

SERVICE & SPORT IN THE SUDAN



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BIMBASHI D. C. E. FF. COMVN.

SERVICE & SPORT IN THE SUDAN

A RECORD OF ADMINISTRATION
IN THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN
SUDAN. WITH SOME INTERVALS
OF SPORT AND TRAVEL ♣ ♣ ♣

By D. C. E. A. COMYN, F.R.G.S.

(LATE OF THE BLACK WATCH)

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TO
MY PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

ALMOST every officer who looks beyond the somewhat cramped fields of regimental soldiering—the “baby-farming-cum-novel-over-ante-room-fire” of Lord Esher—hopes some time or other to join the Egyptian Army. It is considered the plum of extra-regimental employments abroad. Strange, however, it is that, in spite of the fact that one or more men from almost every regiment or corps has belonged to the E.A. at one time or another, very little is known about it. This is explained in several ways. The man who once has been in positions of considerable trust and responsibility more often than not does not rejoin his regiment. If he does rejoin he probably finds that local scandal holds a more favoured position than Imperial questions. Above all, there will be a certain jealousy among those who have never aspired to anything but regimental life, and a suspicion that the ex-bimbashi or bey is drawing on his imagination for experiences.

I divide the Egyptian Army into three distinct services. First, that in Cairo. The life there is the one that most people in the service and out of it suppose that any one with E.A. before his name in the Army list leads. To live in Cairo with £400 a year at least

over and above a captain's (British) pay, besides private means, is no hardship. One patronises balls and other gaieties, polo of the best, golf, rackets, &c. But who has not heard of the Khedival Sporting Club? The season over, one endures for a couple of months, with an occasional (is it weekly?) week-end at San Stephano, and then—the three months' leave that follows the nine of work.

The second is life at Khartum. For the majority this is official life pure and simple. The hours, from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., are not appalling except for those to whom continuous office work is anathema maranatha. There, too, are polo and all the sports afforded by a well-run club. The society of the gentler sex is as yet limited. Home leave, as in Cairo, is as regular in coming round as the hour-hand. Running in the same heat I place the stations on the Nile north of Khartum. The third I again divide into two. There are those who live on the Nile south of Khartum. They have their weekly or fortnightly mail-boat. They see every one, official or tourist, who passes up or down. Their houses are comfortable bungalows. If a servant falls sick, the next boat brings a new one. If master does likewise, a wire will bring a steamer to whisk him to hospital. A wire brings anything in the way of food or drink (including soda water) by return. The drawback is the mosquito. It is a drawback to be written in capital letters. Mosquitoes in tens by day, in hundreds of thousands of millions by night. Any one who has dinner in the open after dark in

these parts is perhaps a pachyderm, and certainly a lunatic.

To the Nile dwellers I add those in such head-quarter stations as El Obeid, Kassala, and Wau. They have not, 'tis true, the continual steamers, but there are usually enough officers to raise a chukker at polo or make a set at tennis. At the worst there is a white man once and again to talk to. Leave is generally pretty sure to come their way after twelve months' labour.

The second class of the third category is composed of those who live in the "out-stations." They meet their kind when going or returning from leave, the granting of which depends on the exigencies of the service. Their houses are, as a rule, a couple of native tukls (huts), but as two-thirds of their time is employed in patrolling the country this does not affect them much. If a servant sickens, they must nurse him and replace him as best they can with a savage from some village. They live on tinned food, chickens, boiled or roast—the third class murghi of the Indian dak bungalow—or whatever they can shoot for the pot or the cook of the moment is able to improvise. They draw upon their imagination and call a lump of maltreated dough bread. If they sicken they have recourse to their bundle of medicines or native remedies, and, as a last resort, send a message to headquarters to ask the medico's advice. Should I go on I would be put down as a "grouser." If the intending bimbashi can be "choked" off, far better

that that should happen in England. As a set-off they see big game and shoot it if their eye is straight. They see countries and peoples. They administer large districts. Very often they wander in those most fascinating tracts of the world—the blank places of cartographers—the *unexplored*. In a word, they make Empire.

Which of the three would one choose ?

I have often heard those in Cairo and Khartum jeered at when they were heard to long for life at an out-station. I never jeer. To my mind there is no comparison.

To those who wish to join the E.A. it is well to say that previous experience, however short, in say West or East Africa, is invaluable. But more so is seniority as captain.

One's seniority in the British Army (after the first contract of two years is over) is practically the touch-stone for promotion to the rank of kaimakam (lieutenant-colonel). Hence it continually happens that those who arrive at the eleventh hour, by reason of their seniority, step into the vacancies to the higher appointments, passing those junior to them in British rank who have borne the burden of the day and the *heat* thereof. I must, however, hasten to say that this is not at all a hard-and-fast rule ; it has its exceptions occasionally. The conditions of service in the Egyptian Army are contained in a contract, the main point of which is that the pay for a bimbashi (major) is £540 a year, with £60 in addition while quartered in

the Sudan ; for a kaimakam it is £720, also with allowances ; and for the higher ranks in proportion. The pay in the civil administration is somewhat higher.

I do not pretend in the following pages to lay down the law, or even to pose as an authority on things Anglo-Sudanese except in so far as four years of service and observation (with less leave than most) entitles me to do. I venture to think that my service covered more interesting and diverse experiences than is usual, but have to admit that of the various "ologies" that should be part of the mental outfit of such as are selected for such employments, I had acquired none when I joined, and did not have the opportunity of using the one I learned later.

I could indeed, as some writers have done, crib anthropological notes from Schweinfurth, Junker, &c., but they have a right to their own observations. Moreover, much has changed in the last thirty years.

I will not attempt to describe the scenery, for that is beyond the power of the pen of an artist imbued with the soul of the Sudan, much more of mine. For a list of the fauna or flora, I refer you to people like Messrs. Butler and Broun of the Sudan service. To introduce into the narrative that "the stickjawites Africanus twitters on the bough of the multilettericus, soothing its little mate to sleep," as Emin Pasha does, sounds queer, if learned.

Personal experience is all I have to offer. It will be that of a pioneer life. I hope its recital will induce

those whose paths are laid in similar places to benefit by it, eliminate the bad, take advantage of the good, and above all, by the glimpses they will get of lost opportunities, at once equip themselves with the means of making their observations of scientific value and reliable accuracy.

Personal observation and the perusal of innumerable books of travel have convinced me that one's success with native tribes is due to three things—an unrelenting sense of justice tempered by well-considered mercy ; a tenacious hold of any position once taken up, whether right or wrong (it will *never* be the latter if the first-named quality is present) ; and a keen sense of humour. Like charity, be it said, "The last is the greatest of these."

A noted West African, in relating his experiences, told me of an official who complained of being unable to manage his native escort. Inquiry proved that on the march his persistent order was, "Silence in the ranks." Ye gods and little fishes ! Learn the chorus of a song and join in it. Sing and whistle yourself—the only appreciative audience I have ever had has been in my escorts. Listen to and laugh at a story, and tell one yourself—be sure, even if ill-understood, it will be well received ; and if you punctuate the points by laughing, you bet that they will drive it home by their merriment. And when the time comes, whether it is silence you want or work or whatever it is, it will be given you wholeheartedly.

Nowhere have Napoleon's maxims more truth than in dealing with the children of Africa. One's hand is on the pulse of raw humanity. Above all remember this one, "If you wish to command men, pretend to love them ; the best way to pretend is to really love them."

Another important point. Learn the language—the men's own language. If you have an interpreter it is seldom satisfactory, and both in that case and when you are satisfied with a very casual colloquial knowledge injustice is often done unwittingly. Who believes the missionary's tale of his thousand converts with his "I did not know the language, but I had a splendid interpreter"? The following instance of "bimbashi Arabic" is often quoted—I have heard worse: "I¹ am the son of a dog. Why are you still here²? I will put it into a parcel,³ if he says 'ma alaish' (I beg your pardon) again. I am a bad⁴ man," &c. &c., which being interpreted ought to have meant, "You¹ are the son of a dog. Why did you not come in time²? I will hit³ you if you say 'ma alaish' (means also 'don't excite yourself') again. I am going to change⁴ all this," &c.

I hope the reader will remember when dipping into the following pages that they make no pretence to literary style. They are the outcome of odd notes, letters, and so on, strung together for the purpose of describing life as a bimbashi. The heights given were not

Note.—Mixing up (1) ana and enta ; (2) gaya and rah ; (3) durb and turd ; (4) badl and battal.

measured at the time. The publisher is courageously kind to allow this to reach the public.

The maps, which I have already published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, are the results of prismatic compass sketches. As they closed well, I do not think they will be found very inaccurate. At the time of making, they were the only ones, of the localities, in existence.

In conclusion, I hope that no incidents in this volume will give offence, for none is meant. The conditions criticised have in many cases considerably altered ; in others they were but passing shadows on the fair surface of an administration which has scarcely an equal. I have studiously avoided giving names, where I thought that perhaps the hero of an anecdote would prefer it ; so that if A or B recognises himself, I hope he will be generous and forgive if he thinks that what is put down would be better left alone, as he knows that only those who already know the story will be able to fix names.

A word as to the title. It claims a great deal ; with what poor justification the reader will decide. I feel that I have been sounding my own trumpet, though I can honestly say I have embroidered nothing intentionally. As, however, my Western District (Bahr el Ghazal) became known as "Utopia Unlimited," from my descriptions of it to one of the jolliest mess I was ever a member of, I may be accused of taking a rosy view of things.

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SERVICE & SPORT
IN THE SUDAN

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CHAPTER I

From Cairo to Khartum—The Nile—Khartum, then and now—On to El Obeid—"Chasing shade" at Jebel Tius—My first head—El Obeid—General Mahon—The mess, treasury, and officers' quarters—Rebuilding of El Obeid—Origin of the name—My three native officers—The men.

A HOST of writers have described both higher and lower Egypt. Even the depths of the Sudan had been sounded in pre-Mahdist days. How then dare I venture to add to what has been told so well, so badly, and so often? It is of the arms and the man of the Egyptian army that I will sing—subjects which, I think, have been but lightly touched on till now. In a Bimbashi's (Major's) uniform, built for me in a night by Messrs. Collacot of Cairo, I reported myself at the War Office, was introduced to Sir R. Wingate, the Sirdar, and received from him my orders to join the Hagana (Camel Corps) in Kordofan.

There was nothing to delay me in Cairo, so in the company of Captain Leveson (18th Hussars) I started a very dusty and rather hot journey to Khartum by

rail and boat. Both my companion and I would have been quite lost at the railway station had it not been for the kindly offices of Captain Brakenridge, R.A.M.C., who, like a good Samaritan, accompanied us from Abdin barracks to the station, and, finding that the native staff officer on duty there spoke no European language, acted as interpreter for us.

At Shellal we transferred ourselves and our belongings from the train to the steamer, which was moored within sight of Philæ. Pen and brush have, as far as mortals can guide them, done justice to the Nile. It is grand and terrible. As a tourist does, I have devoured its history and taken in its every reach ; as an old stager I have been bored by the sameness of its low sandstone containing hills, narrow strips of cultivation, and limited view. But before I left the spirit of the great river god entered me, and I loved it. Its half-mile-broad torrent, now calm, now rough ; the clumps of scraggy date palms ; its temples, its villages, its very hills and monotonous yellow sand ; the groaning of the Sakias, the creaking of the Shadufs ; the people on the banks, some engaged in work, some in languid play, some travelling clad in sky-blue gallabias on diminutive donkeys, some lazily squatting on the banks—to leave it was to leave a friend. If drinking of the Trevi fountain brought me back to Rome, surely, O Father Nile, I have drunk enough of your life-giving waters from source to mouth to bring me back to your broad bosom !

Just north of Halfa we entered the Sudan. At the town itself we made another change into a train

which carried us to Halfaia, whence a launch ferried us to Khartum. It is of interest to give one's impression of the mushroom city at that date. Of the public buildings the palace, war office, and post-office alone stood. The little villas along the river front, with a few shops in rear, formed the four-year-old town. One ploughed one's way about, ankle-deep in sand. When I left it, four years later, an imposing embankment formed a fitting pedestal for the city above it. Palace and villas had been added to out of all recognition. Elegant walls replaced those of green brick; new buildings were erected everywhere, including a magnificent mosque. There were two fine hotels; the streets were lighted with electricity; the river front was, owing to the embankment, no longer a mean path, but a fine esplanade. No wonder that Khartum should astonish the tourist; more so now with its bridge spanning the Blue Nile, its Christian churches raising their steeples heavenwards—a European city in the heart of Africa!

El Obeid, my destination, meant then to most the end of all things. Even my host, who had left it not long before, did not realise the giant strides it had made towards civilisation. He himself had shot several kudu, a most timid antelope, in afternoon strolls when stationed there. As, however, the remoteness of a station may be gauged by this—Do the officers wear beards?—El Obeid was fairly so, as some did, though they were in the minority. After some delay my camels were got together, and I started for Kordofan in company of another Bimbashi who had been in the

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Egyptian Army but a short time, and so knew very little Arabic. Our camel men wished to take advantage of this in order to take a month for the journey. Very fortunately, Colonel Friend, R.E., had given me an itinerary showing that the 210 miles should be done in ten days. Ye gods! how ludicrous I would consider a proposal to travel at even so slow a rate with my present experience, unless weak camels or some other potent reason were the cause. Then, too, at the various resting-places there were disputes about watering the camels. At one village, where the wells were 200 feet deep, our animals lay beside them the whole day. At last I seized my phrase book, and, learning the Arabic for "the camels must be watered," proceeded to see it done. In a minute all around were cheerfully helping me, and in half-an-hour we were able to go on.

We had, too, a capital map compiled from sketches by Captain Lloyd (Cameronians), which was very useful, though we travelled almost entirely by night, marvelling much at the wonderful sense of direction the Arab possesses. It is a gift that soon comes to one when one has a lot of night travelling to do. Near Jebel Tius, the only hill of importance that we passed, and it only a couple of hundred feet high, we chased the shadow of a creeper-covered thorn-bush for the best part of the day, as our baggage had lagged behind. I remember being much amused, as on this spot on the map was written the legend "No shade," and it turned out to be almost the only place with any pretence of it between Omdurman and Bara. One

needed something to take one's thoughts off one's condition, for chasing shade is a most comfortless occupation. One lies on its near edge, but in a very short time the sun has carried it right across and one must take up one's belongings, place them on the new shade and wait for it to swing across again, and so on.

Near this mountain I shot my first head of big game. It was not very big, just a Dorcas gazelle, but I was as pleased as a dog with two tails. The grass about was coarse, about two feet high, with thorn-bushes scattered here and there. On the road we overtook a Darfur sheikh, whom I afterwards met several times in El Obeid as he passed backwards and forwards on embassies. I hope yet to pay him a visit, as he has invited me to do, at El Fasher.

At Bara, to the north of El Obeid, we found two Companies of the Camel Corps. Unfortunately the British officer was away. We halted in a lemon grove, a relic of the pre-Mahdist days when Bara was a very important town, the ruins of which lie scattered in the surrounding bush.

We reached El Obeid in the evening of our eleventh day, and found there El Lewa (General) Mahon Pasha, C.B., D.S.O., with several other officers and officials. We just escaped being laughed at for the time we had taken over the journey—but only just.

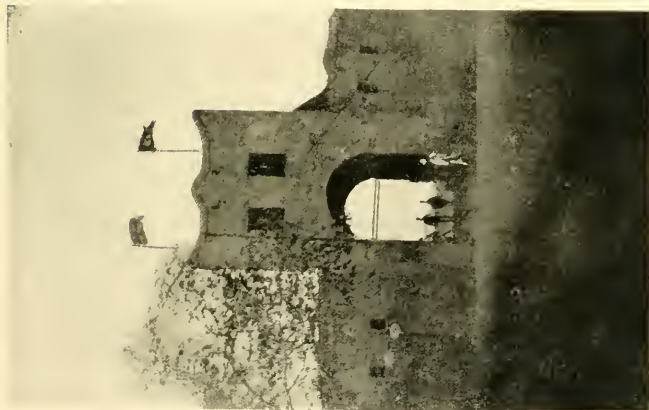
As we approached the place we were much puzzled by what appeared to be wheel-tracks, as wheel traffic was almost unknown, save for guns, in the Sudan. For building purposes in this part of the country any

8 SERVICE AND SPORT IN THE SUDAN

fairly straight tree, some inches in diameter, is invaluable, and is cut down to make beams for the roof. Two of these, trimmed, are fastened either side of a donkey, who half carries, half drags them into town, where they fetch a good price : hence the tracks.

The mess, near which we "baraked" (made to kneel) our camels, was a small unfloored yard, part of which was covered in in a primitive fashion. It struck one as incongruous that the combined incomes, from Government sources, of the few officers who used it amounted to more than £8000 a year. The tables were of barrack pattern. They had just replaced ones made of packing-cases. The chairs, which we thought very swagger, were cane-bottomed. The floor was several inches deep in loose sand.

The houses of the British officers were in a compound about a hundred yards square, the wall of which was the line of defence in case any need arose. The entrance to it was the archway under a tower. The latter was a relic of the reckless expenditure of Ismail Pasha. About five yards broad by six in depth and thirty feet high, and surmounted by the British and Egyptian flags, this edifice was at once the great landmark and the pride of the province. It was built of bricks made in England ! carried by camels along the Forty-days' Road (Darb el Arbain) from Assiut ! The tower was covered with plaster, pitted all over by the gun and rifle fire aimed at it by the Mahdist hordes in 1884 when it was held by a native Bimbashi and a few men. Their ghosts, headed by that of their intrepid officer, who, cup of coffee in hand, encourages to the



THE HAUNTED TOWER OF EL OBEID.



GYASSA ON NILE AT IALFA.

last his small force, are supposed to haunt it. Though I occupied the room till the cracks in the tower were supposed to render it unsafe, I never saw the spooks, nor did I see the other two El Obeid can boast. Under the archway was the guard over the treasury. At one time the want of safes was so great that ammunition boxes were requisitioned to store the money. The mild Egyptian fellah of a regiment on duty discovered that wood and even tin lining can be cut into, and, like the destructive "sus," which eats away the heart of timber while leaving the outside apparently intact, they used to tickle for 20 piastre (4s.) pieces through a small hole in the bottom of the box, collecting a fine sum till the usual quarrel among thieves led to their detection. Inside, as I said before, were the offices and officers' houses. The former were of red brick, which, unfortunately, was made, of necessity, of a bad clay which absorbed moisture and cracked. The latter, with the exception of a few for the senior officials, were very ramshackle. Some were mere native huts nine feet in diameter. The officers commanding the Camel Corps and Sudanese regiment had built themselves green brick huts, with doorways through which one could walk erect! One small substantial building was the old treasury, now haunted by the clerk who was cut to pieces in it by the Mahdists. It was, by the way, the best house I ever occupied during my service in the Sudan. There was a stairway to the roof, on which I spent many a pleasant night. I remember remarking that from my bed one morning I could see lions, panthers, cheetahs,

kudu, oryx, and numerous species of gazelle—pets of the mess.

I must not forget to mention the well, which was the best in the town, and at which I used to spend hours on camel-watering days. Opposite to the tower to the east, and a few hundred yards from it, were the barracks, hospital, and stores, built of red brick. They were occupied by the 12th Sudanese (under Captain Massey, Royal Irish Regiment), at the time perhaps the finest, because the best disciplined, battalion of blacks.

Just south of the compound was the great fula (reservoir), 150 by 90 yards. It is said to have been made by generations of brick-makers, who took their clay then, as now, from it. In the rains it was our watering-place. Near it was a solitary palm, the only one spared by the dervishes. The saying was that it represented the Government, and that when it died, so would the British raj. When the Mahdi of 1904 was gathering his adherents one of them cut off the top—but without effect.

Just beside it was enacted a little farce well worth telling. A policeman, armed with a Remington and native-made ammunition, had reason to wish to fire at a runaway prisoner, one of a gang of manacled felons. Cartridge after cartridge misfired. When the remainder of the gang saw this, their indignation at the runaway changed to emulation, and the ten of them set upon the policeman—I obviously cannot say they disarmed him—and trussing him up, to wrench himself free some hours later, escaped.

About a mile or more from the Government build-

ings the native town lay in a hollow. At the time I speak of it was a real native village of importance, built of straw with practically only two streets, that of the market with the low mud-built, flat-roofed houses, occupied principally by Greek, Italian, and Syrian merchants, and the other cutting the town in two. Each side of the latter was a labyrinth of tortuous paths.

Not long after my departure a British officer, enjoying a brief authority, ordered the then town to be erased and a new one raised on the same site, cut by good roads in all directions. Moving a house in the Sudan, where ten men lift off a roof and carry it where they will without a moment's thought, does not, like a similar if more difficult event in Winnipeg, produce a photograph in all illustrated papers. Nevertheless, considering that there were supposed to be 10,000 inhabitants to be disturbed, the feat speaks marvels for this officer's hold over them, as also for his pluck in backing his luck as he did. Apart from the fact that it might have caused a local rising, one or two complaints, anonymous in all probability, might have caused his removal as a firebrand. Let us imitate him in ignoring the "might-have-beens," and see in El Obeid a town worthy of being the capital of so fine a province as Kordofan. The legend attached to the locality is this. Some merchants were travelling from the river to the west, and near this spot lost a white she-donkey. They tracked it to this depression, and one of them, spying her, cried, "There she is, the white one (el beida)."

The bottom is taken out of the story by grammarians, who point out that the name of the place and the adjective have no real resemblance.

My commanding officer, Colonel Wilkinson (Lincolnshire Regiment), was on patrol when I arrived, but a few days after his return sent me to take command of my Company at Bara. Dear old No. 1 Company—first of the Camel Corps, and first indeed in the affections of your first Bimbashi. Captain Sorel-Cameron (Cameron Highlanders) had superintended the pay, &c., of the nucleus of the Company, which was attached to his, No. 3 (Sudanese) Company, when first raised.

My three native officers were capital fellows. Yusbashi (Captain) Mahomed Eff. Shukri was short and stout, with the concomitant failings thereof, and, unfortunately, like most Egyptians, given to nagging the men. Mulazim Awal (Lieutenant) Mahomed Eff. Fuad was a very fine fellow, who had distinguished himself in the '98 campaign. His Islamism was his weak point, for he loved his peg—as a European might—no more. He had been known to fast the first couple of days of Ramadan! Hanza Eff. Nasr, the Mulazim Tani (2nd Lieutenant), was a Shagia Arab. In appearance slight, of medium height, very brown, with a large moustache, and three large horizontal scars on either cheek (his tribe mark), he was the best type of native officer I have ever met. To him the “mush mumkin” (it is not possible) of the Egyptian (and my two senior officers were of that race) was an unknown phrase. He was the son of

the late head of his tribe. When his father, who commanded an irregular corps under Gordon during the siege of Khartum, was killed, Gordon promoted him, then fourteen years old, to be a Major, and gave him his decoration. He employed him as an A.D.C. He loved Gordon's memory, and would tell many stories about him; as, for instance, when riding together Gordon would always put him on the inside so that he would be shielded by the General's body from the bullets fired by the Mahdist at the party. Hamza Eff. escaped the massacre which followed the fall of Khartum, and later shared with Slatin the post of one of the Khalifa's mulazimen (orderlies). In the fights against us he was with the Dervish cavalry. After his surrender he was appointed police sergeant at El Eddaiya, where he caught Mahon Pasha's eye—that eye which is reputed to have the great gift of spotting the right man for the right job whatever he may be at anything else.

When the idea of an Arab Camel Corps (it had till then been composed of Egyptians and Sudanese) was mooted, it was proposed to have no officers. A British officer would *superintend* a Company, which should be run by sheikhs as captains, and the sons of sheikhs as lieutenants. Colonel Wilkinson, who suggested this organisation, left before it was got into working order. Hamza Eff. had, however, been recruited, so later we moved heaven and earth to have him gazetted an officer and ante-dated, which was done. He also was given permission to wear the Egyptian medals of the eighties and the Gordon

decoration, if he provided them himself. He was a splendid officer, honest, zealous, and hard working, though whether he ever excelled as a "spit and polish" one I do not know.

My Bashawish (Sergeant-Major), Gabril Ahmed, was the next man of importance. He was the son of a Hawazma sheikh by a Nuba woman, and had been wounded, captured, and recruited by us in '96. He was somewhat Egyptianised, which was a pity, as he was a fine fellow, but his "It is not possible" often annoyed me.

Of the 150 men, 50 were pure, straight-haired Arabs; 70 were Kordofan Arabs, who, by inter-marriage with the Nubas, &c., have the curly hair of the latter. The remainder were Sudanese. Often now do I pass them in mental review, and try to find one I would try to mark down as a real "rotter." I cannot. It is not because I am an enthusiast, for I can weed out my Bahr el Ghazal irregulars and Egyptian and Northern Arab police without effort, grand fellows though they were. With the former I had a free hand as to enlistment or discharge. Outside the office there would be daily ten or eleven would-be recruits. If recommended by a friend or relation in the corps, passed by a doctor, and intelligent—in they came. Undesirables had short shrift—out they went. Small wonder that, after a year of selection, I find it hard to find fault with them. They have proved their mettle again and again since then. Truly, in writing of them the difficulty is not to say too much. The camels were not beautiful. Hard

patrolling had left them very weak ; they were covered with tar to kill mange. It speaks well for the work of the men that, five months later, 100 out of 108 camels were fit for a hard patrol, although most of that number had done several in the meantime. The very weak ones had, of course, died.

CHAPTER II

I hunt gazelle—And my camel—Lieutenant Whittingham—Our day's work—Description of the country—The Governor's unofficial escort—On patrol—My Arabs to the rescue—The hills—J. Tagōi—Tilling with spears—The reconciliation of the Meks—The Nubas—Musketry practice at El Obeid—General Mahon leaves for India—A Mahdi rising—The episode of the candlestick—The march of Mahon's cavalry.

