCHE STUDIEN. Von M. Munzinger. *Schaffhausen*, 1864. 8vo.
- \*\* This gentleman is the French (and of late also the English vice) consul at Massowah. He is a native of Switzerland, and has for many years been settled at Keren, the principal place in Bogos.

M. Munzinger has married a native lady; and betwixt the duties of his bi-consular appointment and mercantile pursuits, he has yet found time to write some very valuable works upon Africa.

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\*\*\* The latest published work of any value upon the country. It contains three Maps, mostly compiled from those drawn up by Dr. Beke.

THE END.



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