LO! I find that, though I have only just received Wilkinson Bey's instructions to join my Company, I have already dived into a full description of it.

There was a great difference in the Camel Corps camel I rode out of El Obeid and the hireling I had ridden in. Though I found some difficulty in guiding my fiery mount with the one rein, or "rasan," as it is called, I rejoiced in the change, the rocking-chair motion, and willing gait.

When about ten miles from Bara next morning I elected to go by myself after some gazelle. The telegraph line would ensure my not losing myself. I left my camel, tying his leg in the approved fashion, as I thought. I had, alas, learnt my lesson ill, for when I was about thirty yards from him on my return, hot, tired, and thirsty, from an unsuccessful stalk, he got up on three legs, which he could not have done had the rope been passed, as it should be, over his neck, and walked away, soon releasing the rein which

tied his shank and thigh together. This happened at Abu Klea. I ran, he ran ; I walked, he walked—in the meantime scattering my furwa (sheep-skin saddle-cloth), blankets, &c., all of which I had to carry in addition to my rifle. Presently he made off at a trot. I reached the road and sat down under a thorn-bush. Providence sent along a man on a sore-backed donkey, which, throwing scruples to the wind, I seized and rode into Bara, where my camel had preceded me. I felt like Mahomed—did he not ride a sore-backed donkey into Mecca ? My payment compensated the owner for the highway robbery I had committed.

Lieutenant Whittingham (Durham L.I.), who had been commanding No. 2 Company for some months, was my companion at Bara. The day began with stables at dawn, then drill, visiting the grazing guards, drill, stables, and feeding. I do not think we had time even to read. The camels were in a very bad state. Whittingham would seize the veterinary instruments and perform operations galore, removing pieces of diseased backbone, cutting out abscesses, &c. There is little about a camel he does not know now.

As night fell we would wander, or rather wade, through the deep sand to the wells, out of which hundreds of pigeons would come, and round which night-jars, with their curious wing feathers, would dart. The water in plenty was only some fourteen feet from the surface.

We had not been long together before I was called with my Company, as originally intended, into El Obeid. I got my order in the morning, and started

the same evening. To be able to go anywhere at a moment's notice was to be the motto of the Hagana, and we complied with it. Before the rains Colonel Wilkinson left on leave, and on his way back was made Governor of a province. No greater loss could have been inflicted on the new Camel Corps. He was the originator of the new system which he left while still in embryo. But the Sudan was young and needed its experienced officers for its important posts.

The compendium of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, by Count Gleichen, gives one the best available information on the country; but, in order to enable my reader to follow my narrative, I have to take a few notes from it descriptive of this part of the country: "North of the 14° N. latitude the bush thins till it merges into the arid desert. South of 11° N. comes forest. Between the two is thorn-bush. The Nuba hills are inhabited by a distinct Berberine race, while the rest of the inhabitants of Kordofan are camel, horse, cattle, or non-nomadic agricultural Arabs. Water is got principally from wells, some of which are very deep. They fill and dry up in cycles in a most extraordinary way, e.g. Nahud at one time was a watering-place for thousands of camels; now a score taxes its supply. Where there are no wells the women will walk nightly all through the dry weather to places twenty miles or more away to fetch it. Where there are tibeldi (baobab=*Adinsonia digitata*) trees their hollow trunks are used as water-butts. The country is undulating, mostly covered with thick gum-

bearing thorn, with here and there a low precipitous hill or giant baobab, both equally remarkable."

While the care of camels and the drilling of my recruits was occupying my time, the real work of Empire was going on in the Governor's office. This sheikh was cajoled into submission, that one's head kept straight—and "good hands" are needed for that. The possibility of stern measures becoming necessary was an ever-present factor in so young an administration (three years old).

When I received an order to hold a patrol in readiness I needed but to select my best camels—a poor best indeed just before the rains. Half of the men are to be old soldiers of No. 3 Company (attached to my No. 1) and half of mine. So out of the whole 180 camels I am able to choose 80, of which 10 fairly weak ones are to replace casualties—for who has not heard that when Mahon "of Mafeking" moves his pace is "express," not "goods." The motley crowd which accompanies the Mudir (Governor) for the first couple of miles is worth mention. Here and there horsemen on cruelly-bitted prancing steeds wave huge baggara spears on high; camels, mounted by single men or pairs, are urged to an ungainly gallop. The nucleus to the procession is a body of police preceding and following the Pasha, and bearing the British and Egyptian flags. Around it, mounted on every kind of steed, one sees all the native officers and officials, all the merchants, and several sheikhs who happen to be in town. The Pasha must halt, and his hand must be kissed by this throng before a real start be made.

At last we are off. Twenty camel police, fifty camel corps, ten Sudanese with mules (in case swamps bar our passage, for the rains are due and we go south to meet them), and a mass of scallawags, with rifles, provided by Sheikh Thagi, who accompanies us, and who has been conspicuous on a fine stallion earlier in the march. The latter keep up with the camels and turn up fresh at every camp.

The cultivation ends after about a mile, and we pursue our road in single file down a narrow path between high thorn-bushes. As Jebel Kordofan rises distinct before us, the sun goes down suddenly on our right, the thorn-bushes seem to become trees till dwarfed by an occasional tibeldi.

The country between had not prepared us for the beautiful scenery in J. Daier, where the rains had already fallen and everything was green. Rocky hills, hills covered in a green mantle, valleys that in stony bleakness might rival the last one, tree-filled valleys, enormous boulders, palm-trees innumerable, and here and there a cluster of huts nestling close to the side of a hill, lent enchantment to the scene.

Our camels too draw strength and keenness from the luscious grazing.

At one village lives a notorious robber. The Pasha's A.D.C. is told to go to arrest him as we pass by. He asks me for a few men of the Sudanese Company as escort. Presently I am filled with unholy joy. The good old Sudanese, gallant and patient if you take him the right way, is not full of resource.

The villagers turn upon the party, and I am told to send more men. Naturally, I select Arabs of No. 1 Company. They do look workmanlike as, getting a pace out of their camels such as none but an Arab can, they shoot out, loosening their rifles as they go. Bimbashi Mahmud Eff. Hussein (Mahon's A.D.C. and staff officer) is being hustled out of the village. My Arabs dismount with loaded rifles at the "present." The Sudanese take their cue and the tables are turned; the sheikh is receiving a mild reminder that his is not the reception to be accorded to Government troops. The robber has fled in the confusion, but his wife is taken as a hostage. Alas! others in the village shared that lady's favours, for the same evening, at a camp some twenty miles further on, a man was led in on a halter—the robber. A few lashes and a caution and he was free.

I have heard it said that the most remarkable thing in Ireland is the number of old boots one finds lying about. In Kordofan it was the number of children born since 1898. There were very few between childhood and manhood, such was the mortality by disease due to the crowding near the river during the Mahdia. El Batha, at which we had now arrived, was a place that experts supposed would be so swampy that camels could proceed no further. Fortunately neither it nor the river-bed close by were impassable. El Batha at that period, with its sprouting grass and scattered trees, looked like a well-laid-out botanical garden.

We had some difficulty in obtaining a guide here, as all were afraid of the Nuba Mek (sheikh) to whom we were going. An Arab policeman solved the matter by lassoing the protesting sheikh, who had not noticed the way the former's camel had been edged up behind him.

That evening we entered the hills. We had but crossed a spur at J. Daier and skirted them, sometimes but a blue haze, since. The country was very undulating and correspondingly beautiful. The thorn had been replaced by trees, the bark of which was peeling in big patches, and was the most protective colouring to giraffes, some of which we saw.

Not far from our destination the going became so bad that Mahon took the mules and a few men, and sent me and the camels back to find a way round. This we did along a watercourse. In places it was so steep that the saddles of the pack and ammunition camels would slip on to the neck of the animal, so that frequent adjustment was necessary. At last we sighted J. Tagoï, and as we marched into camp were saluted by dervish salutes on a bugle from the top of the hill, a sheer 800 feet or so above us.

We found the Pasha had arrived in camp some minutes before, and in a very short time the Nubas began to come down to it. The Mek, however, remained in his fastness till he was assured that he would not be taken prisoner if he followed their example.

When he did at last muster courage, he appeared on a small pony, surrounded by well-clad bazingara

(native riflemen). He was an intelligent and cruel-looking man of about 5 feet 8 inches, with true Nuba features and very dark. He was reprimanded for his misdeeds, and promised an "amaan" (pardon) on the condition that he returned the slaves he had taken from the neighbouring Meks, and also made friends with the latter. This he at once promised to do. Messengers were sent in all directions, but, as all seemed so afraid of Tagoï, the venue was changed to Mek Rashad's hill close by.

I climbed up to Tagoï's place and made a rough sketch of it in case negotiations came to nought. A path, four feet wide, wound up from our camp, passing a pool, where we watered our camels. The far side of this pool was a solid sheet of rock, twenty feet high, a waterfall in the rains. Overhung as it was by trees, it made a lovely picture. Here and there, where possible, were small terraces, from two to thirty yards broad, for cultivation. After passing between two huge isolated boulders we came to the first village, and through it to the "keep." The entrance to the latter was through a narrow winding natural passage. When we knocked at the gate the sentry did not know what to do, as the Mek was in our camp. I had been joined by a few men of my Company, and with them walked in. In the centre of the place was a cave which caught and kept all the water that fell. It held enough for a long siege, I was told. Where the rock was not itself a sheer wall (overlooking our camp was a precipice of 100 feet) high walls had

been built. The position was very strong. The dervishes, by the way, in spite of their efforts, never succeeded in subduing these Nubas.

Less hospitable were the hill fastnesses among these hills visited by Captain Leveson (18th Hussars) and Captain Morant (Durham L.I.). The inhabitants of one of them had the unpleasant habit of killing every intruder, and following and killing any of their own citizens who showed any inclination to wander. Leaving their escorts at the foot, these officers climbed up alone and established friendly relations with the inhabitants. In one of them hostility subsided as Leveson lit a match; they thought that he produced the flame from the end of his fingers.

To continue: the rain was falling when, accompanied by Mek Tagoï and about 150 of his riflemen, we set out for J. Rashad, where for the first time I saw people tilling with spears. The spear is driven into the ground, the vibrations of the handle loosen it, and a woman drops seed from a basket into the holes, eighteen inches apart, and covers it with earth with her foot.

From our halting-place to the foot of the Jebel (hill) stretched a plain about 600 yards wide, with a solitary big tree in the centre. Presently about 200 riflemen and many spearmen formed up at the foot of the hill, and in a dense crowd moved towards us. To prevent collision between the Meks the on-comers were told to halt, and the Meks and their wazirs to come on alone. The latter declared themselves

highly honoured to meet the Governor of the province, but it needed much diplomacy to make them talk matters over with Tagoï, who up to now had had the best of it, but was faced with a powerful coalition anxious for revenge.

Mek Rashad was a lout. At the conference next day he talked in a whimpering stutter, and made a sceptre of the tail of his jibba (shirt). I fear I was prejudiced by the loud socks he wore.

The reconciliation scene was highly interesting. The Pasha, his A.D.C., and I sat on chairs under a tree round which grew a rubber vine—probably a landolphia. In a semicircle opposite sat the Meks, Tagoï on the left, and in the centre of the circle thus formed was placed a Koran on crossed swords. I am sorry to say that all my photographs of this scene were destroyed. The “palaver” was a lesson in administration I will never forget. It took hours. When an oath, sworn with the hand six inches above the above-named emblems, was half uttered, some objection had to be argued out. At last a precarious peace was patched up, and the men of the Rashad faction, who had surrounded our party, which however was quite prepared for anything, reassembled to do us honour. Mahon told the Meks that he would dispense with the salvos with ball, which are usual—as also are accidents, which, he recognised, in this case would not be accepted as such. Horsemen careered at him, and when their spears were but a few feet from his chest, pulled their steeds up on their haunches. Then riflemen came forward

at a run, shaking their weapons over the heads of our line ; Tagoï's men returning the compliment. All the while a weird dervish hymn was sung, punctuated here and there by the stamp of a thousand feet.

In the afternoon we broke camp. The Mek of Tagoï chose the longer way round, for safety's sake accompanying us, as we were going by the direct road to Batha, and not by his hill. His men, bounding from rock to rock, put the camels to shame. Where distances of seventy miles on consecutive nights, including, too, the climbing of hills and other arduous exertions, are an ordinary test of endurance, this is not surprising. Mahon used to say that he considered some of the finest of native troops could be conscripted from the Nubas. Our return journey was uneventful. Our camels, which had started mere skeletons, were now as fat as butter owing to the luscious grazing. This was my first patrol. In the long night marches I had found it most difficult to keep awake. The easy jog of the camel, which some find so trying, was most soothing to me. My men would supply me with a forked stick to ward off the branches of thorn-bushes, which otherwise would tear one's skin as effectually as they did one's clothes. Using it at night kept me awake, but often did I seize my canvas water-bottle and pour the contents over my head and down my spine to try to ward off sleep.

The Nubas are not altogether confined to the range of hills we had just left, which is about 150 by 200 miles in extent. Many isolated hills are occupied by them. To see them flying up

what appears to be the naked smooth face of a precipice is a sight worth remembering. Some of their Meks are of Arab extraction, *e.g.* Rashad. They show their cunning in defence, not only in putting their villages in as inaccessible places as they can find, but also in digging pits furnished with spikes at the bottom, and in leaving the stumps of trees standing in their cultivation, so that marauding horse-men (Arabs) would be well advised to move cannily when raiding for slaves. The camels I had left in El Obeid looked worse than before by comparison with the ones I brought back. Fortunately the rains were not long in coming. Real torrential rain, which set a roaring torrent running six feet deep and quite impassable between the town and the barracks—a torrent which, however, dried up within a couple of hours of the rain stopping.

Partly to secure new grazing grounds for my camels, and partly in order to teach my men how to shoot, I took my Company out to J. Kurbag, a small hill about seven miles north-east of El Obeid. The interest my Arabs took in musketry was phenomenal. I remember one man seemed unable to hit the target. I was helping him to aim one day, and he got two bulls in succession. I let him shoot unaided the next shot, and he again scored a bull, whereupon he bounced up and, shaking his rifle above his head, shouted, "I have learned how to shoot!" again and again. He turned out one of the best shots.

The province at this time was to suffer a terrible loss. Mahon was promoted to a command in India. One

of the last of Kitchener's "lions" was going. Of course, there were numerous banquets. Cold meats, drunken Levantines, speeches, and, best of all, the marvellous dancing of local geishas. One of these danced round the table, kneeling to the Governor, who placed a pile of shillings on her head ; she danced round again till she balanced about 30s. there, when her pride in her skill overcame her greed and she stopped, for it would never have done to allow the coins to fall.

Mahon Pasha was barely out of El Obeid before the news arrived that a Mahdi had arisen in the Nuba hills. Mahdis and Eisas (Christs) are hardy annuals in the Sudan and of little account, but this one had moved warily and deserved attention. He had come from Mecca, where he had secured many of the picture scrolls describing the hardships of the pilgrimage, the possession of which stamps one as a holy man for ever. He gave out that the Prophet had commissioned him to grant the privileges of the pilgrimage to all for money down and adherence to his (the Mahdi's) cause. His was a very widespread movement, and came to naught over a candlestick. He arrived at the foot of a Nuba hill, and there was visited by the Mek, who, half converted, left behind his qadi's candlestick instead of his own. The Nuba qadis are former fetish men, as their flocks now boast a bastard Islamism. When, on their return to the top of their hill, the qadi wished to take the remaining candlestick, a row ensued, taunts were exchanged, with the result that the infuriated holy man dashed into the

presence of the Mahdi and retrieved his candlestick. The Mahdi had him flung into prison, whence the latter sent word of the movement to El Obeid. The work of years saved by a candlestick !

This Mahdi was specially well equipped for his attempt. On one occasion he told the Nubas to put some cattle in a certain hut, but when they opened it they found it empty, and the cattle in another. I suppose he hypnotised them.

Mahon Pasha was stopped by the news on reaching the river at El Dueim. He at once made his plans. Owing to the rains the Camel Corps could not be used, so a squadron of cavalry was brought down from Shendi. A column of infantry was prepared at El Obeid, and in a few hours the troops were in motion.

The march of the cavalry under Mahon was one which deserves to be recorded. For several days something like twenty out of the twenty-four hours were spent on the march. The horses were often for miles up to their girths in water. The El Obeid column, under Major O'Connell (Shropshire L.I.), moving in foot-wide paths through cultivation sixteen feet high in the damp, suffocating heat, suffered much. Three Sudanese soldiers died of heat apoplexy—an extraordinary occurrence.

CHAPTER III

Capture and execution of the Mahdi—We set out to capture the Sheikh Sebeik—And return successful—"A man whose name *maybe* Ibrahim"—Birka—A false trail—Back through the night—Another Mahdi—The pet Kudu makes a night attack on El Obeid—Captain Carter "knocks" the Mahdi—We return to El Obeid—The perils of mispronunciation—Slatin Pasha—El Eddaiya—We march to Carter's help—Flowers and big game—Lions.

MAHON'S plans proved admirable. Hearing of the preparations at El Obeid, the Mahdi retired towards the Selim Baggara country near the Nile. His spies told him to a yard the position of the infantry column, but the arrival of the cavalry at dawn was all unexpected, and surrender the only course. He was handed over to the former, and escorted to El Obeid. *En route* he told the native officer and men of his escort that, unless they took off his handcuffs and connived at his escape, he would be obliged to turn the iron into water, with the result that they would become toads. "Our fate is written," was the reply. Regular pay and conditions of service are of more account nowadays than the promises of a captive prophet. The Mahdi then said that he would bide his time, as, if executed, he could in three days rise again. On arrival at El Obeid the evidence was considered sufficiently strong and the situation sufficiently critical to justify his immediate execution.



SUDAN RAILWAY. STATION BETWEEN ABU HAMED AND HALFAIA.



MAIL BOAT SOUTH OF KHARTUM.



To convince the natives of his departure to another world his corpse swung to and fro in the market-place for all to see, till the sentry could no longer stand even windward of it. Many were the merchants (*sic*) with nothing to sell and no money to buy with, who appeared from all parts of the Sudan, travel-stained and weary with hard journeying, to gaze at the gibbet and its burden. That Mahdi and others to follow have lost possible adherents.

Very little was deducted from the Mahdi's papers. Lists of names with numbers against them in his own handwriting was all. It was, however, generally known that sheikh Sebeik of the Hawazma Arabs had accepted command of the Mahdi's cavalry. It was therefore deemed necessary for the peace of the province to capture him.

I was still out at J. Kurbag. One Thursday afternoon, when most of my men had left for El Obeid on Friday leave, I received a note ordering me to produce 100 men as soon as possible. Orderlies were sent at once to recall all the men, who shortly could be seen coming back at a run. Others went to fetch the camels. My Arab officer (the rest were on leave) was sent to El Obeid to prepare the forage, ammunition, and usual fifteen days' pay for immediate issue on our arrival there. Two hours and ten minutes after the arrival of my orders, the order to mount was given.

At El Obeid, Mr. Lyall, S.C.S., joined me, also a very useful officer of the 12th Sudanese.

For some reason we were told to take three days

in going to the sheikh's village. The going, in spite of recent rains, was perfect, except at one khor. The dura and dukhn were so tall that of the hundred men who followed me I could never see more than two or three when riding through it.

On arrival at the sheikh's village we at once surrounded it, and a house-to-house search produced more than a dozen newly raided slaves with shebas (yokes) still round their necks. The villagers all gave different accounts of the movements of their sheikh, but were all agreed that he had gone away for a week at least. Mr. Lyall's staff officer, however, a very handsome black, who was afterwards killed in the massacre at Talodi, practised his blandishments on a dusky damsel, who said nothing, but pointed towards the horse-grazing ground. This was rounded up, and produced a blank, but presently the sheikh was seen approaching. The men, with Ibrahim Effendi, who were mounted on the captured horses, lined the bank of a khor and waited till their prey descended into it, and then called upon him to surrender, which perforce he did.

What stoics these Easterns are : good and bad is all the "tatib Allah" (arranged of God).

We seized all the spears in the village. I never saw so many. It turned out that all over the place the natives were buying agricultural instruments, and, reversing the work of Tubal Cain, were beating them into weapons.

It was as well to get out of the Hawazma country before a rescue party could be organised, so we left at

once for Sungakai, where a man, whose name, according to our instructions, "*may* be Ibrahim *may* be staying." Our road lay through deserted villages. The telepathy of the savage had spread the news of our actions. Every guilty man feared for himself, and it was no new thing to the mass of the population to be obliged, as in the slave-raiding dervish days, to fly into the high cereals. A bundle of household goods dropped on the path, and the waving of the dukhn marked the path of some panic-stricken woman, and elicited shouts of chaff from my men.

The sheikh of Sungakai, a very intelligent man, received us and assisted us in our search. We seized the only Ibrahim in the place—an inoffensive cultivator, as it turned out. His papers were carefully scrutinised, but produced nothing incriminating. Very interesting was his family tree, bringing him back at least ten generations, which, we were told, was in all likelihood genuine.

We decided to return slowly by a lake (in the rains) called Birka. Our camels, when they smelt the water, mended their pace wonderfully. With head stretched out they broke into a swinging trot that no amount of encouragement or belabouring had been able to force from them before.

We halted for a day at Birka, which was crowded by the passage of sheikhs and their followers now hurrying in to show how loyal (*sic*) they were. We left for El Obeid in the afternoon, and halting, as was my custom, at about 8 P.M. for feed and dinner, were overtaken by an Arab on a donkey. This man told us

that he would guide us to the real Ibrahim, but, as he was very insistent that we should release the one we had, we were a bit sceptical. He seemed so sure, that at last we decided to allow him to guide us, and, being in a friendly part of the country, Lyall and I determined to leave the prisoners and camels in charge of the native officers, and, with a few men, mounted on the horses captured from Sebeik, to make a forced march back to Sungakai. Three of the horses had Arab saddles, without stirrups, on which Lyall, his staff officer, and I mounted; the men folded their blankets for saddles, and carried their arms and ammunition. We started off ten minutes after receipt of the news for a ride of about ninety miles in thirty hours, the first half of which we did in eight. Not one of my men, to my certain knowledge, had mounted a horse for eighteen months. I count this ride as one of the many things that justify my love and admiration of the Arab soldier of Kordofan. Many people of experience, forgetting what the justly despised Egyptian soldier of the eighties has become, shook their heads when the idea of an irregular Arab corps was mooted. When it became a fact they loudly proclaimed that in barracks it would be out of hand, in the field untrustworthy. Now there can be no question but that "they are thrust like foolish prophets forth, their words to scorn are scattered."

The moon was almost a full one, but in spite of it our guide lost his way once or twice. The thorns were awful. Seated some ten feet or so high on a camel one never realises, save for the wear and tear

of khoorg and furwa, what is going on some three feet lower down. On horses we had to push our way past every overhanging thorn-branch. When the moon went down I had to call a halt. I had been all but swept off my saddle by a branch a moment before. We rested for three-quarters of an hour, and were on the move again at the first streak of dawn. Our guide having under-estimated the distance to go, we broke into a gallop and surrounded the house he led us to just as, heralded by shaft after shaft of gold, the sun shot up, a huge crimson globe in the East.

The owner of the house proved to be an innocent old villager, personally known to Lyall. Our guide then admitted that he had hoped that, when we got news of the whereabouts of the real Ibrahim, we would release the one we had. In this he made an error.

Lyall and I ate our postponed dinner, which we made from raw eggs beaten up in milk. Partly to utilise the cool of the day and partly to ease our minds as to the safety of the rest of the patrol, we started back at once. Both going and returning we must have struck terror in the hearts of the villagers whose houses we passed in the dead of night ; for Arabs, too, tell many fables of ghostly riders, and at that date a mounted corps other than the Hagana was unknown in Kordofan. In one village we came upon a diluka (dance) in full swing. The charm that fell upon the Sleeping Beauty's palace did not produce figures more motionless than did our advent. Outside this village were piled, according to Sudan etiquette, the arms of the guests. The number of new spears confirmed the

rumour I have already drawn attention to. Little more is to be said about this patrol. We came back by the field of Shekan, on which fell the ill-fated Hicks Pasha.

A fortnight after my return to Kurbag we were again on the move.

The whole of Kordofan was seething with excitement. Sheikhs were moving about in an unwonted fashion. News of an alarming nature came pouring in from all directions. Within a month a Mahdi of importance had been hanged, a leading lieutenant of his sentenced to imprisonment "during pleasure." News arrived from Captain Carter (Lancashire Fusiliers), inspector of Western Kordofan, that the Sultan of Darfur had invaded the province, and that he, Carter, with twenty (!) men of the Camel Corps, had started off to check his advance.

Orders are given to mobilise the Camel Corps and, without waiting for the Company from Bara, which will bring our number to over three hundred, we start by the El Dudia route to Nahud. Ours is a gallant cavalcade through the main road of El Obeid. The Governor, Major O'Connell (Shropshire L.I.), now that Mahon Pasha has gone, preceded by his flag-bearers and surrounded by police, leads the way. Two hundred of the Camel Corps, Arab and Sudanese, ride behind him.

At midday next day we are halted near a pool, talking of our projected conquest of Darfur, when an Arab on a foam-covered horse arrives to say that the Mahdi's hordes have surrounded El Obeid. Fortu-

nately O'Connell is not easily alarmed. The invaluable sheikh Thagi is incredulous, so, as a compromise to the urgent appeal for help, we halt where we are while word is sent to Whittingham's Company from Bara to fall back on El Obeid.

The story of the alarm is this. Captain Massey, left in command at El Obeid, is down with fever, when, at about 2 A.M., he hears the unmistakable sound of troops doubling. He dashes out to see his surmise confirmed. An excited official pours a tale into his ear, which convinces him that, pending confirmation, the one important thing is to establish and maintain, as long as possible, telegraphic communication with Khartum, and the second to get the news out to the outlying troops before such action is rendered too dangerous. He does so, and all stand to arms till dawn, when the only armed people about besides the garrison are seen to be the returning Camel Corps—Whittingham had not waited for orders. As the sentry and guard who raised the alarm stick to their story—that they fired on a force of Hawazma horsemen—Whittingham takes a horse and gallops round the outer defences. He finds no tracks to bear out this story, but, near the guard, finds those of the pet kudu, who, it turns out, is the cause of the alarm.

The local intelligence department report all quiet, and we pursue our journey.

Those in Khartum have not been idle. A squadron of cavalry, a section of artillery, and a battalion of Egyptian infantry have been hastily mobilised, and in spite of reassuring messages are sent to El Obeid, as it

is somewhat tardily recognised that the scattered force of 700 Sudanese, aided by 300 local irregulars, is scarcely a sufficient garrison for Kordofan in its present state. At Nahud information and messages start pouring in. The delay owing to the alarm has given the Sirdar time to stop our advance. Carter sends laconically to say that he has "knocked" the raiding party, and is on his way back to Nahud. Sultan Ali Dinar bolts with his wives to the Wadai frontier, and sends to say that he is perfectly innocent of all ill-intent or actions. His people, ground down by dervish laws and impositions, send to say that they are waiting to welcome us. Best of all is the news that, owing to Carter's prompt and successful action, all is quietening down in the province.

We then hear that Slatin Pasha is going to meet Ali Dinar. Eventually he finds this unnecessary.

The occupation of Darfur, which would have been as simple as it would have been advantageous, is thus knocked on the head. Whittingham's Company is sent to patrol the frontier, his veterinary knowledge and medicines helping to heal the Furs wounded by Carter's party. The story of Carter's exploit, for it well deserves the name, is this. He set out, as already described, against an unknown force of Furs, who had entered our territory and at the sword's point were levying tribute on our people. When near their camping place he tied up his two dozen camels and made a sudden attack. The first news of his approach the Emir in command received was a bullet which chipped a piece off the blade of a spear he was holding as

he dictated his terms to the village sheikh in the latter's hut. The fight lasted but a few moments. The Furs, far superior in numbers and quite equal in equipment, broke and fled, and a number of prisoners and all the booty fell into our hands. My Company was now ordered back to El Obeid. On the return journey the mistake in the pronunciation of a word led to two ludicrous misunderstandings. One of our number fell sick, and the doctor, a Syrian, was sent for. I met him on the road, and by way of hurrying him, as he was going very slowly, I told him that his patient-to-be was delirious. On meeting another officer outside Nahud, he said, "I am so sorry to hear that —— had delirium tremens." A bit further on I was visited by some Arabs newly settled near a tebeldi forest. In the course of conversation I asked whether the grazing was good. The answer, after a look passed between my visitors, "There is only my old mother here," surprised me, till I found that my ill-pronunciation made my question sound, "Are the women beautiful here?"

El Obeid was now quite a big garrison. After the arrival of the reinforcements, Sir Rudolf Baron von Slatin Pasha, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B., honorary Major-General in our army, arrived. He is the ex-prisoner of the Khalifa, whose escape caused great stir in 1895. He is an Austrian, short and light, Teutonic in appearance and accent. He is socially very tactful and amusing.

Of course, the events of the last few weeks necessitated some shuffling of the cards. I brought my Company in from J. Kurbag; and sent the larger

part to El Eddaiya, south of Nahud, which was to be our new station. Its situation would prevent a recurrence of raiding. I did not follow myself till just after Christmas. The weather in El Obeid was now extremely cold, and riding in the night hours, as pedestrianism was almost out of the question, a penance. The burr of the heskinit grass was particularly offensive. One day I followed a gazelle for about a hundred yards through it, and then was covered by a regular coating of them, so much so that I had to call up my camel and change my trousers where I stood. Every traveller in Kordofan carries a small tripod on which to hang his belongings at a halt out of reach of this pest.

I left Whittingham (on his way back to Bara) at Nahud and arrived at El Eddaiya, called the local sheikhs together and arranged with them for the building of 150 huts, &c. My men dug a "mat-murra," or grain pit, about nine feet in diameter and seven deep, into which I poured the grain I sat buying for hours from the natives around. Storing grain in a pit is a bad method, as the grain at the bottom is the first put in and the last used. Two local facts are worthy of notice. The Kababish, a camel-owning tribe, bring in at times skins full of grain, which they barter for water! The favourite coin is a "habeshi," twenty-four of which can be bought for ten piastres in Nahud, but twenty of which buy that coin elsewhere on the frontier.

It was not long before some of the huts were finished. To avoid suspicion of favouritism, the

married women had to race for them—first inside the door to be the possessor. I see from a note that we had twenty starters. I can hear their screams and shrieks of laughter yet.

Just before Christmas, that is before things had settled down, while Carter was collecting taxes, a sub-sheikh sent out to do so by him was murdered, so it was considered necessary to send him an escort of Camel Corps. I was not surprised then one day to see a small party of them coming into camp. The corporal in charge at once sought me out and reported that, when returning to me with a prisoner made by Carter, the former's tribesmen had intervened and rescued him. Turda, the place it had happened at, was seven days' journey away. The corporal had come to me in five. Taking into consideration the state of unrest that still in a measure existed, I concluded that rapid and immediate measures were necessary to prevent this spirit of open defiance spreading.

By good luck it was my watering-day, so the camels being handy I was able to start without any delay. I had determined to make a forced march, but, wishing to mislead any spies as to my rate of travel, I did not go far before halting that night. It was very cold. Having no map, I divided my distance by time, *i.e.* instead of so many miles I marched so many hours.

The thorn country soon merged into tropical forest. I was shown a red flower on a short stump, about two feet in diameter at the bottom, tapering to a point, and four feet high, which is used to blind crocodiles, being

thrown into the water where they are. Another plant like the poker plant (*Triborna grandis*), a hæmanthus, I believe, is supposed to produce violent headache if it touches one. One day we put up several ostriches and a wart-hog, and another passed a large head of Jackson (?) hartebeest. Near Turda innumerable monkeys chased each other among the trees or scurried across our path.

At one halting-place a lion paid us a visit. It was about eleven at night. My guide, orderly, and self were, as usual, a long way ahead. As the men were tending to the camels, they told me that it was evident from the docility of the beasts that there was a lion about. I did not quite believe them, but a few moments later, when about fifty yards or so from them, I distinctly saw a long yellow form, which halted and then slinked away at my shout, making for the camels. Presently in the bush I saw two green orbs shining, but dared not fire, unless it were to stop a charge, which in the Sudan an unmolested lion will seldom deliver.

This was the first lion at large I had ever seen, though there are some near El Obeid. I had once followed a twittering bird for a long time, as my shikari had told me that there was "asal" (honey) near. I had misunderstood him to say "asad" (lion), and it was not till I used the local term "dood" that he told me that there were none about. For some reason I had failed to connect the honey-bird—that true guide or practical joker, as its stomach is empty or full—with the direction we followed.

CHAPTER IV

I cure my guide of an imaginary complaint—On to Turda—The Nasr—
Back by a different route—Hartebeest—My first lion—An unfortunate
accident—More lions—A forest fire—J. Deigo—A doubtful welcome
—A pow-wow—I visit the Sultan—A farewell present.

My guide was a fiki (holy man = local Bible-reader) who was anxious to travel south. The poor man will have reason to remember the patrol. The day following our start we covered about seventy miles. The fiki had not ridden for some time, so became very stiff, and finally at a short halt refused to go an inch further. Argument was useless, so I prepared a great "English medicine." The holy man had a twinkle in his eye as he yielded to my persuasions and drank a three-finger tot of whisky, which I flavoured—to prevent his continually feeling a "sinking"—with a teaspoonful of quinine, and diluted with water, tar-flavoured, from a newly tanned water-skin. After mounting his camel, he first of all showed his appreciation of my hospitality by eructating loudly and frequently (a sign of Sudanese politeness), but then became very silent. At our next halt, made to water the camels at a pool, though it was past 9 P.M., he came over to me to complain that my language earlier in the day was unsuitable to his dignity as a fiki. My men, wishing they had half his complaint, laughingly hustled him on to his camel.

The next night he lost his way near a fula (water-hole), and, as it was late when we found the road again, I sent him back to the fula in order to guide the remainder of the patrol. While waiting there a lion came down to drink. The breadth of the pond, thirty or forty yards, alone separated them. One can imagine his relief as, with a start and lowered head, the lion lopes off. No sound, save the gentle rustling of the night wind, greets the anxious fiki's ears. The sounds and death cries in the forest, for the nonce, are stilled. He has deserted his camel in the hope that the lion might satiate himself on it. Were he near he would see that that patient beast has also received from the wind a message incomprehensible to human senses. Slowly the anxious minutes pass. Then a tall white form, moving majestically and noiselessly into the moonlit clearing near the water, is clearly reflected on its mirror-like surface. He almost screams from excess of relief. It is the party. Hamza Eff. wisely decides to halt where he is, while my two companions and I, happily unconscious, if conscious not caring, of the enemy around, sleep soundly. As the remainder of the patrol creep past us before the dawn they see three sleeping figures round the ashes of a long-dead fire.

We follow. We must get to Turda to-day, for the evening before a party of men has passed us, and they may bring information of our approach back. They all carried glowing bits of wood, which they whirled round and round as they walked. This was done partly to scare off wild beasts, but principally to provide

kindling for the next fire. If the wood is at all damp, making fire by friction is a long business. I was shown how to do it, and managed to make it smoulder myself. A bit of hard stick, the size of a lead pencil, is selected. On the ground is laid a short length of any soft wood—a bit of dura stalk is as good. A small incision is made to keep the end of the male, as it is called, in place. In the incision is placed a little sand, and the first piece of wood is twirled smartly between the palms. Soon the pith begins to smoulder, and with judicious fanning produces a flame.

Towards midday we halted to let the camels graze. Almost every bush was covered with ghulum. Camels eat this creeper voraciously when they can get at it, and almost invariably die from its effects in a very short time, so a sentry over each plant was a necessity.

Shortly after starting again we emerged on the vast plain known as Turda. It was covered with cattle, the keepers of which, when they saw us swing into the open, bolted. As we approach the huts we see a white-clad figure running to meet us. It is the Nasr (head sheikh of a big section of a tribe ; an Omda is the head of the Nasrs). He knows, from long residence as a prisoner in Cairo, that, grave as is the crime of rescuing a prisoner from his escort, dervish methods are not employed by us.

He is a noble-looking man : tall, straight as a dart, in spite of his weight of years, and powerfully built. Clad, as his fathers, in no parody of European fashion, but in a jibba. Behind him one son carries a plate of rice, stiff with sugar ; another a bowl of “nakl el asal”

(a drink composed of wild fruits—mostly nebbuk—fermented with wild honey). They press me to eat and drink, and, as I refuse, take mouthfuls themselves to show that the food is not poisoned. All the time the Nasr's tongue goes like a mill. Nothing was his fault. He has lived in Cairo, saved by us on the battlefield of twenty years before. He was sent here as Nasr by the Government, so how could he so far forget himself as to release a prisoner? His sons have been servants to British officers and have characters from ———. He knows the Sirdar, and Mahomed here knows how to starch English collars, and Ali there can make "hanties" (entrées). Whose blood do I want as long as he is unscathed himself?

The village of the man who was released is searched, but drawn blank. In the meantime I have got at the true facts of the case. A corporal's patrol, sent to Carter, obtained a guide at Turda, who, when clear of the village, deserted. The patrol managed to get to their destination, and there got from Carter a note to the Nasr ordering him to hand over the runaway for disposal at El Eddaiya. If guides are not to be relied on, administration would be impossible. The corporal meets the man just outside Turda, captures him, and, fastening his hands by a baggage-rope, loops the loose end to the back of his own saddle and trots into the village, where a "diluka" (native dance) is in full progress, with the man running behind him.

Some seven hundred well-primed Arabs hear the cries of "Oh, my brothers. Oh! Ah! Ahmed—Mahomed—Suliman!" as the captive addresses each friend by

name, and naturally they begin to get out of hand. The Nasr intervenes ; the prisoner is given over to him. Five hours later the corporal proposes to go on. He asks for his prisoner, who is in the midst of his pals. These, with levelled spears, jeeringly call on the corporal to take him. Nothing can be done, so the corporal comes to me. This slightly exonerated the Nasr, whom I ordered to send the prisoner to me at El Eddaiya, which he did in about ten days' time. I remember he got some very minor punishment. We had taken just sixty-eight hours to get to Turda. I saw from the way all the camels ate the grain, which I had spread before them, that they were none the worse for the journey. So, as I did not know these natives, and it was not my intention to allow myself to be surrounded by a disaffected section of Arabs, and lose, by an undignified retreat, the good effect my surprise visit may have caused, I moved off at sundown. From Hamza Eff. I heard of a route by which we could get to El Eddaiya without retracing our steps. With considerable difficulty I secured a guide, who later said he did not know the way. Very fortunately in disarming the runaway's village I had secured the spears of two visitors who, in exchange for their return, volunteered to guide us. My first halt was to be at Gereif, a small place a few miles from Turda. The road was very broken, and brought us across a good many small khors. By ill-luck half the patrol went to the wrong village, and so delayed our departure the following morning.

As we waited at dawn for it to turn up a huge herd

of hartebeest, which, however, moved off before I got near them, lured me out of camp. The place was alive with golden-crested crane. On my return I found my men all looking to the west, and they told me that there were lions in sight. I scarcely believed them till, following the sound of a grunt, I located through my glasses four lions about five hundred yards off. Our camp was on the edge of a plain about one and a half by half a mile in size. The lions were engaged in stalking a stray hartebeest. Whenever the latter tried to break away to its herd by the plain one of the lions would dash out and give a loud "ough!" Whenever he made for the woods he saw his pursuers loping rapidly towards him.

Need I say that the moment I saw a chance of securing my first lion I wasted no time in loading my rifle. Shouting to the men, who, seeing my intention, wanted either to dissuade me or, failing that, to accompany me, to remain where they were, and loading as I ran, I made for the opposite side of the plain. When the lions saw me they gave a loud roar; two of them cantered off, and another two went into a patch of high grass. I reached it in a minute or so, and was just walking into it when, like a whiskered Jack-in-the-box, with a snarl a lion sat up. Much quicker than he, I sat down, and aiming at his head, ten yards away, I fired; he dropped and sat up again, and I fired again, and all was still. I was certain he was dead, but feared to go into the grass, as I thought the other lion was there too. As I was hesitating, half-a-dozen of my men turned up. When

they think their officer is in danger he may as well talk to the wind as try to deter Arab or Sudanese from accompanying him. With them came the Nasr's son, clad in a white jibba ; my men were in khaki. While I was deciding what to do, the lion began to snarl viciously. I separated my men, and with one at my side pointing out the lion, which he could see, we all took cover in the grass, which was about eighteen inches high at the edge, and three feet in the centre of the patch. Suddenly up bounded the lion with a roar, and, with tail erect, charged straight for where my companion and I were crouching. The man beside me, not realising, as turned out to be the case, that the lion was making for the only one he could see—the man in white—fired his rifle and got up to run. In a trice the lion had carried him to the ground. I merely had to turn on my knee, and I recollect deciding, with the muzzle touching the hair, whether to fire in or behind the ear—so slowly do moments of that nature pass. The charge was not in itself terrifying ; the roar was insignificant.

The nailing of the man to the ground and the death of the lion passed in the crack of the rifle. All would have been well had not one of the men, seeing, as he thought, his comrade being torn to pieces, dashed up and fired at the lion from above. His bullet pierced the recumbent man through the chest and killed him. As we dragged the lion off the last and only words of Ali Ahmed were : “ Ya, Allah akbar ! ya, Allah akbar ! ” (“ Oh, God is great ! ”) Wonderful is the hold of a religion of forms, that invariably brings

to the lips of its adherents the most magnificent confession of faith. Even the criminal hanging on the gibbet will stretch out his forefinger to perform the office his lips may not. We buried him with full military honours, drawing the bullets from our cartridges in order to fire the last volleys over his grave.

At 1.30 P.M. we moved off. Two hundred yards or so from our late camping-place we struck into the pathless forest. The first part of the journey was over black cotton soil. The trees were mostly one of the gum-bearing thorns, with here and there mighty *tebeldis*. We passed a number of depressions, now dry, but which the rank vegetation showed must be full of water at times. We put up antelopes here and there. My guides at times would break off to the right or left, resuming the original direction after going a short distance. On asking the reason I was astonished and somewhat incredulous to be told that we were passing lions. Just at sunset we halted at a water hole (*fula*). The unwonted zeal with which all gathered dried branches convinced me that there were lions about. We soon had three fires four feet high laid. I fired the surrounding grass to give light and protection to the wood-carriers, and the *fiki*, who had insisted on accompanying us, went out to light that on the other side of the *fula*. He had barely left camp before a snarling roar drew me, rifle in hand, to the side where he now came bounding back. The fires were lighted, and shortly afterwards we began to see lions walking round our camp, the firelight playing on them, and showing, as they stood and



FASHODA (NOW CALLED KODOU).



DUG OUT CANOE ON LAKE FELL (AMBADIE)

stared at intervals, the corners of their cruel mouths drooping. There were quite thirty of them. We dare not provoke them by firing at them in the gloom. Need I say that the events of the morning had rather shaken my nerve, so that I placed but little reliance on the ring of flame around us.

As we moved along in the forest we came upon a couple of men looking for honey and gathering the nebbuk fruit. These men were responsible for starting a big forest fire. In the Sudan a forest fire goes very slowly. The one difficulty with animals is to find a break in it that they will face. We rode up and down this one for a long time on the hot embers, galloping here and there for a gap, which closed before we got to it. At length we managed to get through ; the first to pass had to jump off, and, with loose sacks or coats, to beat down the flames on either side in order to prevent the gap closing. Once through our way was easy.

At a dried-up fula, north of J. Abu Likri, the fiki was so sure that he knew the way that I let the two Turda men go, as, after the first day, they had found camel-riding too sore for them. The fiki, however, led us sadly astray, and put on long miles to our journey ; so much so that, when a few hours from our destination, J. Deigo, I had to leave the bulk of the men and camels to rest awhile, while I pushed on in order to secure the wells for ourselves. My camels were not off-saddled from the start at 6 A.M. (the fiki had said that he would miss his landmarks if we travelled by night) till 4.30 P.M.

We entered J. Deigo over a low col. Opposite to us was a high, steep, rocky ridge, with a valley between us, and at the head of the valley was the Sultan's village. The building of the huts, &c., was princely compared to that of the Arabs. When we reached the wells we had a rather amusing experience. Every one had fled at our approach ; or rather all but two stark naked men, separated from us by a deep khor with steep sides, who were engaged in rebaiting the hooks on the lines they had laid out to catch guinea-fowl. An old lady, hiding in the rocks on the side of the hill near the well, addressed us as follows : "Are your excellencies brigands ?" "No," was the answer ; "don't you see that there is a 'hat officer' with us." "Oh ! any one can wear a hat. Are you der-vishes ?" I took off my hat and rode towards her. Loud screams greeted my movement, and she disappeared. From another crag another beldame, after bidding us to water and go to —, hastily vanished. At last an old man came and scrutinised us, and shortly afterwards I got a message from the Sultan to say that I was permitted to go and pay my respects to him.

After a couple of embassies, in which it was explained that I was no ordinary (native) officer, but the first (white) representative of the Government to pay him a visit, the Sultan sent to apologise for his disrespectful behaviour, and presently I saw approaching me the rest of my patrol and a long file of men, some fifty, mostly unarmed, with the Sultan in their midst. He was a small, oldish man, clad in a parti-coloured jibba with long sleeves. It had seen better days.

Round his neck he wore a wooden rosary with five gold beads in it. I had my chair in my khoorg, so the furwa was spread for the Sultan, and I sat down, dirty, unshaved, and ragged—for thorn-bushes give no quarter—the representative of the British Raj.

By means of an interpreter, the Sultan, a Nuba (as an exception he does not call himself a Mek), made a long speech. Its gist was that he had never submitted to any one yet—not even to the dervishes ; and that what he paid the Government was tribute, not taxes. I made a suitable reply, and he sat down on the furwa ; his wazirs, some twenty in number, all insisting on a share of the seat of honour. The remainder squatted round, and we began to talk and chaff. Till, however, Hamza Eff. joined us we did not get far, as both the interpreter's Arabic and mine left much to be desired. As it turned out, Hamza Eff. was an old acquaintance. Before Gordon's time this hill with others was under the over-lordship of the Omda of the Shaigia, the former's father. This meant that each Nuba chief had to supply yearly a number of boys and girls as slaves, failing which the whole mountain would be raided, and all captives enslaved or killed.

The Sultan sent for grain at once, brought me a present of a sheep, which I refused, and some ground nuts and marissa, which I bought for my men.

The morning after my arrival I carefully inspected the camels, and found all taking their grain well and grazing with avidity, under Nubas supplied by the Sultan. I may say here that not one of the camels

out on this patrol showed any signs of it a month later. There was, however, no point in taking all my camels, fresh or tired, along with me now ; so I determined to leave all but my two orderlies behind to come on slowly, while I, with these two men, picking up guides as we went, returned at once to my headquarters, where the work of building the station and laying in stores of grain required my presence. I therefore paid my return visit to the Sultan. I found him seated on an angareb outside the zariba of his collection of well-built huts, the chief men, as before, crowding each other, and him for the matter of that, off it, though there were several other unoccupied ones near by. I had one to myself, but not before Hamza Eff., for whom room was made near the Sultan, had warned off some would-be sharers of it. After an exchange of compliments, I returned to my camp. I had just finished saddling up when the Sultan paid me another visit. I saw in the corner of his eye that he wanted something, but could not guess what it was. I started, got fifty yards on my way, and then a wazir ran up to say that the Sultan wished to speak to me. He came up and said "Good-bye" again. I started again, and another ancient pursued me. Fortunately, Hamza Eff. stepped into the breach at this juncture and told me that the Sultan was longing for one of the men's green belts to use as a turban. The moment he got it he was off like a shot—whether to peacock before his subjects, or lest I should change my mind, I leave to the reader. From his appearance one would not have suspected him, off-hand, of vanity.

CHAPTER V

Marching at night—A lion—The Messeria Arabs—"The incident of the royal shirt"—I leave El Obeid—"Gyppie"—The Sudanese soldier—English lack of tact—Moslem marriages—Sudanese irregulars—Their endurance—The Arab soldier in the Hagana—Native officers—Turks—Egyptian—Sudanese.

I WAS away at last. Soon I met three minor sheikhs hastening in to pay their respects to me. Riding down the valley we could see several high hills in the distance. Roads led in all directions—one to Sungakai, not many miles away, where I had been a short while before. Our road passed several villages, in one of which a weaver with a hand-loom was busy making the nine-inch-wide strips of "damur" (coarse cotton cloth), which are used both as clothing and as currency, the value being a shilling; while all the inhabitants appeared to have distaffs in their hands. It passed between two moderately high conical hills, and debouched on to the Kordofan plain.

As we rode through the night a forest fire, which had climbed the side of a long ridge, showed ruby-red in the distance. We crossed the Wadi Shalango, which we had so frequently seen on the road from Turda.

After a few hours' rest we started at 3 A.M. I do not remember a darker night in the Sudan; we even

strayed off the path several times, and had some difficulty in finding it. Shortly after our start we passed close to some animal who hissed and snarled at us. Presently the rearmost camel came pushing up from behind, then the foremost slowed down in front. We heard the tearing of an occasional branch, and the "ough!" we had now learned to know well. After riding for some time in such unpleasant companionship, I fired my rifle in the air. The noise and the flash evidently frightened the lion, for so we heard he was from the Arabs of the horse-owning Messeria tribe, into whose camp we rode at daybreak.

Burdia, their headquarters, is on the edge of a swamp, which in the grey dawn looked like a lake. It is itself a collection of mere shelters—I cannot call them huts.

The arrival of a white officer and two men caused some surprise, which soon gave way to hospitable politeness, as the Arabs, wrapped up in their cotton "tobes," turned out to greet us. Huge bowls of milk were produced, and a guide, a handsome young fellow with the face of a bronze Mephistopheles, was also forthcoming. He soon had his horse, a useful-looking country-bred, saddled, and carrying his eighteen-foot-long Baggara spear on his shoulder, prepared to lead the way. After ten minutes' halt we pushed on. At J. Abu Gerein, a hill occupied by Nubas, he left us, and we got another guide from the Mek. He turned out a great goer, as he ran the whole way from here to El Eddaiya, a distance of about forty miles, at the rate of about five miles an hour.

What I called "the incident of the royal shirt" occurred at this jebel. After a little reconnoitring, the Mek of the place, a man, a typical negro in appearance, came down the hill clad in a very antique cotton jibba, and escorted by ten or more all but naked companions. I settled a complaint which he made—an Arab family settling without, by, or with your leave, on his well and grazing ground—and he then retired behind some rocks to procure a guide. Presently the same shirt, but containing a much smaller man, returned, followed by a fine naked black, who, when he came to shake my hand and present me with a large "beteik" (water-melon), I recognised as the Mek. A week or so after my return to El Eddaiya, when buying grain at the "Matmurra," I recognised the shirt doing duty as a sack. To make assurance doubly sure I asked the proprietor if he came from J. Abu Gerein. He did.

My noonday halt I made at J. Seigo, which, being near a seat of government, was full of litigants. I listened to many complaints which, on inquiry, turned out to have already been investigated. They were brought before me in the hope that, being a new man, I would reverse former decisions: a very favourite practice in the East.

Here I learned the local way of buying ostrich feathers. The "marbua" weighs four pounds. The buyer selects from the store a pound of feathers, the seller the other three. The whole costs about 16s.

The return of the remainder of the patrol was heralded by the "luluing" of the wives, most of whom had now turned up, and now came to help their

husbands to carry home their belongings. It was still very cold, but that helped on the building of the station, which made El Eddaiya—when we arrived a tiny hamlet—look now an important town.

But now I was obliged to take my turn for leave. So, in the middle of February, I left No. 1 Company, little thinking that I would never see it again ; for on my return I was selected for transfer to the Civil Administration, the most fascinating branch open to the Egyptian Army. My orders were to catch the first available boat at El Dueim. I therefore determined to lose no time *en route*. In less than seventy-two hours I was in El Obeid, a distance of 190 miles. Hamza Eff. accompanied me most of the way, but the men of the escort I left behind at Abu Seneita (a swamp in the rains), taking only my orderly and bugler with me. As we rode along Hamza Eff. told me many a story of the dervish days, and of the difficulties in the early days of our occupation.

At El Obeid I found that I had been misinformed as to the dates of the boat departures, so, at the Mudir's suggestion, I halted there two days. I was not altogether sorry. My camels could do with a rest, and I, having neglected to swathe myself in the broad Camel Corps belt, found my shoulder blades so sore that I could barely hold my head straight.

Leaving El Obeid I took the Um Bosha road, and reached El Dueim, a distance of 160 miles, in seventy-six hours. A part of the way was very trying. It lay over ridges a couple of hundred yards apart, with a sharp dip of twenty feet or so between them. Having

plenty of time I halted near J. Shwei to follow some ril I saw gambolling in the first rosy light of dawn. I had sent my own rifle on with my baggage, never dreaming that I would ever get a chance at this beautiful and rare antelope. I failed to get one with my orderly's rifle.

As it was at this period that I severed my connection with the purely military side of the Egyptian Army, I venture, ungrateful as is the task, to place on record my opinions of its native personnel, garnered during a four years' thorough study. I call the task ungrateful because, to be fair, one must not only eulogise but also criticise.

Not many can take a dispassionate view of the comparative merits and demerits of the different kinds of native troops. We have the Egyptian fellah, conscripted for five years ; the Sudanese negroids, enlisted for life ; and the Arab and other irregulars, whose conditions of service are very diverse.

I had very little to do with Egyptian soldiers. At Halfa I had a small force of them as police. They did not shine in that capacity. They lacked force of character and were too often suspected of blackmail. Needless to say, they were not selected as the best men when sent to us by their commanding officers. Almost every one has a different opinion of them. Major-General Mahon was wont to say that he pinned greater faith in them than in the Sudanese. Confident as they now are in their leaders, their very stolidity ensures their following like sheep. In physique they are the finest troops in the world. It is said that they

like work (?). Let that be as it may, they will, even when left to themselves, do twice the work and more of an equal number of blacks under an overseer, and do it cheerfully.

It has been the fashion to abuse the poor Gypjie. Taken direct from his village, from tilling the fields from early morning till late evening and driving a sakia at night, he is considered a fool because he cannot hang a picture straight.

It has been said that they could not be taught to shoot. By the time those I have known were taught that this exercise does not consist in loud words of command and automatic movements they did right well. I may say here that, in all my experience in the Sudan, which was varied, I never met a man who failed wholly to master the elements of hitting a target. This was not the case at home before 1900.

To those who are convinced that the light shines out of the back of the head of all black troops, my statement that the regular Sudanese of to-day is an unreliable, because spoiled, article will give dire offence. I yield to none in my love for the dear old black, but—well, there is no point in washing dirty linen in public. The Sudanese soldier, if made to work, will do as little as he possibly can, grumbling the whole time. If he thinks it will pass unnoticed, he will be impertinent. Never having served in a Sudanese regiment, I have had plenty of opportunity of noticing things as an onlooker.

I have said that the Sudanese are grumblers. Have they no cause to be so occasionally? Officers who

have never seen the outside of England, perhaps, come to their country, and without inquiry or study of the language or customs of the country, and relying on often prejudiced interpreters for their facts, proceed to decide questions on the home life of their men. Such a thing as a book on the laws and customs of the Moslems, not to mention the various tribes of the Sudan, was, and I believe is, unknown. Why?

When on patrols, furnished with an escort of regulars, they have often told me their grievances. They would slip out as I whiled away the tedium of the march by learning their customs, their thoughts, and their folklore. A fruitful source of complaint is interference with their marriages. A Moslem may have four wives and a concubine for every year after his first marriage, so I understand. Owing to the fact that the Government has made itself responsible for the transport, &c., of the harimat (wives, &c.) of the regiment, the official number is cut down to one, and only for a percentage (a large one) of the men. If a soldier brings a small girl forward as a wife, an ignorant newcomer may drive him out of the office with ridicule. He does not realise that a soldier's means are not large. The maal (price paid) for a girl before reaching puberty is about £2 and her keep till she joins her husband. For a marriageable maiden it will be from £15 to £30; sometimes much more. The alternative is a widow or divorcee, who can be got for £2 and some clothes. Small wonder, then, that we find a Sudanese regiment of 600 men may have 700 grown women (mothers included) and barely 200 children in its

harimat. What a difference in my time in the Hagana. One hundred and fifty men had 350 women in their lines, and I should say more than 500 children. Nearly every woman suckled a child. Colonel Wilkinson, who raised the Arab Camel Corps, decided that, beyond insisting on their living together in lines, there should be no interference in the home arrangements of the men other than in presenting happy fathers with a trifle to help to pay for the birth festivities.

I should lay myself open to reproof, indeed, if I attacked the value of the Sudanese soldier as a fighting man, or even criticised it on my own authority. They say that the Sudanese is apt to get out of hand in action, though the movement of Macdonald's brigade at Omdurman is a brilliant exception. There have been cases in which he has behaved badly.

As I said, almost all I know about the Sudanese regulars is second-hand. It would be unfair for me to pose as an authority on the subject. One of the easiest things in the world is to criticise and to fix blame, if the person who is the object of it is asked for no explanation, or if, as is more general, ridiculous stories, accompanied by nods and winks, are told. I have good reason to think that they are not the fine troops they once were, and would be again, if they reverted to their old ideals, "hard work and hard tack."

First cousins to the above are the irregular Sudanese negroids. First in quality and first in my affection come those who have not been spoiled by contact with

the former, and learned from them to talk of "my rights," when the best one can do falls far short of the promises made to them on enlistment.

I have had a great deal to do with them. In the Western Bahr el Ghazal I had a body of 150 of them, 20 of whom only were from Khartum or enlisted from the disbanded 14th Regiment which revolted. This score, at heart right good fellows when taken the right way, soon were broken of their bad ways. Then with the remaining men, raw savages, their equal would be hard to find. To No. 3 Company of the Jehadia no work was too hard, no march too long. Obligated (by order of the Mudir) to do without carriers—unlike the regulars, who require as much transport as a European soldier—with cast-off clothing, odds and ends of equipment (rifle-slings used to be made from the hides of the game I shot), with no water-bottle save the gourd picked up in a village, these men were wonderful. Sir Ian Hamilton mentions, as an almost incredible fact, that 1000 Japanese marched 85 miles in 48 hours. What the conditions under which they did so were I do not remember; so except for distance there can be no comparison. In the same time a party of Jehadia marched about 90 miles through fairly dense forest on a forest path through undulating country, part of it a morass, with the necessary services of protection out, and carrying the whole of their transport (food, &c.) themselves. This was a march which wound up a patrol of twelve days, during which our average day's march had been over 20 miles. A fortnight later the same men marched 400

miles in 14 days (we could have gone faster, but the need for doing so vanished in the meantime), part of the way over very hilly, as I cannot call it mountainous, country, and in bad weather. There are few troops to beat the unspoiled black.

In the central Bahr el Ghazal I had to deal with the same material, but spoiled by close contact with regulars, whose higher rate of pay, &c., and lower standard of work required, caused a certain amount of discontent, and also by the fact that they were recruited from inferior races to those further west. Nevertheless an order to start on patrol was scarcely given before a man with rifle over his shoulder would be seen making his way out of the station. All the Jehadia were armed with antique Remington rifles, yet their shooting was such as, with good rifles and ammunition, would not have disgraced a British regiment.

The Arab soldier! my first tropical love, and whom I first met in the Camel Corps; first in quality in the Egyptian Army, and *facile princeps* in the affection of all who have had to do with him. Weighing my letters and notes, written while in the Hagana, in the scales of a wider experience of native troops, I still place him high in merit above all others. The Arab, a dandy in dress, ambitious, a perfect gentleman; indefatigable in the field—he soared above comparisons! I wonder what he is like now. When I knew him the Hagana (Camel Corps) was in embryo. The head that had conceived it had just gone. A new commanding officer, imbued with

the fetishes dear to the heart of a London soldier, had just arrived. Gone was the experience with Arabs, the good colloquial knowledge, not only of their language, but of the various Kordofan dialects ; gone the brain that swept away the nursery-bred system of discipline (punishments, &c.) culled from the British army, which to this day will keep a soldier "standing in a corner" as punishment, like a naughty child ; that prohibited interference with their family arrangements, incidentally eschewing the responsibility for their harimat. In fact, the man who had formed a common-sense corps which, with the fetishes of the past eliminated, promised to be as near perfection as possible, had to go to higher work. Alas, there was no continuity of policy ! I have no doubt that, moulded as the corps later was on the model of the rest of the Egyptian Army, it became a very fine example of it.

The Hagana wore an adaptation of the dress of the country. The Sudanese soldier in his skin-tight trousers and coat and heavy boots is a painful parody of the English one. The pay of the Arab covered everything except the cost and upkeep of equipment, rifle, saddlery, and camel.

The devotion of the native soldier to his British officer, so marked a feature of the Indian Army, is unknown in this one. The system is against it. A bimbashi is in one regiment one day, in some other employment the next. The time, too, is broken by long periods of home leave, so that barely five of the seven years of contract can be spent in the country.

Remarking one day on this very patent fact I was amused by the contradiction of one who adduced the fact that the departure of a certain officer on leave was accompanied by the turning out of his men to bid him good-bye. I happened to know that this was a custom in the corps in question, and, although I knew that no officer had ever been more popular than this one, the men would have turned out in as great force for an unpopular one.

The Sudan is full of anomalies. This has been stated by a number of people whose words carry weight, so I need not scruple to repeat it. Not the least of them is the native officer. He is of three kinds: the Turk, the Egyptian, and the Sudanese (Arab and Negroid).

There are only two classes of Turks—the good and the bad; a hero or a coward; honesty itself or dishonesty personified; a gentleman or a boor. Such he is and will remain.

We turn to the Egyptian officer. I echo the wonder of the “lions,” of the Sudan, and ask—Do the majority of British officers in the Egyptian Army ever realise the amount of work done by these men? In spite of copy-book maxims, it is far easier to command than to perform. The Gypsie officer is far more the backbone of that army than is the N.C.O. that of ours. The former keeps practically all the accounts in his own handwriting. Officers of less than five years’ service will be entrusted with the care of districts larger far than Indian cantonments, will personally assess and collect taxes, try cases, see

to the sanitary arrangements of the town—a native town, too. Another will carry on the secretarial work of the office of a province as large as England. One, almost a boy, will be sent to a frontier station, cut off by more than a month's journey from the outside world, and, in the words of a Governor whose report I quote, "carry on negotiations the nicety of which would have taxed the powers of a capable British officer." Another on a distant post set in the midst of a savage people, wholly uncertain as to the intentions of the Government towards them, will hold his own with dignity and without friction. I could multiply my examples *ad infinitum*. I marvel as I look around me now and think of the empire-making work, so little appreciated, that they do.

But as to a picture in the Academy there is to this another side not fair to see.

The opportunities for speculation, taking bribes, and, worst of all, robbing those beneath them, are many. Say, 100 naked savages have to be paid for ten days' work; a day's pay deducted from each will not be noticed by them, but will be an appreciable sum. In the issue of a month's rations to a Company there will needs be a surplus, the sale of which will keep a servant and even a horse. Some, alas, fall !

The watching necessary has rendered some men chronically suspicious, so much so that there is the case of one officer who at the end of seven years, the first four of which had been brilliant, had become so openly suspicious that he had to be requested to leave the country.

The native officer will always scrupulously carry out any instructions which he believes the giver will ask about later, but here the want of continuity and its ill-effects becomes apparent. I can show it best by an example which came under my notice. One officer gave the order that the grass round a station should be cleared, as it bred mosquitoes. His successor maintained that without a quantity of grass about the noxious vapours exuded by mankind were not absorbed, and so bred disease, and clearing the grass showed want of common sense on the part of the officer who did so. Naturally to sit tight on the order was the best policy. If No. 1 came round, man, woman, and child turned out to weed. A monthly item, "To clearing grass so much" in the accounts satisfied him that his order was being carried out—but that money had to be absorbed somehow. In this case quite honestly.

Now is it altogether fair to give the show away like this? Thirty years ago the man who did not make hay along the Nile while the sun shone was altogether out of it. In England 100 years ago what was our army like? Is it not a relic of the dishonesty of those days that till lately the C.O. of a unit had not the control of a penny of public money, and that even a general should ask twenty permissions before he could sanction the expenditure of a shilling? It is a wonder, considering the class most of the native officers are drawn from, and the necessarily slight supervision they are subjected to, that they are so upright.

To conclude. As a rule the Egyptian officer is

not like the older Sudanese, illiterate. Almost all are *soi-disant* Moslems. There are a few Copts and Syrian Christians in the departments, and many in the Medical service. The pay is practically that of the British army at home. I have already described the only Arab officer I ever knew. I would have given him a signed blank cheque—not because he could not write, but because I knew he would never abuse the confidence put in him.

I was thrown a good deal among Sudanese officers in the Civil Administration. He is generally a fine fellow. He has imbibed many of the faults of his Egyptian brother. In addition he is uxorious, lazy, but tactful. Having gained his rank by the display of his qualities as a leader of men, he would, if placed in an isolated position, cause less anxiety than another.

CHAPTER VI

I travel south again with Captain M'Murdo to become Inspector of the Dinkas in the Fashoda province—Renk—Mosquitoes—I bring rain—My nocturnal visitors—Big game shooting—A waterbuck—Ordered to Taufikia—Fashoda—Fish-spearing—Missionaries—Up the Sobat on an inspection tour—Itang—Giraffe.

FOUR months later I found myself again travelling south. For companion I had that indefatigable Nimrod, Captain M'Murdo, D.S.O., the director of the slavery repression department. He was full of anecdote as each village or bend in the river recalled to him some adventure with the dervishes in the days when the "New Army" was being created. Not less interesting were his tales of adventure with big game, &c., which included the description of hours spent in watching the herds, their habits, &c., which means so much more to the true sportsman than the mere slaughter.

Near Abu Hamed my train passed that on which Colonel Wilkinson's successor was. He was going on leave, and just as his train was moving off he said that he had heard a rumour that the Sirdar had selected me for the Civil Administration. To leave my beloved Arabs was a wrench, as was to leave the "Irish" Mudiria, great as had been the changes in both since I had joined them. As it turned out it

was one of those unpleasant events in life which are the prelude to the greatest luck. I was to be Inspector of the Dinkas in the Upper Nile (Fashoda) province ; but, pending the arrival of my predecessor with books and local information, I had to remain in Khartum for a month. Every one knows what a tropical station is without a horse, and for me it was useless to get one. I spent the morning in the Civil Secretary's office ; hours from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. It was very hot, and there was very little doing.

I arrived at my destination at the beginning of July. Renk *did* then appear a desolate spot. The plantation I made, and the orangery I settled (from trees cast haphazard by a previous inspector about the place), have made it look more agreeable. I erected my mosquito-house without delay. I had been warned about that pest. I do not remember what happened the first night. I certainly did not sleep. The mosquitoes in India, South Africa, and Kordofan were mere dilettanti—little worse than sand-flies—compared to the ones I now encountered. From the first day I was in bed before sundown, and did not get up till after sunrise, when my curtain, even inside the mosquito-house, would be black with the pests. I may say that, from the day I arrived to the day I left, a mosquito was drawing blood from me every moment of the day or night not spent inside the curtains over my bed. Since that day a stagnant khor has been cleared, so I believe that in the sudd alone can the mosquito now claim the right of creating a hell on earth.

While on this subject I may as well say a word

of advice to the tyro. Malaria is acquired by inoculation, which is carried out by the female of the *Anopheles* mosquito (it seems to stand on its head when sucking). *Pace* the hare-brained lunatics who deny this and are responsible for ruined constitutions. A man's health, and, what is of far more importance to his employers, his power of doing his work, is thus in his own hand. Ten years ago the use of a mosquito-net was sneered at ; to-day it is recognised as perhaps the most important item in the equipment of any one in mosquito-haunted countries. It is not wasted kindness to supply one to the servants. No one should lie down to sleep without having carefully examined the interior of the curtain and killed any intruders. A hole, even the size of a pin-head, should be tied up. Where mosquitoes are bad, mosquito-boots, of soft leather or canvas, reaching high up the thigh, should be worn.

It will soon be recognised that the authorities who send a malarial subject to live with men who are not infected, *for the infection, remember, is carried*, assume a great responsibility. An instance in my own experience is this. I was once in a station where six of us never suffered from malaria. Shortly before I left a malarial subject joined us, and after my departure I heard that almost every one was down with it, and black-water fever followed.

My office was as bare of official literature as the bag of a junior of briefs. The books of the district which I had received contained the record of about a score of extremely simple cases. The Mamur (police magis-



STEAMER IN SUDD (IN BAHR EL GHAZAL). NEARLY THROUGH !



BRITISH OFFICER (BIMB. HUTCHINSON, D.S.O.) IN "MARCHING ORDER"
IN BAHR EL GHAZAL PROVINCE.

trate), a capable native officer, did the very simple work of the place. I sat and scratched, and almost longed for Khartum, and, oh ! how I longed to be back in the Hagana.

One day an aggrieved deputation arrived to demand rain ! “Inshallah, it will come soon,” was the only possible reply. Some days later, my pony having arrived from El Eddaiya, I rode round the place promising rain, which was overdue. As a shower fell that night, a second deputation arrived to thank me, and to say that it had only fallen within the circle I had ridden, so would I ride elsewhere and bring it. I did not bless the rain, necessary as it was for the crops. The black cotton soil on which my house stood became a perfect quagmire. The house had been partly built by the hands of Captain H. Wilson (Lancashire Fusiliers), the first inspector of Renk, but its position was awful. Apart from the fact that it was in the centre of the worst section of mosquitoes, it was so near the river that hippopotami walking round the hedge of the garden, but not breaking through, fearing a trap, made the night hideous with their yawnings and snortings ten to twenty yards off.

In the meantime one of the men of my Company of the Hagana had arrived with my pony and kit. I could have fallen on the man's neck. He, on his part, was most eloquent. Ah ! the Irishman is not the only one who knows how to blarney. He brought, or said he did, messages from the Company that I should send a “paper” to the Sirdar to get sent back to

it. His news, the minutest detail was of interest to me, was interlarded with this suggestion. Dear old Hagana !

The lover of animals will ask how poor "Tops," my pony, used to fare at night. He had a good hut as a stable, and in Dinka fashion, after every chink had been stopped up, a dung fire would be left lighted in it, the smoke of which drove away mosquitoes. An officer who tried this method for himself told me it was very good when one was accustomed to it.

One of the compensations for a solitary life at an out-station is the big-game shooting. As soon as I could I started inquiries, and from one of the sailors on the gyassa belonging to the Government I learned that there was nothing to be found on the right bank of the river (on which the station was), as it was inhabited by sedentary Dinkas, whereas the left bank, occasionally occupied by nomadic Selim Baggara Arabs, held a fair amount. Some hours before dawn one night I left the shelter of my mosquito curtains, and getting on the gyassa sailed a short way up the river, and landed on the opposite bank. It was still dark. On landing we were rejoined by hordes of mosquitoes from which the breeze on the river had freed us while in mid-stream.

Following the sailor, who posed as a shikari, I plunged into a wood, and, just as things were beginning to become more distinct in the first break of dawn, I heard a sound like an irregular hammering. I soon discovered the cause. Two young bull water-

bucks were fighting for the possession of a small herd of does who looked calmly on. Selecting the one who was having the best of it, as likely to carry the finest head, I fired. He redoubled his attack on his opponent, and I fired again. The excitement of firing at the first really big head—it was under thirty inches, so not so very big—and the dim light caused me to fire too far back at my first shot, while my second struck the heart.

I wonder has any one ever done justice to the description of the feeling that possesses one when approaching big game. The hopes, fears, and necessary quick decisions of a stalk are worth anything. Add to these the spice of danger in following elephant, lion, &c., with the proviso that nothing unpleasant occurs, and it is one of the most glorious sensations in life. The forbidden climb or surreptitious cigarette, both unpleasant, are they not the joys of boyhood?

I left the sailors cutting up my kill, and continued the hunt. That morning I put up ostriches, roan antelope, and a panther, but did not see them. I stalked some white-eared cob and more waterbuck. The latter I approached after a long creep through a swamp and found to be all does. Something drove them my way, and I had a lovely view of them as they passed me at some twenty yards' distance.

I had been at Renk a week or ten days when a wire came ordering me to Taufikia (near the junction of the Sobat and the Nile). I did not waste any time in getting ready. With a few clothes and a fortnight's provisions I was waiting, on the morning following

the receipt of the order, for the mail boat. It was a good bit late, so it did not stop *en route* to let the passengers have a passing stalk. Even before I left the Sudan people were beginning to look shocked at the idea of stopping the mail boat for that purpose, and just after my arrival there stopping a train to alight to shoot gazelle became a thing of the past. The development of a country may bring compensations. It also has its drawbacks.

Game there was in plenty. We saw all sorts, including buffalo. Once we passed a fine lion, who, as we approached, yawned ostentatiously, performed part of his toilet, and moved slowly into the bush. The boat had naturally made straight for the bank, but when the lion disappeared we saw that, without a long delay, we could not hope to bag him.

Fashoda, now called Kodok, in deference to the feelings of the French, needs no description. Its antique guns on rickety carriages, the remains of Marchand's fort, and so on, have found many historians, as has the open house, reminding one of mediæval times, kept by the then governor.

At Dul I made the acquaintance of the priests of the Catholic Mission. They never failed to give me a grand present of fresh vegetables the many times I called on them after this. Their Father Superior, the greatest, if not the only, authority on the Shilluk tribe, showed me the native method of spearing fish, at which he was himself an adept. The dug-out canoe is pushed into the half-submerged grasses at the edge of the river, the fisherman poises his spear,

generally provided with a line to pull it back with. A line of grass moves. It is obviously not the wind, as that would cause a movement over the whole surface ; so the spear is driven in, and one in about twenty throws secures the fish so betrayed.

Taufikia was soon reached. It was not then, as now, a tin-built town. There were a few houses built of red brick standing. Others, also of red brick, were not. Most of these buildings up the river, owing to a dearth of officers no doubt, were built without any proper superintendence. The result was that, even in black cotton soil, the foundations were but a few inches below ground. Seeing, however, that the headquarters at Khartum of the department responsible for them is also in need of struts to prevent its falling, one need not be surprised at wrecks so far south. One buys experience.

I had to wait for the Mudir, who returned from an exploring trip up the Bahr el Zeraf some days after my arrival. He had been sent to discover "Baker's passage" between that river and the Bahr el Jebel. Having little sympathy with the quest, and much unpleasant experience with the "sudd," he failed. Shortly afterwards the passage was re-discovered.

While at Taufikia I spent my spare time chasing the wily spur-winged goose—other game there was none. I went a couple of times to the American Mission at Doleib, where at the time only the doctor and his wife—most charming hosts—were present.

Without in the least wishing to question the methods of a most devoted class of people, for it may be that

many who choose to spend their lives in missionary effort are actuated by religious motives, not by an intense craving for the wilds, &c., I must say that some of these Americans overdo things. For instance, a white man should not work naked (save for a mackintosh and straw hat), nor his wife perform the offices of maternity *coram publico*, especially if it is composed of degraded savages, as I heard from an eye-witness was done. Then, too, to bring a negro Bible-reader, married to a white woman, to such a place was to suggest to the savage the crime that is making the negro problem of such importance elsewhere.

There was no means of getting at the big game in the vicinity, as the Mudir, who held somewhat exaggerated views on the subject of sport, had removed the launch. Not caring for it himself, and able to fill every moment of his day with interesting work, he did not realise that an officer tied down to the limited rounds of regimental duties, in a swamp-surrounded station like Taufikia, was in absolute need of some form of healthy recreation to keep up his health and spirits. He had no doubt seen things which confirmed his views. All agree with him in deprecating the conduct of those who allow opportunities for sport to swamp those for work. Who can condone the conduct of the officer who, sent to join some small expedition, allowed his native subordinates to do so, while he himself, sending to say that he had no transport facilities, remained where he was and shot seven elephants before he got orders to return whence he came.

The Mudir brought me back to Fashoda with him. We were accompanied by the Mek of the Shilluks, who, till ejected at last from our quarter of the boat, "spread himself" in a manner inexplicable to one accustomed to the deference shown elsewhere to the British officer.

The orders I got were to go on a visit of inspection to Itang on the upper reaches of the Sobat, and then to make an attempt to penetrate those of the Pibor, the most important tributary of the former. The Sirdar was most anxious to learn something about the country south of the Sobat. It was *terra incognita*, for M'Millan's expedition, which had just returned from the exploration of the Akobo, had followed very much the same routes as Captain Welby (18th Hussars), and Major Austin, R.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., both of whose explorations have made them justly famous.

At Fashoda I boarded the *Abu Klea*, which had already been used in two abortive attempts in the same direction as I was to follow. I may say here that I consider that it was the fact that I had had my men in hand for three weeks before the real work began that was one of the deciding factors of our ultimate success. But above all, I put the loyal co-operation of Mr. Sharples (the engineer of the Steamer's Department), who was my companion.

Some miles up the Sobat game began to be seen in plenty. Ostriches, which we were forbidden to shoot, must have had a copy of the ordinance protecting them under their wings to produce if asked for, so bold were they.

The notes of my report describe the conditions of things in July and August. Up to Nasser the crops were poor and not yet ripe; the amount of cultivation small. The country on either side of the river was overgrown by grass some seven feet high. The post at Nasser, on a mud-patch, 100 by 50 yards, surrounded by swamps, was practically boycotted by the surrounding natives. Near Itang the crops, mostly maize, were just ripe and very plentiful. A quantity of rubber from the landolphia vines was being brought in by the Anuaks of the vicinity.

The trade of this post, Itang, was to be with the people of the Rases of Goré and Goti, both of whose capitals, Showa and Datamé, were only a few days' journey from it. The post consisted of a square mile on the river, and although in Abyssinia was considered as Sudanese territory. I had to report against the position of the post on sanitary grounds as well as on the grounds that, if a position were selected further up-stream, as was done shortly afterwards, when Gambela was chosen (where General Gatacre is buried), communication between it and its markets would be possible for more than five months in the year, while that with Khartum would be about the same. The country round Itang and Ideni, a few miles further up-stream, where I went some distance inland, was at the time quite impassable for caravans. I did not pass a single spot where a night's halt could have been made. The country was inundated everywhere.

I left my steamer wooding at Ideni, and, accom-

panied by a couple of Anuaks, started at dawn for the foothills of Abyssinia, which one saw not so very far away. Of course, I combined pleasure with business. I made an abortive stalk at what I was told was a lion. It turned out to be a tree stump, but looked very life-like in the early morning. We then plodded on, generally up to our knees in water, and never completely out of it. Game tracks of elephants and giraffe were particularly treacherous, as they formed a line of pits. The country was fairly open, but, though one heard the noise of quantities of game splashing away, when they heard the awful din we were making through the water, we only caught very occasional and most tantalising glimpses of them. At long last we came on some giraffe. I determined to shoot one. In the first place, we wanted meat; in the second, this was Abyssinia; and in the last, I had no idea that they were, as a rule, so easy to shoot. I had stalked to well within what General Mahon calls the sportsman's maximum, *i.e.* 150 yards; indeed, I was almost within stone's-throw of them, when, turning round, I saw the Anuak to whom I had given my helmet had put it on. I was much more concerned in the future state of my hat than in the game. My signals to him to take my helmet off only brought him to my side; but, strange to say, the giraffe, who were on the move away from me, continued to graze on the flat-topped mimosa-bushes about. I continued my stalk, and was deciding which of two giraffe I should try for—one was big and light in colour, the other smaller but very dark—when the Anuak, unable

to contain himself any longer, and uncertain whether I saw the quarry, splashed over to me. In a trice the herd was off. I very foolishly followed. I heard here, as elsewhere, that if I had sat still the giraffe, which are very curious, would have come back in about half-an-hour to see what had frightened them. A stern chase is a long one. I do not mean that I introduced my bootmaker to the man who spoiled my shot, though, indeed, he doubly deserved it. I came upon them once, and finally gave them up and returned to the boat, on the way shooting two fair-sized tiang. Neither head, however, was as big as the ones I already had.

CHAPTER VII

The Anuaks—A native officer stalks a tiang—The power of “litterae-scriptae”—My crew—I am sent to explore the Pibor—My force and personnel—The Sudd—Elephants and giraffe—Villages on the banks—Cutting through the sudd.

WE stopped another day at Itang on our return. Sheikh Fagoi, the lame headman of that section of the Anuak tribe, again treated us to a dance. In the first one quite three hundred ladies took part. They were said to be all wives of his. After the dance they formed a large semicircle, and I had to pour beads into their hands.

The poor Anuaks are an unfortunate people. Till the trading-post was established they were continually being raided by the Abyssinians. They were, however, a feckless lot. To get beads and wire they would sell all their grain, and then, famine-stricken, require relief. As one of the horrors of the slave trade, Count Teleki told us that he saw in the vicinity of Lake Rudolf mothers selling their children for a few gewgaws. In appearance they are of the weedy riverain build. One who struck me as being particularly fine in physique, as he marched along the bank naked but for a short cloak made of the hide of a tiang, I measured and found his chest to be $31\frac{1}{2}$ inches round, while he stood nearly six feet. An effort was being made to

buy ivory and gold, but both were dear. The royalty on the former exacted by Menelik, the Negus Negasi (King of the Kings) of Abyssinia, is the tusk which first touches the ground as the elephant is killed.

Our journey back was not at all as arduous as the one up had been. Then the swift current and tortuous waterway had been our enemies. We were tired of towing our barge—the last resort *but one* when in difficulties. Now we raced back. To give some idea of the condition of the banks I will tell this anecdote. One of the native officers on board wished to shoot a tiang, of which there were many on either bank. As they invariably have some sentries posted on the five-foot-high anthills, it is possible to get a shot in spite of the very high grass. Well, this officer landed on the bank, which was quite dry. Two steps took him into water above his knees. “Oh, it is wet!” said he. His next few steps plunged him up to his neck. His rifle and red tarbush looked very ridiculous as he shouted, “Oh, it is very wet!” and decided that the joys of a shikari were not for him. Everywhere it was about the same. The actual bank seemed to have silted up to a few feet above the level of the water, but fell away at once. The country was a vast swamp, intersected by khors often out of one’s depth.

Litterae scriptae are of power even at home, more so here. I remember one day on this trip we saw a small procession moving along the bank. In front walked a man carrying in the cleft of a long bamboo an envelope. It contained a letter from the Mamur

at Itang, about a canoe stolen from the bearers. I was able to see to the case, and, having done so, told the complainants to go home. They insisted on getting the envelope back. They said that without it they would already have been murdered *en route* a dozen times. I wonder has it yet done its peregrinations. Not if it is not yet worn out.

At another place, a small square of moderately dry land in the swamp occupied by a couple of huts, our eyes were caught by another long bamboo, with also a letter at the end of it. It was from M'Millan, addressed "to any white man," saying that we were welcome to a stack of wood he had paid for but did not use.

The trip up the Baro, as the higher and more difficult reach of the Sobat is called, had shown me the sterling qualities of my crew. Of Sharples one need only say that he was a "white man"—one cannot say so of all, alas! The head raïs was a "dour" old fellow, who took a long time to learn what "must" meant, but when he did, threw himself heart and soul into the job. The second raïs was religious and anxious to please. The third was a wag. The sailors to a man were "gudas," than which one cannot use a more flattering, if untranslatable, Arabic word. I suppose a dictionary would say "Fine brave fellow." I had also five Egyptian gunners. Time and again I heartily endorsed Mahon Pasha's dictum. Finer men I never met. The only failure on board was my own cook, whom, if I could, I would have discharged earlier at Fashoda.

At Fashoda I got definite orders to explore the Pibor. My chief explained to me at length what madness and waste of time it was to send me up this river. Five attempts to penetrate its upper reaches had already proved abortive. My true employment was Inspector of Dinkas at Renk, where I had not been a fortnight, &c. As he had a lot of experience in sudd-cutting, I could not but be impressed, more especially as one report spoke of reaching a point where overhanging boughs interlaced across the river. The Mudir was most emphatic that I would be away for ten days, returning baffled, like my predecessors, after reaching the edge of a sudd-covered lake. At his suggestion, therefore, I supplied myself with about twenty days of flour and a couple of pots of jam from a Greek in the market. I had a few tins of meat, and out of his very meagre store my chief, with his usual generosity, gave me what he could. By rare good luck the crew had got two months' rations before starting for Itang, so were moderately well supplied.

As there was now no reason for delay, we started the day following my return. At Khor Atar, just south of the Sobat, we stopped to take in wood, and there I saw my first bush-buck.

Arrived at Nasser I organised my force, which consisted of: the gunboat *Abu Klea* and sandal (barge) for carrying wood; a small screw launch, the *Atbara*; a steel Hyslop sailing-boat.

Personnel: Mr. Sharples, the engineer-in-charge; 5 Egyptian gunners; 2 Anuaks (interpreters from

Nasser); 12 sailors (4 raises); 1 woman (cook to the sailors); 5 native servants (2 boys); 3 native engineers; 1 boy.

It was at Nasser that I picked up my interpreter. He was one of those boys who, like carrion crows and dogs, invariably attach themselves to soldiers for the sake of what they can pick up. He knew his own language, Anuak, and a smattering of Arabic and Nuer. His companion was a stowaway whom I did not discover till it was too late to get rid of him, and who, a runaway slave of the Nuers, and marked with their tribal mark—three horizontal weals on his forehead from ear to ear—was perhaps the saviour of the situation later on.

Not long after leaving Nasser we swung into the Pibor, which was known to the rais as the Yayo River. The lakes, which earlier cartographers had placed on either side of its mouth, and even named, were non-existent, for small ponds, some four acres in extent, did not deserve the big marks on the map. Navigation was easy; the current less strong than that of the Sobat. The well-defined banks were crowded with villages—Nuer on our left bank, and Anuak on the Abyssinian, or right bank. The latter were continually being raided both by Nuers and Abyssinians. At one village of theirs I was asked for the Anglo-Egyptian flags. To the native mind an empty envelope forms a mantle of protection which few dare pierce, but flags would be a patent of nobility. No chieftain of these parts would dare aught against any one under the protection of

the latter, however many "resolutions" he might pass over the dung fire in his village.

I saw numbers of spears made from the split shin-bones of giraffe, of the horns of various antelope, and Sharples had a couple made of small elephant tusks and of rhinoceros horn filed down to the necessary thickness. The ivory armlets were exceedingly fine, some an inch thick by three broad.

At Koratong a Nuer chieftainess asked for a passage, and got it for as far as she wished to go.

Near the mouth of the Akobo, whence I intended to make my start, I got out on the left bank of the Pibor, and found it untenanted by (visible) game and under several inches of water. From here to the mouth of the Agwei, a parallel stream to the Akobo, the waterway was about twenty-five yards broad, and near the former the left bank was quite ten feet above the water level, and covered by what appeared to be lulu-trees. The few natives we saw ran away, leaving craft and cargo. On our way back, however, they were very friendly.

At noon, leaving the Agwei River on our left, a few beats of the stern-wheel brought us into the sudd-covered lake of former reports. It appeared to be 600 by 1000 yards, bound by half-submerged bushes, and covered by *thin* sudd. The raïs, who had accompanied a previous expedition, now came to me and asked whether we should, as others had done, return. Allah had been kind, said he, to allow us to come so far with but one sudd barrier to negotiate. I sounded and found the water

to be about twenty feet deep, the current almost imperceptible. Favoured as we had been above our predecessors, it would have been rank folly to retire, so we advanced. We had barely gone fifty yards before the stern-wheel and rudders were choked with sudd, which had to be cut away with knives and axes, while the steam poundage, which had fallen to nothing, had to be raised. Another hundred yards brought us to a short winding stretch of clear water, and so we went on till at 4 P.M. we halted, having made about four miles. The sudd, as may be seen, did not by any means form a solid barrier. After the first two miles the banks had closed in till the bushes were about two hundred yards apart.

Every one was beat, so we decided to halt near a small bit of bank that showed above the water. I had foreseen that this would be necessary, so steam was up on the *Atbara*; when the *Abu Klea* halted I at once started off in the former to reconnoitre. We managed to get some distance by dint of hauling the launch over those bits of sudd through which we could not charge our way. A sailor would swim out with a rope, fasten it to a tree or bit of sudd, and we would then heave, keeping the sudd down below the bows till we were over.

We found that the waterway improved greatly, so put about, reaching the gunboat after dark. A deputation of the crew then waited on me to request that we should return. It was pointed out that they were paid to go anywhere, that they had over a month's provisions, and that at our present rate we could hope

to go at least 200 miles before we thought of turning back, and that I was astonished that men who had proved such "gudas" during the day should come and talk like this at night. It was lucky that we went on, for at noon next day we had practically left obstruction behind us for the time being. Every one was filled with the spirit of the adventure. Each bend of the river was virgin country. All were keen as mustard. I have noticed that with natives very little is needed to make them take a sporting interest in things. I have known them to beg that a camel ride should not be shortened, as otherwise it would not exceed previous records; to march over sixty miles in a day, after many averaging over thirty, in order not to appear laggards, "to march in with their bim-bashi," as they said; to quarrel for the doubtful privilege of riding half-broken horses barebacked nearly a hundred miles in a matter of hours. They are, as a rule, real sportsmen. On both banks was a belt of bush, in some places of unknown width, at others giving the large, almost treeless plain beyond a clear run to the river bank. Scattered heglig (*Balanites Ægyptica*) trees were seen on the left bank. At one bend of the river a mass of large creeper-covered trees (probably rubber) formed a superb picture I can still see.

We passed a herd of elephant who fled on hearing our syren, which we sounded to warn Sharples, who was on the bank improperly armed. In its flight it put up all sorts of game, waterbuck, hartebeest, giraffe, &c., whose heads we saw bobbing up and

down in the grass of the plain as they joined in the flight.

Except when on the move the only game we could see, as a rule, were giraffe. Herds of ten to forty were common. I fear I will be dubbed a dreamer, or worse, when I state that one day a herd, which numbered from 500 to 800, followed the gunboat so closely that we could distinguish the markings on their heads. They evidently took our yellow funnel for the neck of their Mahdi. This herd moved in quite a military formation. The thick mass in the centre was surrounded by advanced guard, flankers, &c. That it should have followed us is not extraordinary, for the giraffe is intensely curious. The numbers, no doubt, were made up by the amalgamation of lots of small herds we had passed.

My boy, an Omdurman-bred Dinka, thought, from their lolloping gait, that there must be a lot of thorns about, as they appeared to him all lame. Getting out to shoot was no pleasure. The river, which continued to be about twenty feet deep in the centre, was four feet deep at the sides for many yards inland, and, as far as Sharples or I penetrated, the country was always at least a few inches under water.

Further up thin sudd covered the river, leaving a waterway of about fifty yards, and two blocks of a heavier sort of sudd came floating past us. A bit later we came to a broad belt of it, which, fortunately, was already on the move, so we got through it without many hours' delay.

The bush on the banks was now interspersed with

larger trees and was very dense. A great commotion among the crew brought me from the quarter-deck, where, compass and field-book in hand, I was recording the course of the river. A fire had been sighted. On approaching the bank and getting out I found a lot of most primitive huts. Some of them had a sort of frame, three feet high, on which grass had been thrown; in others the supports were the lower branches of trees. I went to where the fires had been located, and found them burning under rude sort of couches with no covering from the weather, which, I forgot to say, was most inclement; we were seldom dry, for the roof of the gunboat leaked like a sieve. The couch was made of forked stakes driven to a height of about two or three feet in the ground, and on them were laid rough boughs. I shouted to the runaways, but presume frightened them still more. As I had no time to waste, I wrapped up a few beads in paper and left them on one of the couches. I wonder if the owner on his return thought the gunboat a beneficent genii.

This and other fishing villages are occupied by the people of the Agibba tribe, who state that they come here when the river dries up further south. I think, if true, that this does away with the supposition that the Pibor emerges from some great lake or is a loop of the Bahr el Jebel, though where is the sudd we passed formed? I saw no canoes here or elsewhere in the Agibba country, and no fishing-spears, though quantities of fishing-baskets, like our lobster-pots.

We were greatly cheered up by finding these traces



GUN CARRIER. (TO SHOW HEIGHT OF GRASS
DURING RAINS IN BAHR EL GHAZAL PROVINCE).



JUR SHEIKH ("SHULOW") WITH SWORD OF
HONOUR.

of inhabitants, for there has yet been no Prometheus in the lower creation. Thirty miles or so further on the river seemed to close in till a heavy belt of sudd barred our way. Beyond it the waterway tailed off into nothing. The left bank was high and dry, and on it grew a lot of so-called elephant-puzzle trees. These trees are like india-rubber : cutting is the only way to secure a branch, as bending or pulling is unavailing. Two courses were open to us. To try to ram past the barrier by the right bank, which was overflowed, or to cut through it. For several reasons I decided on the latter. It took us more than ten hours of the hardest work. As the river promised so badly in front, I had the launch practically carried over to clear water up-stream, and started off to see whether further advance was possible. With me were five men, including a gunner to work the Maxim gun, which I had transferred to the prow of the launch (the holes by which it was clamped to the deck may have puzzled the present owner of the *Atbara*), for the natives were evidently frightened, which is just as bad with such as being hostile.

We did not take long to get into a still better reach of river than had been our lot since the fishing village was passed. We had gone about six miles when in the dusk my lynx-eyed escort discovered some natives along the bank, from which we were separated by a broad belt of thin sudd. With my glasses I soon made out a lot of savages waving their spears and showing the palm of their hands at us as they crouched in the shadow of overhanging branches on the bank.

I found a narrow channel, and pushed the launch down it, and on landing sent, as is the custom in quasi-civilised Sudan, a couple of men to tell the sheikh that I had arrived, and that he might come to me. My messengers came back to say that they had found a deserted village a hundred yards inland. It was approached by a path running through high dura. I decided, to save time, to go to the village myself. Foolish though it was, it turned out well. To show the temperature in August in the Tropics, I should mention that I was wearing my military greatcoat, and welcomed the walk. I found a group of five hive-shaped huts (in the other parts of the Sudan the huts end in a point often adorned with horns, &c.). Not a living thing appeared, and we wisely did not enter the darkness of a hut in which we heard a slight noise. Instead I poured a lot of beads on the ground and returned to the launch, pushed out and got to the sudd barrier, which we crossed dry-foot to the steamer.

Elation, if not plenty, reigned supreme that night on the *Abu Klea*. A good river in front—inhabitants within hail.

Daybreak saw us at work on the sudd barrier, which five hours later was almost cut through. I then started off in the launch, as I thought it would frighten the natives less than the gunboat, which they probably had not yet seen. Before going further I must describe how a sudd bar is negotiated. If not too solid an easy part is selected and the steamer put at it once or twice at full speed. If the boat merely climbs on

top of the sudd and the stern-wheel beats frantically till every pound of steam is exhausted, one sees that other means must be employed. Every anchor is requisitioned, driven into the sudd wherever it appears likely to break, and, gathering all the hawsers, the steamer backs, takes the strain swinging backwards and forwards in its efforts till steam must again be "got up." Every now and then a hawser breaks or an anchor slips, or, better still, a large section of sudd comes away and is left to float away. Perhaps, however, in spite of heaving, advancing, backing, &c. &c., the sudd defeats the steamer. Then saws, axes, and spades are requisitioned. Trenches are dug in the tangled mass of vegetation, maybe a couple of men dive down and remain working under water for many seconds. Then again the steamer takes the strain and pulls out a section which follows what has gone before. At last the weight of the water pressing from behind makes short work of the last few yards of the belt.

There is another chapter to sudd-cutting which, D.G., I have not had to read through, though I once just lifted the leaf. It is when one is up-stream of the barrier, additions to which come down every hour. The awful experiences of Gessi and Marchand are too well known to need repetition. In 1909 some steamers took over three months getting down the Bahr el Ghazal.

CHAPTER VIII

We meet with a hostile reception from the Agibbas at Nyanabec—A very unpleasant conversation—The effect of a gun—The Agibbas—The dress and habits—On again.

AN hour or so brought me to Nyanabec, which I later discovered was the name of the village I had visited the night before.

My presents would, I felt sure, have shown that I was friendly, so I again sent a couple of men to invite the sheikh to come to me. They had not been gone half a minute before I saw them tearing back. As the Maxim gun was ready for action I was able to wait for their explanation, which was that they had advanced a little way by the main path and had then noticed that the high grass on either side of it was full of armed savages, who gave chase when my people began to retire. Such a lapse of routine—I had served only in semi-civilised Kordofan till now—appeared to me incredible. I waited for a rush if there was to be one, and as nothing happened, and the men would not go back, I decided to go myself. It was evident that the natives were merely frightened. I therefore moved up the path (at right angles to the one we had followed the night before), shouting out greetings in Arabic, which my interpreter, from fifty yards behind, trans-

lated into Nuer. After going two hundred yards or less, through grass about four feet high interspersed with small trees, I came to a clearing about fifty yards in diameter, at the far end of which was a group of twenty, mostly old men, all with foot drawn back and spear poised. The situation gave one furiously to think. I now saw the grass begin to swarm with men between me and the Maxim, so, laughing loudly and with my hands up, I advanced on the party in front. With a good deal of persuasion the Anuak was got to come up with a box of beads, which I now began to distribute, all after a momentary pause accepting them. Some I saw were wearing the beads I had left the night before. An interpreter appeared on their side, and by his help I discovered that a very old-looking man was the chief. I possessed myself of his hand, in spite of his swinging his spear, and found, as I filled it with beads, that he was trembling like a leaf.

Our conversation then proceeded in the following manner. I talked to my Arab servant in broken Arabic; he repeated the sense more or less to the Anuak, who translated what he understood of what was said to him into Nuer, and that in turn was translated into Agibba. The proceeding, with its corrections, was more cumbersome than it sounds.

After mutual answers to the query, Who are you? the Agibbas forthwith accused us of being slave-raiders. At this point there was a slight struggle, and my servant advised a retreat, as a young warrior had just been prevented using his spear by an elder. Then a few questions were asked, and the old sheikh begged

me to return to the launch, as he said he could not control the curiosity of the young men, who, in spite of the efforts of the elders, were crowding round. Nothing loath, I did so. In a few minutes the *Abu Klea* approached. I sent the launch to her with orders to remount the Maxim on the quarter-deck, load the nine-pounder with case, and take up a position covering the place of palaver, so that if anything happened we would go aloft in plenty of company.

When I went back to my friends, as I did at once, I found them more inclined to give me a hearing. The original party, some of whom were pushing back the youths by whacking the latter's shins with the hafts of their spears, now began a talk which lasted for three and a quarter hours.

When we got angry at being accused of slave-raiding, they quieted down for a bit ; then asked that the Nuers, for whom they seemed to have a great respect, should come out of the boat. Assured that there were none on board, they became very obstreperous, till the Anuak's companion, with his Nuer tribe-marks badly concealed under a cotton rag he had elected to tie round his forehead, convinced them that a big force of Nuers was in hiding.

There was another attempt on the part of one of them to end the conference with a spear thrust, and the sheikh, I am sure, would not have been so touched by my show of confidence in him, as I planted my chair in the midst of his people, had he known that I did so to place the muzzle of my revolver between his ribs.

At last a very unpleasant conversation ended in their ordering me to moor my boat on the opposite bank. I answered that I would do as I liked ; in the meantime we would cut wood (fuel for the steamer). As I saw that treachery was intended, I asked if they realised what our guns were. They evidently thought them very clumsy clubs, and jeered at my warning not to be afraid. To say that when I fired my rifle into a tree the result surprised me does not describe what happened. The whole of the elders fled, some falling in their haste. The grass around was suddenly alive with flying forms ; from 1000 to 2000 would not be exaggeration. Our laughter brought some of the headmen to a stand, and the old sheikh came back, took my hand in both of his, and said that his country was mine and my friends his. I sent word to the gunboat to unload and fire a round of blank out of the nine-pounder, which was done, and completed our triumph.

I read the sheikh a short lecture on the stupidity of thinking that we, who possessed such power, would dream of being unfriendly, and gave him and his people more presents.

This shows how important it is to impress the untutored savage by what he considers the supernatural. Count Teleki describes the virtues of rockets, and books of travel are full of the benefits of such trickery. One cannot but be astounded that leaders of other expeditions, holding the lives of many at the value of their knowledge, have failed to grasp this fact, or rather ignored it.

I returned to the gunboat, but found its occupants

most unwilling to leave it. Sharples and I had to muster and lead them out ourselves. We were just returning to have our luncheon when the whole party came pell-mell back. Some Agibbas, stalking for view, had frightened them. It was necessary for the two of us alternately to do sentry-go inland of them. Every one but two gunners in charge of the gun and Maxim was at work, even the boys. As it was necessary to keep steam up, the wood-cutting appeared an almost Augean task. That night we moored in mid-stream, and next morning at daybreak were at work again. The sheikh later on brought me the present of a fat-tailed sheep, and during a lull in the work the men bought heads of red dura, cones of native tobacco, and even shields, spears, and armlets from the Agibbas. All were anxious to hear the guns go off, and the old sheikh fired a shot into the river—his bravery being loudly applauded. I gave away some beads and wire, but found I had to persuade them to take some Shilluk spear-heads I had. The sheikh told me that if he did so, the head of the tribe would decapitate him. My presents were necessarily small. Officially I had been given nothing as such. All I had was what I had brought with me wherewith to buy my breakfast eggs for ten days, and those can be bought for very little.

I paid a return visit to the sheikh next day. When I reached the first group of houses, I found a body of men there quite evidently determined that I should go no further. I pretended not to notice this, and presently the sheikh turned up. New men had arrived,

among them a brother of the sheikh, who needed a lot of subduing. Their interpreter, a cocky, well-adorned stripling, with a wing of lustrous green hung round his neck, became rather offensive once. Fortunately a nice fellow turned up who also knew Nuer, and through him the sheikh begged me not to get angry, as how were we to know if our conversation, passing through so many mouths, was correctly interpreted. The sheikh was very curious to know all about us. He asked if my Arab servant were my brother; and when his position was described to him, he dived into the crowd, produced an old man, and said that the latter performed the same offices for him. I have never yet come across a native in his wild state who thought the complexion of the European extraordinary. Hideous—yes!

From what we could gather wherever we met the Agibbas, it was plain that they are a well-organised tribe under a strong-minded paramount chieftain; that they have a feud with the Nuers, whom they hold in great respect; that they appear to despise the Anuaks, who are a very inferior tribe, and it is through them they get the beads they have; that the Abyssinians have made their raids felt as far as this. In appearance they are quite unlike riverain negroids. They are much more like those of Dar Fertit; their stature, not at all uniform, averaging, I should say, 5 feet 7 inches.

The dress of a young man was as follows :—

His hair was arranged like an inverted soup-plate, the part over the forehead cut off. Across the fore-

head he wore a three-inch-deep band of small red beads (two bits of giraffe leather forming the ends above the ears and fastened behind, something like a German "Kaiserbinde"), with a one-inch wide line of white beads down the centre. One or two had a small patch of blue beads in the red, but said they meant nothing. From the centre of the under-lip, which was pierced, hung about eight inches of thin wire or chain with a bead at the end. The lobes of the ears were pierced with many rings. Round the neck a quantity of beads, and perhaps a bright wing of a bird hung round by a string of hair. On the arms, both above the elbow and at the wrist, were several old small ivory and rhinoceros horn armlets, and iron or brass wire bracelets. Under the armpit a small stool was carried, which also served as a head-rest. Round the waist some more beads, and just below the navel a bell. From the bell, like the cut-off tails of a morning coat, a small skin clear of hair and embroidered round the edge with an inch or two broad pattern. A circular knife round the wrist, a few small spears, each provided with a giraffe-leather sheath, and an oblong ($2\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet) shield of giraffe leather on a stick ornamented at the bottom end by a tuft of ostrich feathers, formed their equipment. A few had a couple of ostrich feathers stuck in their hair, and one had the skin of a young cheetah, or large tiger-cat, slung pelisse-wise over one shoulder. A very few wore the headman's badge of giraffe tails (see below).

The dress of the older men was somewhat different.

On their heads, the hair of which was not dressed, they wore a round bowl of felt adorned with two-inch rings of beads of various colours, mostly white, and some cowries. Just above the elbow was worn a large tuft of giraffe tails, the band round the arm being about four inches broad and thickly ornamented with cowrie shells. Their bell they mostly wore under their armpit. The sheikh was very simply dressed. His grey hair was frizzled out and about two inches long, and he was inclined to baldness. Except the giraffe-tail badge and bell he had few ornaments. Their method of carrying on conversation is very extraordinary and unlike anything I have ever met or read of, but indescribable. I would deem it incredible had I not seen it. During the whole trip I saw only one woman, and no children. The woman's nostrils were pierced with lots of small rings, as were her ears. The hair was short and not dressed. Around her loins she wore a long skin, the hair of which, with the exception of a three-inch border, had been scraped off. Through my glasses I could see that she was well built, and besides the above wore many iron and brass bracelets and anklets.

As I said before, they were of fair height. The hair, as one could see in the case of the older men, was woolly. They were not markedly prognathous. They flatly refused to have anything to do with carrying the wood into or even near the steamer, but their sprinting powers seemed quite fair. However, there are times when every one develops quite a turn of speed, and no doubt, in their case, the first bang of a gun was

one of them. The tracks on the banks told that they possessed a good number of cattle and sheep, and they all had fair-sized patches of dura (red) and tobacco, which, after the first, they were quite willing to trade in. The giraffe is their natural prey, but, as only the older men wear the tuft of tails, it is probable that the slaughter of them is not very great. It was strange that I neither saw nor heard any dogs, which usually are ubiquitous.

The houses were stoutly built—grass bee-hive tukles. They were in groups of five or six surrounded by cultivation.

They seemed quite ignorant of weaving. I saw nothing resembling cloth, and the few handkerchiefs and bits of calico my men traded in were looked on with awe. Later on, when we stopped to wood, one man was very desirous to buy my trousers. He circled round me at about fifty yards' distance, offering his shield, spears, and ornaments, and by pantomime inviting me to disrobe. What they lacked in weaving they made up in leather, which was very well worked and nicely embroidered in a scroll pattern. The rings of beads on the felt hats and the forehead band were most regularly and carefully finished. They had the ordinary Sudanese tobacco, which they smoked out of a clay bowl. Their medical arrangements seemed to consist of phlebotomy.

It was interesting to note that their ivory and rhinoceros-horn bracelets were carved—the former either rounded or brought to a ridge in the centre; the latter thin and serrated. Their spears were quite

evidently home-made and of all shapes, but small ; the Baggara or Shilluk shapes no doubt requiring too much iron. Unlike their neighbours the Nuers, they seemed to have no tribal marks cicatrised on face or body, nor had they done anything to their teeth, like the Dinkas, as far as I remember. It was amusing to notice them squatting behind the protection (*sic*) of their shields.

Sharples secured a very interesting dancing spear. It was about three feet long with a three-inch-long head. The haft was covered by strips of leather and small (half-inch) bells.

Every one carried his wooden pillow under his arm-pit. He used it as a seat. In a word, most of their things might have come from the Bahr el Ghazal.

In spite of the assurances of the Agibbas that the river ran dry, &c., a few miles further on, we steamed south. We passed quite a lot of villages and patches of cultivation (red dura). I tried to get up places that looked like tributaries, but found them to be merely backwaters, with one exception, where there was a strong current. It was quite small and overgrown by trees. We had not gone far before the bush closed upon the river. Almost due south we caught sight of a hill which formed a grand landmark for us. Presently the waterway became so narrow and tortuous that we had to tow the sandal, as otherwise we could make no headway. Towards evening things became so bad that I took the *Atbara* and tried to reconnoitre. A few miles up we found the river sudded up. Late into the night we worked in the light of a full

moon, but had at last to give in. The depth was still eighteen to twenty feet, however, in mid-stream, while the banks, which we steamed over for many yards inland in search of a passage, were four feet under water. A *screw* launch is almost useless in grass, which at once winds itself round the propellers. We had still one more shot in our locker; that was to leave the sandal (barge) behind. I removed everything I could from it, fastened friction tubes to all bits of iron, &c., and steamed off next morning. On our return I found the barge intact, save that two of the tubes had exploded, showing that it had been visited and left as uncanny.

The gunboat, of three feet draught, having shed half its bulk, did not find the circumnavigation of the sudd a terrible task. We could just pass, breaking the branches on both sides of the waterway when back in the stream. After a bit we ran under a high wall of dense foliage, and soon found ourselves again in a magnificent river eighty yards broad. Here the water appeared whitish, no doubt owing to a heavy storm. I do not think we passed a branch stream unawares. The trees, too, changed from the large kuk, nebbuk, &c., to talh.

We had seen no natives by the time we halted, *i.e.* at 11 P.M. I slept, but my crew did not, for shortly after that time, I was told, the river, twenty yards in, began to swarm with natives shaking their spears as they stood waist-deep in water. The depth of water between us (nine feet), and the energetic policing of the elders, appeared to be the reason that they came

no nearer ; neither did they make "country war," as the usual shouting is called.

We soon next day came on villages, and at one I halted. The Agibbas had formed a large, dense semicircle at the far side of a clearing a hundred yards or so across. I got out to speak to them, but, although they answered my questions, their attitude was so hostile that I did not get beyond half-way, when I had my chair put down. My Anuak interpreter presently bolted back to the boat, and continued his functions from there. After a bit I followed more leisurely. The Agibbas certainly looked very fine, all uniformly coifed and armed.

The river brought us within two miles of the hill we had seen. It was called Atin. Beyond it our progress was a little impeded by sudd, but the moon was a good friend, so we steamed till well into the night, and halted within sound of lowing cattle.

The following day we sighted another hill, called Lokichar. The river here broadened to a lake about fifteen hundred yards in diameter. To the north and west was a vast treeless plain, to the south slightly rising ground. I regretfully admit that my exploration of the lake was cursory. At the time I had but a small quantity of coal for an emergency, practically no wood, and the bushes around were useless for fuel. Added to this was my inexperience, and the fact—which, however, would have weighed little with us—that we were practically out of European food.

To the west was a waterway, where the depth of the stream abruptly changed from eighteen to eleven feet.

It barely deserves the name, for it was merely a strip of light green grass in a plain of brown. I have always admired Sharples for his plunge into the plain, for his would have been the explanation to make had we piled the *Abu Klea* high and dry on it. We backed our luck, short of fuel as we were, trusting that we should not be obliged to pole the steamer back. We continually had to clear the stern-wheel of tangled grasses, and at one halt I rigged up a ladder on the quarter-deck to see what lay before us. Should nothing be sighted we should have to turn back and, on the coal that remained, get as near the last past bushes as possible. I descried a small wood, which showed at first as a slight haze. Eureka! we have found what we were looking for, so there was now no talk of turning. We moved into our position at the wood on our last pound of steam, having for an hour before helped the steamer along by poling. This just shows what splendid material I had on board. The wood, 200 by 200 yards, stood solitary on the plain. It was composed of tall trees, six to nine inches in diameter, and waist deep in water.

CHAPTER IX

We leave the gunboat and proceed in the Hyslop boat—And then on foot—A lucky precaution—Homeward bound—A crocodile—The sudd again—We meet a “relief party”—My difficulties—Renk—I hunt crocodiles and hippos in an American canoe—A crocodile story—Rudeness of the natives—The need of pomp and ceremony—The administration of the Dinka country—The Dinkas—I leave for the “front”—The friends I left behind me.

“BEGGARS cannot be choosers.” Out we waded. Sharples took one relief, I the other. The Egyptian gunners (especially) and sailors worked at the wood-cutting like heroes. We were three days at it that time, from dawn to dark, and the same time on our return journey, but strange to say no one seemed to suffer any ill effects.

I never saw so many birds in one place, if I except gulls over a shoal of fish in shallow water. When they rose from the trees they darkened the air. They were large and black, the size of large ducks. There were, too, numbers of egrets, and some guinea-fowl. The trees were covered with nests containing eggs, whose flavour was so strong that one could scarcely swallow them, even made up as an omelette and eaten in the dark.

We saw a herd of twenty giraffe as we steamed in, about a mile from the halting-place. On the other side of the wood we came upon a dry patch,

fifty yards in diameter, on which were half a dozen gazelle, of which I got two before they took to the water. A sailor later got an animal like a badger in the same place.

We got only a few miles further with the steamboat, which so often grounded that I sent her back to the wood. I myself, with my servant and three others, in the Hyslop boat, began to pole my way to where I had made out a dense forest that looked like the bordure of a river.

We poled till evening, making fair headway. What with the heavy dew and bitter cold we were poling by compass long before sunrise, but at about 9 A.M. the thick grass and lack of depth of water rendered that form of progress no longer possible. I climbed the mast, made sure of the bearing of my wood, and, getting out, prepared to walk to it. But before doing so I fixed one of my sheets to the top of the mast—a providential precaution.

The grass was over our heads. I sat down several times to rest. The driest place I did so was six inches deep in water; in another it was up to my chin. At last the wood was reached. It was composed of huge heglig trees, three feet or more in diameter, standing in water eighteen inches deep. To rest we climbed into the first forks. Tired as we were we could not halt long. I marked the tree by cutting seven notches on three sides of it with an axe, and started back. My men lost the way, but did not confess it till just before sunset. I at once climbed to the top of a small mimosa, ignoring

the thorns, as we had found climbing on each others shoulders unavailing, and with my glasses closely scanned the horizon. At last, thirty degrees from the direction we were following, I caught a glimpse of white. The evening breeze had bellied out my sheet. We reached the boat in the darkness by the aid of my compass, to which alone I now trusted, and were positively dragged in by the man left behind. A tot of whisky dosed with quinine was taken all round in spite of any protest.

We started back next morning, and, having a favouring breeze, were able to get the sail to help our poling. We reached the steamer on the evening of the third day after leaving it.

The next day, having completed wooding, we began our return journey. The night, however, had been marked by a most awful storm. Every movable thing on deck was carried away ; most of them, however, we retrieved floating around in the morning. The steamer broke from her moorings, and was driven to within a yard or so of the wood. This storm, in spite of the awe-inspiring thunder and lightning, blew us good, for the river rose three feet at Nyanabec, and by the iron survey standard at the mouth of the Akobo we found that it had risen the same amount there. Our return journey was therefore greatly facilitated.

We made the circuit of the lake which we had left on entering the plain, but found no other outlet. At J. Atin we stopped to wood. The natives were quite friendly, although once or twice there was a small fracas, as, for instance, when an Agibba attacked a

gunner with his wrist knife—which he afterwards sold him.

In order not to allow myself to be prevented going to the top of the hill, I started for it in the darkness before dawn, accompanied by three men. The hill was a double peak of black marked red granite, rather handsome when polished. From the top I had a grand view of the country which, except for the belt of trees either side of the river, appeared to be a vast open plain. On my return I found a group of excited Agibbas at the foot of the hill. I made great play with my glasses, &c., while the interpreter managed to speak to them. A fine looking youth was introduced as the head sheikh's son. He told me that the Agibbas ranged to the hills of Abyssinia (fourteen days' journey, he said !?). There is little doubt that they are the people Major H. H. A. Austin, R.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., came across in 1901 in his Sobat to Mombasa journey. He found them shy but friendly, and coifed as I have described.

As we moved down-stream the natives often ran along the banks waving their spears and shouting—I think for the beads and wire I occasionally showered out. At Nyanabec, however, I found the place deserted. For "Auld Lang Syne" I left a box of beads on the path near the village, although it looked as though we were still suspected to be slave raiders.

Not far from the "sudd covered lake" a terrible wind storm drove us into the right bank. We were unable to extricate ourselves from the sudd for over an hour owing to it.

By the time we reached the mouth of 'the Agwei we were so elated that I put off in the *Atbara* to explore a bit of that river, while the *Abu Klea* went on and "wooded."

I little expected to find it a fine river running almost all the time between high banks, and about fifty yards broad by eighteen feet deep. We had not gone far before we came to a solid belt of sudd. As the left bank was flooded we managed to bring the launch, through a W-shaped course, up-stream of the belt. As the river promised so well, and we had come out without provisions, we returned to the gunboat, which we again left at dawn next day.

Again we passed the first belt of sudd. After steaming a good way, passing *en route* a couple of big floating sudd islands, we came to another belt. The right bank here was overflowed, but so slightly that we had to get out and lift the launch, to a great extent, and keep pushing her through the sudd till the water was up to our shoulders. Three miles further on was another belt which took us only an hour and a quarter to pass.

The banks were often as much as nine feet above us. In one place a huge gemeiza tree overhung the river. In another bushes grew close to the water. They were alive with birds, mostly egrets. I shot one with my rifle, and the sailor, a youth on board, dived over to get it. There were a few yards of thin sudd between us and it. He had just stretched out to grasp the bird when he disappeared; a crocodile had seized him! I emptied my magazine either side

of the place, and was most relieved, as I finished, to see his head and hear his cry of "Ya Saïd !" as he, a magnificent swimmer, floundered on the surface like a beginner. I got him on board, and found his thigh pierced with several deep holes. I went on after this, but it was ludicrous to see the precautions of the raïs when he had to go overboard to clear the screw of sudd.

At last we came to a belt of sudd between solid banks, nine feet above water level. Further advance was impossible—would almost have been so in the *Abu Klea*. Just before we reached this spot I landed within fifty yards of a small herd of giraffe which, after a first look, continued their love-making among the old, and gambolling among the young.

I think the Agwei will turn out to be one of the Ruzi's mentioned by the explorers Captain Welby and Major Austin. When I stopped, it ran in a plain with a few tiny bushes sparsely scattered along the banks. On the horizon were large trees, probably gemeiza. It was eighteen feet deep.

We turned about at sunset. The rain, hitherto almost continuous, had stopped, so we determined to go all night. We dashed past the side (right bank) of the last belt passed. The next one, which had caused us so much trouble before, almost stopped us. Every one, even the engineer, who left his engines throbbing madly, seized a pole, and after a moment's suspense the launch slid into deep water. At midnight we reached the first belt. But, alas, our channel was blocked by the sudd we had seen floating down.

When we towed away a piece the current brought down another. The river was too deep to pole, and all being afraid of crocodiles, we had to take turns overboard at clearing the screw by the light of a lantern, *i.e.* the raïs and myself, as the interpreter and engineer could not swim. When we did get to the passage into the stream below we found that the water had pressed the barrier down on it so that it was almost closed up. It was dawn, *i.e.* five hours later, when we got through, and the evening of the third day from leaving it when we rejoined the gunboat. A sudd barrier had formed on our way down across the Pibor River. One morning we found ourselves steaming up-stream of one of the tributaries not far from Nasser, having missed the way during the night, and had to turn back. At Nasser we bought some sugar, rice, and native flour, having been out of them for fourteen days, owing to the stupidity of starting unprovided, and also to the dishonesty of my cook. The Anuaks of Obo (the village near the Agwei, where the *Abu Klea* wooded), who became very friendly, told us that the Agwei is the common channel of two streams, one of which rises in the hills, the other in the same plains as the Pibor, of which it "might" be a loop. The former is inhabited by Anuaks, the latter by Agibbas.

At Nasser I was visited by the sheikh of Bang, an old Nuer, who came to ask whether he was not to accompany me in my projected (*sic*) attack on the Agibbas, as his people were all ready. I sent him away very disappointed. When I paid the interpreter,

I left him being pursued by his sheikh like the bird with a crumb is by his pals.

Another attempt was made to locate the river from the vicinity of Bor on the Bahr el Jebel. The party sent out met with resistance, and its commander did not feel justified in going on.

My theories on the course of these rivers are, I admit, worthless. Yet here they are.

Where does the heavy sudd come from that we met? That on the sides of the waterways appeared composed of quite different plants to it. Sir R. Wingate, the Sirdar, thought at that time that the Pibor was, like the Zeraf, a loop of the Nile. I incline to the belief that it has its own swampy sources fed from the Uganda highlands.

The northern branch of the Agwei should be the Ruzi, and the southern one, which is the more likely to exist of the two, must rise or pass through some large sudd-growing swamp.

Soon after leaving Nasser we came upon the Governor on his gunboat bringing up a relief party to succour us, as he concluded that we were entangled at the mouth of the "sudd-covered lake." He could scarcely believe the map and report I showed him. Although, had things been done properly, I would have lost a very interesting experience, I cannot but animadvert on the preparations for what might have been an important expedition. It is true that I made a rough sketch. But not only was I hurried off without food, but I was given no books describing the vicinity in which I was to work, not even the

reports of previous explorers, and no interpreter but what I could get myself, 100 miles north of where I might want him! Neither was I given a single present with which to conciliate the sheikhs and establish such relations that would have rendered approach by other routes easy. This expedition must have cost the Sudan Government several hundred pounds.

On this trip I had to shoot a giraffe, when all our meat on board was done. It was poor sport, though I must say that this fellow gave me a long stalk, probably owing to the length of the grass, 4 feet (not as long, it will be remarked, as near the Sobat). The smell of the skin, which I kept, remained hanging to the boat for weeks.

I found when I reached Fashoda that I had just missed the mail-boat for the north, so was kept for ten days moving up and down the river, unable to leave the steamer, which was carrying wood to the places where building operations, &c., were to be started at the end of the rains. In this way I found myself a good way down the Bahr el Zeraf, which appeared to be a fine stream.

When I at last got back to Renk, it was to the same existence—fighting mosquitoes, and no work to do.

The people about were so-called “refugees”—the riff-raff of Omdurman—who were being given, in stages, a free passage back to the districts whence, as children, they had been carried off by the slave-traders. One day a couple of Shilluks arrived in a

dug-out canoe. They were hippo-hunting, but would not take on the school of them opposite the station, much as I wanted to take part in such a hunt. Their procedure is this. They allow their canoe (which is really a hollowed-out log) to float into a school of hippos, and then stab the first one they can reach. The head of the harpoon comes away from the haft, but has a rope twenty feet long, with a piece of ambatch (12 by 18 inches) at the end, fastened to it. This float betrays the wounded animal, who is followed and speared till he dies.

The ambatch is also, I may say, chiefly used to make rafts, which one sees everywhere on and along the river, often being carried on the head of the owner. In a day or so I was visited by the chief inspector of the province. He had been a predecessor of mine at Renk, so knew much about the place, and was able to tell me a good deal about Dinka customs and about the Selim Baggara. The latter hunt the buffalo down with spears on horses. A very sporting way.

He brought with him an American galvanised iron canoe, which I borrowed in order to attack the school of hippos I have already mentioned. None appeared however, and on my return I was spurting along, when suddenly the end of the canoe shot into the air, and I was almost precipitated into the water. I seized my rifle and fired at a crocodile's head which appeared some ten yards off. I then rowed in, and found on the bottom of the canoe a couple of deep dents, eighteen inches or so apart, which tends to

PIBOR RIVER

From a Prismatic Compass Sketch
by
LIEUT. D. COMYN. Black Watch.
1904

Scale 1:1,750,000 or 1 inch = 28 stat. miles
10 0 10 20 30 40
20 - Depths in feet

Giraffe and
Elephant

To N. banks 100-300 yds. apart, to S. 100-200 yds.

North of this point the bush is about 1 mile broad
on either bank; no big trees; to the south the bush
averages 1 mile on either bank; plenty of timber.

Depth of river at Nyanabek on journey up was
21 ft., it rose 3 ft. in 7 days after heavy storms.

Pibor R. Anuak name (S. of Agwei R.) Nyunwack.
Nuer name Kang. Agibba name Gautila. Average
current 5 miles per hour, waterway 30 yds. wide.
depth 20 ft.

J. Lokichar

Open Plain

J. Atin

Aleloth

Melamoth

20 Manyobel

Limit of bush,
river enters plain

Pibor R.

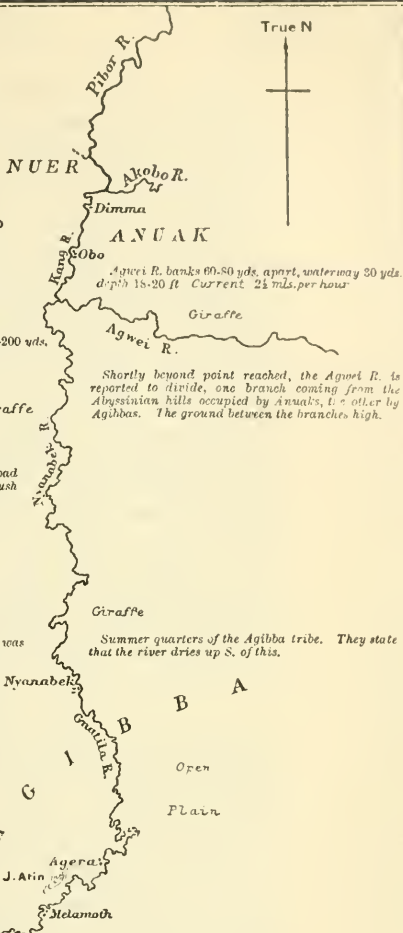
Scattered dwarf hashab

Plain under water

Furthest point reached by gunboat.

Furthest point reached by Hestlop boat.

Forest
Water $\frac{3}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet deep.



show that, when fighting, crocodiles must attack each other's stomachs. I at once went out again, but he would not show fight that evening. Next morning when I rowed out we saw him coming at me from the opposite bank for all he was worth. He evidently thought the slate-coloured boat a rival on his pitch. Then, and on several other occasions, I had shots at him, but failed to hit him. I think I got him at last by tying up a sheep. He had eaten a woman, badly mauled a sailor, and one story about him appears almost incredible. The station gyassa was being poled back to its mooring one day when the pole on which a sailor was leaning over the water was snapped from under him, and the crocodile made an effort to grab the falling man, who was just saved by the strength of his drawers' string, which the woman cook on board managed to catch as he was going overboard.

According to native lore the reason that one so seldom retrieves a crocodile is this : that, if wounded, it will float with the stream till it recovers (this accounts for the spasmodic appearance of crocodiles far north). When it feels about to die it crawls on land. They also maintain that crocodiles and serpents come from the same eggs (*sic*). If the young go inland the legs drop off, and they become the latter. If they go towards the river they become the former.

The chief inspector sent word to the surrounding headmen to meet him at a certain place. A few sent excuses, and the remainder took no notice of

the summons. When we arrived at the rendezvous no one appeared to greet us, though a good many of the inhabitants of the village passed us. At length I had to water our horses, and then, perhaps an hour after our arrival, the headman turned up. Accustomed to the almost exaggerated politeness of the Arab, I was indeed surprised. I may add that in no other province in the Sudan in which I have been was such rudeness the rule, or even the exception.

My opinion, which is that of most men of experience, is that it is folly, and prejudicial to the forwarding of peaceful administration, to parade a savage country in a mean manner. In Town one wears a top-hat in deference to custom. In these countries one should have an imposing escort, *i.e.* as large as that which will accompany any sheikh who comes to pay his respects. March with it? No. One would get no shooting, and it would appear to be a bodyguard, which is the last thing to be desired. But in camp and in paying complimentary visits it should always be present.

En route I noticed that a lot of the long grass was tied in a knot near villages. From the police-sergeant, who had become my very good friend, we heard that this custom and, when the grass was burned, that of putting a stone in the fork of a tree, was to ensure the finding of meat and drink at the end of the journey, which also was to be helped to a speedy end. This superstition is very widespread in Equatorial Africa.

This chief inspector had also had a very mortifying

experience in Abyssinia. Sent up to negotiate with Ras Tessema Nado of Goré about the post at Itang, he was treated in an outrageous manner by the Ras. Kept running to and fro from the audience chamber, he was at last permitted to approach. He would have liked to mark his disapproval of the way that he was treated by returning, but dared not do so, for had his mission proved futile, his return in a huff would have been put down to want of tact. I may add that here, too, he travelled perforce as meanly as a Greek trader. The present he was given for the Ras was a three-guinea Winchester rifle. It was received in withering silence. The Ras, however, asked him to get him, on payment, some ammunition; and to his surprise and, considering what had already passed, his mortification, showed him a stand of arms that would have made the mouth of the best-equipped Nimrod water. I wonder what happened to the Winchester?

He also told me that on his way to Goré he had passed a Swiss who had been induced to come out to reorganise Menelik's army. He was brought well inland and left there dependant for his food on the charity of a local sheikh, and unable to go either forward or backward.

I heard a great deal about Abyssinia, as it was proposed to send me there to negotiate a real treaty with this Ras, and I had just got my things together when I received a wire to say that I was transferred to the Bahr el Ghazal province, where an expedition was just in course of preparation.

This sketch, hurried as it is, of a very short period of administration in the Upper Nile province would be incomplete were I to omit some mention of the different methods employed in dealing with Dinkas on the right bank, and with Shilluks eight hundred yards further west, on the left bank of the Nile.

The Marchand expedition had left on record that both the Dinkas of the Bahr el Ghazal and the Shilluks, being of one stock, were very warlike, and it were best not to interfere with them. The chief inspector (who had gone about a great deal in the province) did not at all agree with his chief (who had remained either at headquarters or in his steamboat on the rivers) in the way that the Dinkas in the Upper Nile were taxed, and administered to the fullest extent, while the Shilluks were left to their paramount chief. Nominally, of course, the latter paid tribute ; but, like that of Darfur, most of it, if not all, found its way back to them as presents, besides being infinitesimal when compared to the richness and number of the population.

I was in touch with them only a very short time, but long enough to see that the governor was Shillukophile, just as the chief inspector was Selimphobe.

To the casual wayfarer the Dinkas of this province are much more civilised and cleanly, though poorer, than the Shilluks, whom one seldom sees without a covering of ashes and filth. The Dinkas, too, use the mother-of-pearl shell of a sort of mussel from the Nile as a spoon, instead of their fingers. In appearance the Dinkas, Shilluks, and Dinkas and Jurs of the Bahr el Ghazal are very alike. They all knock

out their lower incisors. They are real swamp negroids. I had once a rather amusing argument with a man who had done a shooting trip near Shambei, on the Bahr el Jebel, where I understand the Jur Bei live, who are a squat, copper-coloured people, whereas the true Jur, whom I administered for a year, are long, thin, and very dark. He thought he clinched his argument by saying, "Why, I wrote a little brochure on the tribes of the Bahr el Ghazal, and it was accepted by a magazine." I wonder was it the *Wide World*.

As I had not spent quite fourteen days, or three weeks all told, in my district, I may be forgiven for being mad with delight on hearing that I was leaving, as I supposed, for the "front." The order came about 4 P.M. The steamer would be ready to take me off at 6 A.M. next morning. I made a point of being ready on the landing-place, surrounded by my kit, in time. When I passed again I saw the little sasaban plantation I had made running down to the landing-place had grown from six inches to ten feet! The lemonry behind the house was doing well, and the khor near the house had been dredged of sudd, and hence the awful mosquito plague, the main breeding-ground being gone, was much lessened. I left some great pals behind me. The old shawish of the police had told me many a story of the E. A. from times long before to the British occupation. The policeman, gardener, and I had struggled together under the weight of trees when transplanting them. The Mamur was a very good, and, like all native officers, pleasant

subordinate. Up the river at Melut was Ahmed Eff. Dash, the telegraph clerk, black as your hat, and speaking perfect English, always first to board a steamer with a copy of the latest Reuter's telegrams. The Mamur of Taufikia, a capable officer and great gardener, who later served under me in the Halfa Province, and many others. It is extraordinary how the native, be he of any race, seems to find the soft place in one's heart, and ensconce himself there.

CHAPTER X

Game *en route*—Serut flies—Lake Fell and mosquitoes—Godelpus Island
—Up the river—Two narrow escapes—Wau—Preparing for the Sirdar
—Cannibal Sultans—The Sirdar arrives—The levee—A native dance—
I fear blackwater fever—Two elephant hunts—A buffalo—The African
dawn—I reach Dem Zubeir—My two subordinates,

AT Fashoda we learned that Lake No would probably be rendered unenterable owing to the sudd. Fortunately by the time we reached it the wind had started blowing from the north-east, so that we found a perfectly clear waterway in front of us. This was fortunate, as the Sirdar's visit to the Bahr el Ghazal depended on our report to a great extent, for a man in his position could not afford to lose several days, perhaps months, locked up in a sudd block.

We saw any amount of game *en route*. Elephants and all sorts of antelopes, including Mrs. Gray Kob (inaccessible), but our instructions being to hurry we could not go after them much. Of birds the rarest seen were the baliniceps-rex, of which we passed five or six. A lion yawning on an ant-heap, and surrounded by countless white-eared cob, tempted our fire, but he disappeared in the long grass when he saw where it came from. We were almost driven mad by serut flies, which infest these rivers. They are about an inch long, and like an exaggerated horse

fly. They fly and alight quite noiselessly, generally on one's shoulder, elbow, or knee, and the first warning one has of their presence is a vicious stab, like that of a darning needle, from their proboscis. Sometimes there ensues a large swelling and mortification, but, as a rule, the irritation is not lasting. He is not very hard to chase down with a towel, but alas, generally has a pal who lands on and stabs your shoulder just as you have correctly measured the distance for your blow. I am sure the recording angel must sympathetically turn his deaf ear your way when you say the things you feel. Poor animals suffer terribly from them.

At Lake Fell (Ambadie as it was then called) I had to visit the transport officer on his steamer. It was night when I found him "tied up" to a bank of the Jur. The mosquitoes on his stationary steamer were so voracious that I had to ask for a copy of the *Weekly (Daily) Graphic* to sit on.

At Meshra er Rek a fellow-passenger and I transferred ourselves to the screw steamer *Nigma el Nubia*, which later I found used as the ferryboat between Khartum and Omdurman. She had been a deep-sea yacht; her engines were bad, and, for so rapid and tortuous a stream as the Jur, she was useless. We half dragged her to Godelpus Island, and very fortunately a little higher up were able to commandeer a gunboat coming down in which to continue our journey.

Godelpus Island, sometimes known as Geziret el Bolis (Police Island), is an artificially raised platform

about 100 yards square, on which are built a few straw huts, and a lot of timber is stacked as fuel. By its first name hangs a tale. When that heroic officer, the late Commander Fell, R.N., was engaged in cutting a channel through the vast sudd swamp to the main river of the Jur, the loosened sudd floating away formed a barrier past which no one up or down stream could get. Provisions were exhausted, and Fell said to his companion, "If a steamer with supplies does not reach us soon, God help us!" It did force its way, and the expression was perpetuated in the name.

The island, when I knew it, was situated in the middle of a vast swamp, not very deep, and with scattered villages, the inhabitants of which fish and hunt the rare situtunga.

Once on the steamer we had very little poling or hauling to do. Before long we found ourselves in a really fine river with firm banks studded with trees. The country was park-like. In lieu of deer one saw giraffes everywhere, and occasionally small herds of antelope could be seen drinking their fill on some sandbank—a scene that required the pencil of a Landseer to depict.

Two incidents on this trip nearly ended my career. When the steamer was "wooding" at one of the stations on the Jur, I went out to shoot. As I might come across dangerous game (elephant, lion, or buffalo), I gave my .500 to a soldier, who posed as a shikari, to carry. I had not been walking many minutes when a bullet whizzed past my head, which was enveloped

in the gas of the explosion. The idiot of a man had been toying with the triggers. In spite of a problematical emergency, I took out the cartridges to guard against almost certain death by misadventure. The shot, unfortunately, started a magnificent waterbuck, which took to the water, and crossed a khor just in front of me. The noble picture fascinated me. Hesitating half-way up the bank, his muzzle in the air, ears cocked, the splendid horns thrown back, he scented danger, but hesitated in which direction to flee.

The day following this adventure, being well in hand with time, we got out to shoot. As I was shooting up-stream, I arranged to be picked up by the steamer as it continued its journey. When I saw it coming I prepared to do what I had often done before. I handed my rifle to a man on board, and jumped from the bank on to the moving steamer. Alas, my feet went from under me, and my next sensation was trying to swim against the current while the steamer was passing over me. A bad swimmer at the best of times, I had to make up my mind whether to risk being knocked on the head by the paddle of the stern wheel, so I turned over, and with my nails seized the edge of the iron plates of the bottom of the steamer. Of course there was the danger of the river shallowing, and being pressed into the mud. I was reaching for the plate above when I found myself seized by a dozen hands and more, and brought to and held above the surface, feeling very indignant at the unceremoniousness of

my seizure, for I could not move a limb. I do not think that it was till afterwards that I fully realised my marvellous escape.

The much-abused headquarters, Wau, proved on reaching it a most picturesque spot. Before there was any chance of my going there it had been described to me as a hideous swamp. The describer said that he had to keep a dry suit in the mess as he was compelled to wade there from his own house. This is the measure of some travellers' yarns !

The present Wau is the Fort Desaix of the Marchand expedition—that known to Gessi was further south. It is built on the side of a low and beautifully-wooded hill on the left bank of the Jur or Such. On the right bank of the river is an open plain a mile or so wide, which in very rainy years is swampy. The dwellings were native, or adaptations of native huts.

As I later became inspector of the district, I will not dwell on my first sojourn there.

The place was in a turmoil, "whitewashing the sepulchre" for the visit of the Sirdar. Every one had a job, and all worked with a will—the main thing. In mess the chief subject of conversation was the coming "tagrida" (expedition) to the south, and I was pretty disgusted to hear that I was to go to the western district where there was small chance of fighting—as it turned out there was none in the expedition, as the one volley of about twenty rounds, which killed the cannibal Sultan as he hid with a few wives in a bush, can scarcely be considered such.

It was the rule that the names of the principal

Sultans (cannibals) and places should be mentioned only by their initials, *e.g.* we talked of Tambera and Rikta as T. and R., so that it would not get about that we bothered about the matter at all. As a matter of fact, the situation had caused much alarm and trouble before my arrival. Tambera, the principal Sultan, who had seen the French come and go, wished to entice us down to him in order to hand us over to his relative Yambio, against whom the expedition was primarily directed. To this end he established friendly relations with us, and sent a sheikh, Wando, to spy on us. Our preparations, the arrival of well-armed troops, stores, &c., alarmed the latter, who realised that his people must be defeated. He, therefore, to curry favour with the strong side, betrayed Tambera's plans. Tambera realised, of course, who had done so, and got possession of Wando, but a British officer who was sent down to the former's village managed to save him from emasculation and mutilation, though he was thrown into a deep pit. Later he was brought to the surface, and, with a block of wood fastened to his foot, made sport for the Sultan till he managed to escape again. Our precautions for allaying alarm were not as silly as they might appear. One night a native officer, having imbibed not wisely but too well, fired his rifle in the night—at a hippo, he said. Every one poured into the forts. I remember the sheikha or head-woman was a very tall old Dinka, dressed like a man, and carried a long spear.

One morning I was in the middle of my work when a breathless native came to tell me that steamers were

approaching. The Sirdar had arrived two days before scheduled time. However—perhaps owing to the state of readiness we were in—when the second steamer disgorged the Governor-General, a guard of honour was in its place, and all ready for his reception. One thing in his visit stands out in my mind, and that is the wonderful physical endurance of his Excellency himself.

That evening the inspecting party dined with us, and many flattering speeches were made. What pleased every one most, however, was the news that the Royal Geographical Society had sanctioned the name of Fell being given to the lake near which he had done such splendid work—Lake Ambadie.

The following day at daybreak the visiting sheikhs and their retainers were busy putting the finishing touches to the place. The Sirdar was inspecting the records of the province in the morning and in the afternoon held a review. About 300 Sudanese and 100 Jehadia (local irregulars) marched past. Then came the levee. I marshalled the sheikhs outside while the chief inspector, Fell, called them into the audience tent, where they drank a cup of coffee in the Sirdar's presence—a greatly appreciated honour.

Following the levee came the distribution of presents, which ranged from a gaily-caparisoned donkey for Sultan Tambera, who sent his excuses for non-attendance when he heard that there were presents awaiting him, to a small mirror. Alas, all were discontented. Not only were merchants more generous, but also the French had spoiled the market four years before.

That evening there was a great "diluka" (native dance). Every available man and woman was ordered to take part in it, and certainly, once there, enjoyed themselves. We all went round, accompanied by a couple of men carrying acetylene lamps. By the bright light one saw one race doing the belly dance pure and simple, another a sort of cake walk, and others barn dances and polkas. In only the latter did the two sexes touch. It would have been of interest to study the different forms and the reasons of their adoption. The Sirdar had to hurry back. The guests were hurried home, and shortly after, having heard as much as Fell could tell me of my new district, I left for it.

En route I was to make rest-houses and dig wells, so my progress over the 150 miles of road was slow. At the first halting-place I found that the women wore the most primitive of clothes, viz. a bunch of leaves fore and aft. Near the river Pongo I came across the first of the tsetse fly, which, eight months later, one found in Wau itself.

I had reached Khor "Ganna" (of the bamboos) and was there engaged in building the usual three conical huts and long shed inside a stockade and in sinking a well, when an incident occurred which frightened me a good deal. I developed all the symptoms of black-water fever. In order not to aggravate whatever it was, I sent back word to the medical officer at Wau, and determined to retire to one of the newly-built huts till the answer came from him. I was feeling very bored next morning, so, in spite of feeling a bit off



THE OFFICERS' MESS AT WAU. ON THE SMALL PLATFORM
IN FOREGROUND WE HAD OUR DINNER. SCORPIONS, ETC.,
WOULD NOT CLIMB UP IT.



TWO IMPORTANT COMFORTS IN TRAVEL. MY DONKEY AND
GRAMOPHONE. DURA GROWING IN BACKGROUND.

colour, received the news, which the sound of breaking branches ought to have conveyed to me sooner, that a herd of elephants were close by, with delight. One does not miss one's first real chance at elephants. I thought to myself—if I do demise, what a duffer my ghost will think my corporeal self for not having at least tried to secure such trophies.

A few minutes brought me to the herd. I selected a pair of bulls standing asleep head to tail. The question was what to aim at. The bamboos spoiled the chance of a shoulder shot, so I determined to try the one at the leg which I had heard advocated with great heat by a Mr. Know-all, who quoted Selous as his authority. According to him, one fired at the knee, anchored the elephant by breaking the bone, and finished him off at one's leisure. I stalked to within seventeen yards of my quarry (most people go closer when they can) and fired with my black-powder .500. Instead of falling down the elephant bounded forward, and, for some inexplicable reason, turned like a polo pony and made off. I followed for some distance, but regretfully had to interpret his trumpeting as the elephantine version of "The Anchor's Weighed—farewell."

I went back to my hut as I did not feel fit enough to go on, but at about 4 P.M. I sallied forth again. I came on the herd feeding in very dense bamboo. As seen through the branches they appeared to be made of swaying tails and trunks. I sent my man away and climbed a tree—a most foolish thing to do as, had they got my wind, they might have hooked me out like a periwinkle. I fired to make them break cover as I

could see nothing, but they made off at a furious rate. I followed for a short distance, and came on the tracks of the wounded animal, quite evidently being helped along by a pair of friends. One of his legs was dragging. The following morning the alarming symptoms had almost vanished and by night were gone. I got the medical officer's letter some days later. It said: "I think you have an irritation of the kidneys through having the sun in your back and drinking bad water, and the symptoms will soon pass. If you have blackwater fever, which, as you have never had malaria, would be extraordinary, you will be dead by the time this letter reaches you. So cheer up."

No doubt my rapid recovery was due in a great measure to our finding a pool of clean water. Hitherto we had drunk water from a marsh into which every animal in the vicinity had wandered. A shudder is thrown away, for the African traveller is often glad, as how often have I not been, of anything that resembles liquid, even mud flavoured with anything.

As I was marching to my next halting-place I put up a buffalo that had selected the path as a nice place to sleep on. In the faint grey of the false dawn I could see a black mass in front of me. One can imagine my fright when it jumped up and bolted. My pony did the same, so, while waiting to have him brought back, I lit the surrounding grass in order to prevent a possible, though not probable, charge. I cannot refrain from speaking about the dawns. About 3 A.M., breaking the pitchy darkness, there appears what Fitzgerald so picturesquely describes as "dawn's

left hand." After lasting about half-an-hour this grey glow disappears and the world is plunged into darkness which appears more dense for the slight light that has been withdrawn. Between 4.30 and 6 A.M., according to the season, comes the true dawn. From the first glimmer of light to the rise of the sun seldom takes more than half-an-hour. First a haze around the horizon, then small shafts of light, and then the dark, velvet curtain of night seems lifted by its centre like the cloth off a conjurer's bowl, and shaft after shaft, as through a glorious prism, herald the upward-bounding sun, which shoots in blinding splendour into the heavens. It is a sight which fascinates day after day. One's only sorrow in beholding it is that it lasts so short a time. It is seen at its best on the desert, but to behold the break of dawn and sunrise down a stately forest avenue is, too, a very grand sight.

Both at Sultan Limbo's (not far from Wau) and at Dem Idris one sees the very fortifications used in the pre-Mahdist times. At the latter place are the charred remains of the stockade which Gessi took by storm from Zubeir Pasha's adherents and agents in the slave traffic Gordon tried to put down. Here, too, was a well, sunk by Lupton. I cleaned and covered it. The bees seemed to have chosen the well to commit suicide in. The water was thick with their carcasses, and had a really disgusting taste of honey-laden putrefaction. In my later visits it was beautifully "water-like."

I reached my headquarters-to-be, Dem Zubeir, one afternoon. It was most picturesque. One descended

into a valley, crossed a small bridge and ascended a decided incline to the ridge, on the top of which was the station. Some travellers have mistaken the hills near Babai Beshir, several miles to the north, as the position of Dem Zubeir.

Coming to meet me I saw the Mamur, El Yusbashi, Ali Eff. Wahbi, and the doctor, Mulazim Awal Nesib Eff. Tibsherani. If ever I have to undertake any arduous job may Providence supply me with another two such subordinates. Describe their merits in what superlatives you will, you cannot, in my opinion, exceed the mede of their worth. I will often have to mention both. Wahbi Effendi is dead—dead at his post, and, I should say, deified, if that is any pleasure to him, by the people he ruled justly and well for so many years. For long periods in sole command, his loyalty never faltered, nor his zeal slackened, when some British officer took command for a few months, whose views were perhaps quite contrary to his own. A little joke of his, a play on words, summed up his position : “The Sirdar is the *one* man in the Sudan ; the Sid-ed-dar (lord of the district) is myself.”

Tibsherani Effendi, I dare say, smiles and gives bread pills to avoid the risk of poisoning any one, and his cheering tact to the natives, so different from the usual hectoring manner of the subordinate Jack-in-office, heals by faith cures, while he grows fatter every day. Natives would do anything for him. How few, much nearer home, comprehend the *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*.

CHAPTER XI

My house at Dem Zubeir—The Senussi bubble and the building of the fort—I hold a levee—And enforce an order—The carrier question—Our exchequer—A mild mutiny ends peaceably—Tibsherani Eff.—The importance of maps—An impressive welcome—My Christmas dinner—Ivory merchants and government regulations—Kossinga and its inhabitants—Nasr Andal and others.

THEY escorted me to my house, and I gazed round my headquarters. In front was a square, the far side of which was *the* fort, and one of the trees under which Zubeir is supposed to have given the celebrated instructions which led to the rising of the slave-traders under his son Suliman. Forming the other sides were a few grandiose native huts forming barracks for one Company of Sudanese (which I was to send back to Wau), the hospital, clerks', guests', and officers' houses. These were built on the site of the ruins of Zubeir's "dem" (settlement), hence the name.

The fort represented a huge amount of labour and hysteria. Not far from the north-western boundary of the province lived a petty sheikh, a namesake of the great Senussi, the religious revivalist and bogie-man of Northern Africa. The Senussi bubble has yet to be pricked. This sheikh, who, needless to say, had no connection with the holy one of Jarabub and Kufra, used, till I suggested coming to him, to amuse himself

by sending us such messages as, "Prepare to die. I am coming.—Senussi." Now be it said, the local Sultans were in the habit of forging such a letter, when, for instance, the movement of an illicit caravan necessitated the anchoring of the inspector at his headquarters.

Such a message arrived one day, and straightway a fort, designed from the "Manual of Military Engineering," was started to take the place of the one of green brick built by the French. The ground was disintegrated rock, and had to be moistened with water from one of the innumerable delicious wells left by Zubeir before pick or shovel could be used with effect. A perimeter of 500 yards, a ditch 4 feet deep by 6 wide (jumping which was the usual means of entry into the place), and a parapet (to resist shell-fire !) 5 feet high by 8 or more thick, unprovided with loopholes, remained a monument to the industry of those that built it. Any one with the smallest military knowledge will gauge its value when it is known that its garrison could never exceed 120 rifles—in my time 50 only. Inside the fort were a number of straw sheds, in which were kept the grain, ivory, and trade goods of the district.

The day after my arrival I held a levee. Some of the bigger Sultans had halted at the place on their return from Wau to greet me. The local ones came in to see me.

I was the bearer of unpleasant news, both to them and to the Jehadia. To the former I was to give the Mudir's order that grain should be sent in to Wau

under certain penalties. Forty-five piastres (= 9s.) was to be paid for an ardeb (300 lbs.) of dura. Though the price was fair, the portorage, which would have amounted to about 90 piastres in addition, was not allowed. We had to enforce the order, as "the chief" brooked no argument; and it was well we did so, for the thousands of pounds of grain that we hustled in saved Wau from a famine eight months later.

I should add that refusing to pay portorage was not such a hardship as it would appear. No taxes were paid in the province, and the protection afforded the inhabitants was great. The hardship and discontent which arose was, I am sure, due to the fact that, in the neighbouring district of Wau, everything that was refused at Dem Zubier—*i.e.* rifles, ammunition, spirits, money, &c.—was freely scattered. I myself do not understand administration without system. I know right well that had the Governor of the province not died, it would have fared ill with those who failed to carry out his scheme and, as it was, disregarded his orders with impunity.

Wahbi Eff. and I went into what could be done with the money at our disposal. For building purposes we had £20; for making a couple of thousand miles of roads—an item that looks so well in reports—another £20. Wood and straw had been collected for building more huts of a native pattern, but I decided to build our offices, &c., of burnt brick, and soon had the satisfaction of knowing that Dem Zubeir was, south of Taufikia, the pioneer of red-brick buildings in the Sudan.

The road-clearing question was different. We spent our money on the uninhabited portion between ourselves and Dem Idris. The Sultans were induced, protesting loudly, to do their roads as a form of tax. I later understood their objection.—“Why should we clear a path none but ourselves use, and by breaking up the ground ensure the growth of a thick jungle as soon as the rains fall?”

A couple of days later I inspected the Jehadia Company, and broke to them the news that in future no carriers would be allowed them when on the move. They were seventy strong, fifty of them the vomit of regiments disbanded for mutiny and assaulting their officers, or Omdurman refugees. The remainder were locally enlisted lads. The whole of the former had some complaint to make, mostly frivolous, but some justifiable. I adjusted the latter—cannot understand why it had not been done before—and promised them on my own authority, in which I was later upheld, as near a realisation of the conditions under which they joined as possible.

I soon saw that Wahbi Eff. was, as I had been told, a man in a thousand. Having seen a kiln of bricks burned to perfection, I handed over the completion of the buildings to him, and proceeded to follow Major Boulnois' (the governor, R.A.) instructions to patrol.

The carrier question produced a mild mutiny among the thirty men I was taking with me. I was showing them on parade the best way to carry their blankets when an old soldier of the disbanded 14th Sudanese

shouted out that he was not a camel, &c. Seizing the nettle I ordered him to receive twenty lashes. Another of the same regiment then volunteered for punishment. It was touch and go. I sent him to the guard room as drunk, and led off the patrol. Half were on the point of refusing to budge, the other half waited on them. Wahbi Eff. behaved most loyally. I had gone more than half a mile, however, before my servant told me that they were streaming after me.

Fortunately the road ceased within half a mile from the station, and a winding path in a dense forest does not help conversation. The men were still sulky when we crossed the Biri River, a lovely rocky stream overhung by trees, and mirroring the honeysuckle like flowers of the rubber vine.

I walked till I was tired, thinking that if the men came in like condition they would go to sleep at once. As luck would have it they took the wrong road, and came in very late and very apologetic. In these little contretemps of travel I never feel even inclined to lose my temper—they are inevitable. I think this was the beginning of the mutual liking that rose between us. The path was narrow, made more so by the strong leaves of young *doleib* palm-trees. We passed the hills near Babai Beshir where Felkin broke off in his journey to J. Liffi. At a place called *Doleib* we halted near two pools. The place is so called because it lies in the long belt of that kind of palm that runs N.E. and S.W. from it.

We reached Faranghai in four marches, and it so happening that there was no water a well had to be

dug. Here I had my final struggle for mastery. The sergeant in charge of the men came to tell me that the marches were too long ; it was not the custom to walk like this, &c. I let him go on, acquiescing at intervals, till at last his dense head realised that his eloquence was miscarrying. Well, then he caught it. He had arrived with a deputation which I, of course, had sent away, and having no supporters at hand, and being at heart a good fellow, though an ex-mutineer, he caved in. After this we became the best of friends, and I often wondered how they could have been as demoralised as I had found them. Of course, the Mamur was busy with other and strenuous work ; no British officer had been near them for almost a year, and discipline had suffered.

I forgot to say that Tibsherani Eff. was with me. He was awfully done up by the marching, and at my suggestion halted at the Sopo River not far from Kossinga, our destination. I have said that he was a wonderful fellow. At Dem Zubeir he spent his time taking his own temperature and physic. His kit on patrol was what he would have worn in Cairo, and ended in patent leather jemimas. One of the four carriers he was allowed bore a (light) iron bedstead and table (!) instead of necessaries. To him the way was always "very long," but he always got in quite cheerful in spite of his fifteen stone, and quite ready to help at once in interpreting the abominable Arabic of the district for me. I do not know what he was like in a hospital—in the wilds he was invaluable.

I should say that though I purposely marched hard,

I was also grossly misled by a compiled map, which showed the distance between Dem Zubeir and Kossinga as about fifty-seven miles, whereas it was quite thirty more. I could not make it out. I later saw in a compilation of my sketches a distance of sixty miles cut down to twenty-six ! The paramount importance of employing, in an unmapped country, only those who have acquired the knowledge of "shooting" stars (to do so is the work of a week) is obvious. I shot a water-buck and bush-buck on the road, but except on Christmas Day, on which I had decided not to shoot anything, I saw very little. I, of course, looked for the spoor of eland, two of which were got near here some years before, but saw none—neither did an officer who spent days on the road on which I was only hours.

At a Mandalla village south of Kossinga, the first of Sultan Nasr Andal's envoys met me, and hearing that I intended to march into the "capital" that night, he sent word in to say so. Shortly after my start two bazingers (gun-men) met me, and one of them dashed back the way he had come. This performance was repeated time and again till I met the Sultan himself. He was surrounded, as far as we could see in the dark, by a mass of followers, and accompanied by a bugler, who greeted me with a more than Khedivial salute (the Governor-General's salute twice repeated is that of H.H. the Khedive). In fact, had I not shouted that I wanted to go on he would perhaps be blowing still. As it was, whenever he found breath to do so, he startled the surrounding darkness with his discordant strains. It was about 9 P.M. when I reached

the solidly built house the Sultan has for his European guests. The first, no doubt, were French.

At about 10 P.M. I ate my Christmas dinner. The next morning I was up late, *i.e.* 6 A.M. instead of 3 A.M. I found a crowd of traders waiting to salaam me. Among them was an immaculately dressed Syrian in a blue serge and topee. If his shirt, instead of being white, had been a pale mauve covered with pink roses, as affected by the average native officer, had he not had on a white collar and quiet tie, I could have placed him, but for a moment I took him for a French or Belgian officer *en route*, as they have been before, for somewhere he had no right to go. His first words were to wish me a happy Christmas in the name of the merchants, and Tibsherani Eff., arriving just at that moment, at once foregathered with his compatriot.

Rotting meat, asida (porridge), marissa (beer), and other delicacies were brought by the Sultan for my men. I found my instructions *re* paying for the men's food—the party was entitled to about 1s. 6d. worth a day—at the regulation rate not only difficult to execute, as doing so ran counter to all the established rules of hospitality, but also *infra dig.*; for, although one warned a Sultan that he would be paid for the Government ration alone, it was obvious that we paid just a twentieth of the value supplied.

There were quite a lot of merchants at Kossinga. Their dreams of buying ivory were, however, to be rudely broken. For some inexplicable reason an ordinance was received whereby the purchase of ivory

was forbidden to any one unprovided with a pass signed by the Sirdar or the Governor of the Fashoda province (it was said that this particular Governor was selected as the compiler of the ordinance fancied there was no ivory anywhere else !), and who had not made a £50 deposit. Any attempt to infringe this ordinance was to be sternly repressed. Exception only was made for the natives of the Bahr el Ghazal. In other words, would-be buyers of ivory had a several months' long journey before them to provide themselves with a permit. I took it upon myself to offer to issue provisional ones, but could not cancel the deposit. Now, who would have £50 of bullion in the wilds of Central Africa? One man gathered that together. The others said they would return to Khartum. As a matter of fact I know that they simply ignored the order and chanced being found *flagrante delicto*. I asked myself then, and tactlessly asked others, and yet ask any one to tell me what was the meaning of this ordinance. The penalties were not meant to be exacted. Each *buyer* should have a permit, but should he have a slave of Bahr el Ghazal birth to put forward as such, no permit was needed at all. There could be no loss of revenue, as it is supposed that no ivory can leave the Sudan in such a quantity as to be of consequence without having the royalty paid on it. Boulnois Bey's approval of my action in complying with his very strict orders in repressing this illicit trade alone saved me from immediate severe consequences for carrying them out. Indeed, one might say of many of the Sudan ordi-

nances that they are like the proclamations during the South African war, made to form the subject of a jest. This one was tyrannical, impossible, and against the best interests of the country. It was no check on the purchase of female or immature ivory. As long as the latter was sold by the Government by auction in Khartum, nothing could prevent such ivory being smuggled in.

Under the shadow of a rocky hill about seventy feet high was the Sultan's "palace," a collection of grass tukles, surrounded by a wall of matting. This formed one side of a square (west). On the south was my house—some clumps of date-palms four feet high (springing from stones planted there), carefully fenced round with split bamboo, and a well of good water. The east side was composed of a few lots of houses, and the north one of the grass booths of the merchants.

I should say here that in Kordofan the straw of the dura and dukhn is used for thatching, &c., whereas further south, where the grass is so luxuriant, the latter is always used. To the north-west and south-east were other low hills about two or three miles off or less. The village straggled to the north of the Sultan's house up the spur of the hill of Kossinga, and south towards Khor Luyu, which formed the water-supply. The magnificent river Boru is about five miles north, and its fine tributary the Sopo six miles east of the town.

The inhabitants are mostly the bazingers of the Sultan, who feeds and dresses them, moreover supplies them with wives, which are a very scarce commodity

in these parts. They have not the stamina, I found, of our Jehadia, though looking finer men. My men said that it was because they lived luxurious lives on marissa.

Nasr Andal has three hundred women in his harem. It is a point of honour to show his importance in this way. As women, owing to the depredations of the slave-traders, are very scarce, this collection of likely girls by Nasr causes a good deal of dissatisfaction. My predecessor had the case of five lads bolting to him for protection from this Sultan, who wished to execute them (further south they would be mutilated) for tampering with some girls then in the Sultan's harem whom, before the latter had taken them, they had been about to marry. They were enlisted, and one, Morgan, was one of the most intelligent blacks I have ever come across. As my orderly and guide he led me for miles, and on the way told me of the religion, social conditions, &c., of the people. He plucked different sorts of fruit for me as we marched along to teach me, as he said, what to eat if I lost myself, which I might do if any one else was with me but himself! The native officer and regular soldier is almost impossible to get at in this way. He thinks either that all folk-lore is below his dignity to repeat, or that one wants to laugh at him. Both ideas make him dumb. I remember once trying to get the marriage laws of a tribe from a Sudanese officer belonging to it. He told me, as he saw I already knew a good deal about them and was not to be denied, but interlarded his conversations by such expressions as "Walahi, they are the beasts of the field," "pure savages," &c.

I remained in Kossinga the whole of Boxing Day, investigated a couple of cases, bogus ones, brought up to make a show by the Sultan, and one that came before me unbeknown to him and much to his annoyance. I walked round and saw the merchants and also a couple of camels who they feared had contracted trypanosomiasis.

The other Sultans had met me here as there were outstanding disputes to settle between them, and having done so I sent them to their districts. Among them was Murad Ibrahim, he of the Kreish Hofraui on the Bahr el Arab. He had come thus far on his way to the Sirdar, but was frightened to come further. I dare say when he heard of Sultan Ibrahim Dardug, his neighbour, who was imprisoned, for many crimes I admit, immediately after the Sirdar's departure, he must have blessed his stars for his caution, as there was a lot outstanding against him.

As Fell had told me to try to win him over, his district being a disaffected one, I clad him in a robe of honour, much to his delight.

CHAPTER XII

An arduous march—Chakchak—The Sultan Atiok Chiok—The Dinkas—
I return by a different route—Big game—The elephant and the cock
—Nasr Andal—Sultan Musa Hamed's capital—Two of the "walking-
round-the-world-for-nothing" fraternity—Virgin country.

I STAYED one day in Kossinga, and, leaving all but a few men behind me, started for the village of Chakchak, capital of a portion of the Dinkas. I unfortunately had not learned wisdom enough not to trust the map I had, so, though warned that I would find no water for many miles east of the Sopo, a few miles from Kossinga, I started, without any riding animal, to walk. The guide at first lost his way, so, although I started at 2 A.M., it was almost dawn before I crossed the Sopo—a broad, sandy river, very different from its rocky self I had crossed before. We walked till 8 A.M., from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., from 3 to 5.30 P.M., and from 6 to 11 P.M., or eighteen hours, going mighty strong. For quite two hours before reaching our destination we could hear the noggara (drums) being beaten, and found on arrival that a great dance was in progress. We were parched indeed, not having drunk since about 9 A.M. My men, old soldiers, who within the week had all but mutinied, took the greatest care of me. They would have piled their own blankets on a sort of rude couch

for me had I let them. I threw myself, wrapped in my greatcoat, on it, only to be wakened again at 2.30 A.M. I got up, shook myself, drank my cocoa, and started. Alas! I had to send on my men to fetch me something to ride, as I found I had wrenched my knee. While waiting at a pool for them to come back I was much amused by the antics of troops of monkeys and numerous clutches of guinea-fowl. At last I got so bored with this sylvan scene that I limped on, and presently came upon a couple of men leading a mule for me. As I heard that we were by no means near the station, I halted for the night.

Chakchak was reached early. I crossed the Chell (Kuru) River, here about fifty yards across with a sandy bed and a few inches deep. The station, built round a kitchen garden, looked very neat. The Mamur, however, had everything by the ears. The Dinka Sultan, Atiok Chiok (Chak Chak), the only important man of that tribe with whom we were in touch, felt deeply aggrieved, and would help in no way. The Jehadia there were almost in mutiny. I was not surprised, as, during the whole of my stay, and when I met him later, he reeked of spirits, which, he hastened to inform me, he took as medicine.

I had barely arrived before the Sultan, a dear old man whom I had met in Wau, arrived with a huge bullock as a present for me (of course refused with profuse thanks). A very enlightened savage, though not a pure Dinka (his mother was a Jur, I think), he had made great friends with the French. He has, however, been rather demoralised by contact with

junior and sometimes tactless native officers, and his position among his own people much lowered thereby. Later, their squabbling was, but for its possible serious consequences, a subject of amusement. The Mamur would send a letter to demand the infliction of terrible punishments on the Sultan, who would make the bearer of the letter an ambassador to complain of the atrocities of the writer.

The Sultan was about 5 feet 8 inches in height, and cleanly in his person, which he clothed. On our occupation he at once sold his rifles, as he saw that they would be of little use again. Nasr Andal bought them. At one time his word was law among a vast section of Dinkas.

I paid him a visit at his place, Chamoni, which is a few miles north of the station. The Mamur accompanied me. We found the Dinkas bringing in their cattle. The Dinkas are real riverain negroids. As they use disgusting matter, not only in anointing their bodies, but also in the preparation of their food, one cannot call them cleanly. Here the youths of the race decorated their own particular oxen or cows by suspending huge tassels from holes bored at the point of the long horns, and paraded them to and fro, singing the while.

The Sultan pestered me with presents of oxen, which were always returned, accompanied by some small present. I made use of this friendliness however, for I managed to buy several oxen and, *mirabile dictu*, a cow for Dem Zubeir. They all died of trypanosomiasis there.

I determined to return to Kossinga by a new route. The Sultan gave me his eldest son as a guide and his youngest as a gun-bearer, and I set off. That night we crossed the Chell again, and slept in a big village. The lowing of the cattle and the smell of innumerable dung fires, invariably lighted to ward off mosquitoes, &c., did not succeed in keeping us awake. Our start, however, was delayed till about dawn. My escort consisted of four men and two carriers. In one place the lady of the house, clad in a flowing jupon of ox-skin, scarcely veiled her contempt for us. Our guide was being continually cross-examined, for the Dinka is as suspicious as a jealous wife; and, except perhaps Lupton in his campaigns, I was the first white man to penetrate this densely populated bit of country.

We halted late at night, foodless, on the Boru River at the village of Dow Marial (wicked David). He did not turn up to meet us, so I sent for him and presently he came. He was a charming old boy. We became such friends that it was with difficulty that he was persuaded to go back to bed.

Close at hand was the junction of the Chell (Kuru) and Lol (Boru). At one time it was supposed that the latter was the Bahr el Arab. I wrote very fully about this to the Royal Geographical Society, and my determination of the western sources of the Nile has since been proved correct by other explorers. Dow Marial, and another important headman, Dow Nigol, insisted on accompanying me next morning. First of all they tried every inducement to persuade

me to return the way I had come, but I put all arguments to one side and started with them. I had reason to be glad of their presence, for at our midday halt the Dinkas about closed round our camp, and, disregarding the manners of the bush, brought their spears right up to where I was, instead of piling them outside it. The Dinkas refused to believe that the troops massing at Wau were meant for the expedition against the cannibals in the south, and so were in a disturbed state; so much so, that a section of the tribe unsuccessfully attacked Captain Percival, D.S.O., who was leading the "Mule Company" of the Hagana south through their country. I dismissed the Sultan's elder son here with a present, as we were going into the bush, and got other guides. The younger one had dismissed himself before. Atiok Chiok later described to me by gesture and interpreter the beating he had administered to him for doing so. My laughter led to a repetition of the pantomime.

The grass in the forest had just been burnt down, so we left a fine track for the sluggards of the party to follow. I got a couple of fine Jackson hartebeest near the Boru. After killing the first, I practically walked into the middle of the herd, which looked stupidly at me. One morning, just at dawn, we sighted a dark mass, which my companions first described as a herd of elephants, then as wart-hogs, and which turned out to be buffaloes (!), so deceptive is the early morning light. My stalk was rendered futile by the fact that a cow with a calf, some distance my side of the herd, prevented me getting

nearer than a couple of hundred yards from the nearest bull.

One of our halting-places near the river was rendered memorable by the number of crocodiles we saw. I had halted close to the bank and straightway went to fill my water-bottle. There was a spit of sand ending in what looked like a rocky ledge. I walked towards this, and suddenly it heaved up, and a mass of crocodiles, mostly from 3 to 6 feet long, threw itself into the river.

We halted that night within sight of J. Telgona at the side of a marshy khor. Shortly after our arrival I heard a faint crackling of branches and saw one of the men rush forward and kick some fowl which I was having carried as food. I was naturally furious at what I took to be wanton cruelty, till, all incredulous, I was informed that an inquisitive elephant was moving on our camp.

The Shilluk story, to explain the fear of elephants for fowl, is worth telling. In the beginning a cock and an elephant were bosom friends. One day a thorn got into the latter's foot, and he asked the cock to extract it with his bill. He started to do so, but was struck by the delicacy of the fat, which he could not help sucking in, and forgot the dues of friendship. After making a good meal, he suggested to the elephant that the only way to get the thorn out was by burning. So he built a fire and induced the elephant to hold his foot over it. The elephant shut his eyes and yelled for pain. Presently he looked round for his friend and saw him guzzling on the fat now running



THE "WHITE MAN'S BURDEN." FASHIONS IN CARRYING.
(ON THE HEAD.) WAU-MESHRA ROAD.



CARRYING ON THE SHOULDER. (LEAST FATIGUING—FOR A
EUROPEAN AT LEAST.) WAU-DEM ZUBEIR ROAD.

in a copious stream from the foot. Since then the elephant is afraid of what the cock will do.

When we crossed the Boru (Lol) under J. Telgona it ran between banks 15 feet high and more than 100 yards across. The water, 18 inches deep, flowed in a narrow channel. Here and there on the banks were small patches of tobacco a few yards square. I succeeded in falling into a pool near the bank, and my mule sank to his girths in a small quicksand in the channel, soaking all my bedding, before we got over to the left bank. The discomfort of the night was perhaps the principal reason for a very early start. At about 3 A.M. we arrived at a group of huts, and as we wanted a guide we beat at a door. The result was amusing. Out of the occupied huts the male inhabitants dashed into the surrounding bush—the old trick in the days of the slave traders: how often had my older Arabs in the Hagana described the raids to me. With great difficulty—for no one is fool enough to venture his head into a dark hut—we induced a woman, unable to contain her curiosity, to come out, and she produced a small boy as guide. His place, shortly after we moved off, was taken by a man.

We made straight for Kossinga. We halted for a short time at a village of the name of Arcassidei, whose sheikh was an old dervish and most polite. I had a long talk here with a weaver making damur (native cloth). He explained that he worked in solitude, and stopped working when any one came to talk, in order to prevent others learning his job. The anchor

of his primitive loom was the skull and horns of a hartebeest, weighed down by a stone !

In my hurry I was unable to stop to shoot, although we passed any quantity of game. I did follow a magnificent roan, but got no shot.

I left Kossinga next day, Nasr Andal leading my donkey as a mark of respect at the start.

Nasr Andal is a Negolgolei negro from Darfur. His sultanate covers 4800 (120 by 40) square miles, and contains a congeries of tribes amounting to about 1800 souls all told. This includes a section of the Mandalla tribe, who accept him merely as an overlord. He poses as a buffer between them and the extortions (*sic*) of the Government. He is a portly gentleman of about forty-five (in 1906), very black of skin, dressed in the best of style—fine linen and silks ; a good Mahomedan in his conversation, he has dispensations for all he wants to do (*e.g.* drink) or leave undone (*e.g.* his prayers). He speaks with a lisp, has an earnest manner, is very civilised, and sees as far through a brick wall as most people. For example, poor Wahbi Effendi got the Sultans to sign a round-robin to Slatin, who was expected to pay a visit to the place, saying that they would not know what to do without this just, &c. &c., Mamur. As Slatin did not come, Nasr handed it to me. Had I not been told about it by Tibsherani Effendi, who made seals for those who had not had them (and who, by the way, does not stick at trifles to make a good story or a story good), Nasr's manner would have told the tale. His walk is stately even when he has swallowed half a bottle of

whisky neat. He has made all his brothers (those he has not murdered) and sons, whose name is legion, learn to read and write, though illiterate himself. He is mad for money—really mad. He is a very able man.

His father began life as favoured boy and later mukdum or viceroy of the great Ferogeï Sultan Hamed. He succeeded his father, watched Sultan Hamed wasting his ammunition in the petty wars in which ultimately he was killed, while he, Nasr, husbanded his by pretending to keep the Dinkas in check. When Musa Hamed, then a lad of eighteen, succeeded his father and ordered him to acknowledge him as paramount Sultan, he told him to go to Jericho. Before Musa was ready to assert himself the French arrived, and Nasr Andal threw himself into their arms. Their principle is to raise up the insignificant as buffers for themselves. We followed the French lead.

Nasr Andal annoyed me greatly by comparing his present position and that he held when Marchand was in possession. Then his monthly allowance was £3, two dozen cognac, besides occasional rifles and ammunition, and a proportionate amount of wine and spirits for his relations. When I pointed out that he had an extra-special "robe of honour," he held up a corner and said, "It is very tawdry; the stuff is poor and wearing out already," which unfortunately was true and admitted of no reply, as he was wearing a heavy silk gallabia underneath it. The Mandalla always speak of him as "the viceroy." So do the other Sultans.

I had to leave my Abyssinian pony "Tops" behind me at Kossinga. The tsetse fly killed him. About half-way to Ragaa is a ridge from which the country to the west can be seen for miles. From it I located J. Liffi, at a bend of the river Ragaa, so often mentioned by the first explorers.

On approaching Sultan Musa Hamed's capital we had the same amount of bugle blowing as before at Kossinga. The reception was not at all so well stage-managed as at the latter place.

Musa Hamed and I were now old friends. We had met several times, and I had clad him in a first-class robe of honour at Wau. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, twenty-five years of age (in 1906), dresses like an Arab, and lays claim to a pedigree. In it a march from Mecca, in which large brass drums figured largely, forms a principal feature. He is open and ingenuous, a gentleman according to his lights. He did not welcome the change of headquarters from Dem Zubeir to his capital which took place later, and was accordingly deposed in 1908.

He ruled over a sultanate 9600 (160 by 60) square miles, containing about 3500 inhabitants.

I had now to sketch all my routes. Except the compilation Wau-Dem Zubeir-Chak-chak-Kossinga-Dem Zubeir, the district, about 264,000 (1320 by 200) square miles, had not only not been mapped, but scarcely patrolled. I sketched three separate routes from north to south and two from east to west.

I had many routes open to me from Ragaa, one of which, which I naturally avoided, had already

been traversed (by Colonel Sparkes Pasha, C.M.G.). I chose that to the west.

My first halting-place was Mambera, a tiny village occupied by thirteen souls of Arab extraction. These had sponged on the Sultan for some years, and were now not allowed to return till they had repaid the cost of their entertainment. Their case reminded me of that of two Frenchmen whom one of our inspectors found in Abyssinia. They belonged to the "Walking-round-the-world-for-nothing" fraternity. In spite of dissuasion, they insisted on entering Abyssinia, got some way inland, were asked to pay the cost of entertaining them, and, as they were unable to do so, were detained as gardeners by a Ras. The cost of their board and lodging accumulated faster than it was paid off.

Till one has met this class of men one is apt to take an interest in their movements. One does not realise that they often blackmail hotel-keepers to take, as sole payment, a puff in the papers they write for, &c. One fellow, "skating" round the world, carried his skates in his portmanteau, and boasted that he always travelled first class, stopped at the best hotels, and had not spent a fluke save in the postage of his lurid lies to some rag. His record was broken in one place, where, after unsuccessfully trying to force himself on official hospitality, he was forced to pay his hotel bill, and removed as an undesirable. He threatened to publish a special chapter, which ought to be worth reading, on the place.

We were now in virgin country. It was very

much the same as the rest of the district. The trees, 10 inches or so in diameter and 20 feet high, were scattered at ten to twenty paces interval. There was no undergrowth, the forest fires having cleared the grass. Six or seven miles north of us flowed the Boru.

On the march my guide, a young Ferogei, hung my water-bottle, &c., round himself in such a way that his arm became "dead." I massaged it with whisky to restore the circulation. He was delighted.

J. Ringi looked a fine mountain when it hove in sight. It was the biggest I had seen since leaving Europe. It was at a village at its foot that I learned that the arches into which the stalks of the bamia (a vegetable) are bound when dry, is not the play of children, but a wedding ceremony necessary for fertilisation.

The scenery was very fine. At one place the ground had a sharp drop of many feet. The trees were big, and there was a quantity of bamboos about.

CHAPTER XIII

I sit in judgment—Mahomed Meriki—Wasa—A herd of buffalo—"The grandfather of buffaloes"—Gila—Ibrahim Dardug—Our reception—Kafiakingi—Ibrahim Murad—The Bahr el Arab—A list of the game we saw on the march—The mines at Hofrat el Nahas—An unpleasant duty—I take charge of a prisoner—My party—Important rivers—One of our prisoners "dies."

AT Munangba, not far from J. Ringi, I had arranged to meet Sultan Saïd Baldas, and also the eldest son of Sultan Ibrahim Dardug. I had to adjudicate on a case such as often cropped up. One of Saïd's wives bolted with a man who was traced to this place. There was a child whose paternity was doubtful. As, however, the "Co." was unable to refund the dowry to the Sultan, I reluctantly had to order the runaway to return to her lawful spouse. She screamed and kicked, but followed her child whom one of the Sultan's riflemen had taken up. I passed the party later on. Approaching it, I heard laughter, mostly feminine, ringing through the forest. The dusky Helen was charming another Paris. I fancy it was not long before she was missing again—with her a sturdy bazerger.

I can now see myself trying these cases. Seated on the ground under the shadow cast by a small canopy of grass, the Sultan shares a bit of my furwa

with his wazir. In front a mass of natives gesticulate and talk.

Every march has an end ; so also that which took us into the territory of the Kreish Sultans. The first was Mahomed Meriki, on the left bank of the Boru, there a rocky stream 35 yards broad, with banks 18 feet high. The Sultan, who has about as much right to the title as many baronets have to theirs, has about five hundred souls under him in the vicinity of his village. He is the philosopher of the district. A little wizened man is he, of immense age—all his people remember him always a greybeard—yet active. He was a lieutenant of Zubeir Pasha's son, and managed to clear off with his rifles before the latter was captured and executed by Gessi.

In his village lived, as a clerk, an ex-native officer. I tried to get him a pension, but from rumours afloat I understand that that was out of the question.

The Sultan brought me a present of some araki. He put some of the spirit in a wine "glass" cut out of ivory. The fumes of the spirit were so potent that I was unable to approach my nose to it. Quantities of maize were grown here to make this tippie. The heads were dried hung in rows on huge screens.

A few miles from this village, Ajai, which comprises the sultanate, and contains 500 inhabitants, is Wasa, the village of Saïd Baldas.

This Sultan has a district of about 3200 (80 by 40) square miles, which holds some 1500 souls. He was about forty-five in 1906, and much the same size as Musa Hamed, but of lighter build. He has a quick,

intelligent face, black and prognathous. He was a warrior of note, but having got into very hot water in French territory owing to his proclivities in that line he fled to us. We gave him a great part of Ibrahim Dardug's people when the latter was deposed. If we quitted the western district to-morrow the position of paramount Sultan would lie between him and Nasr Andal, and I think he would get it.

We now struck due north. The country was hilly, much intersected by khors, and rather more open than elsewhere.

One morning I came on a herd of buffalo. I was stalking it when I heard a shot fired on the other side of it. It was fired by a courier sent to meet me by the sheikh of Zeinei. His weapon was a muzzle-loading fowling-piece held together by string and wire !

I was rather annoyed at being baulked of my chance of a shot, but, on arrival rather early at Zeinei, I at once sallied out, and by rare good luck came on a solitary buffalo bull. He was grazing in an open space near a pool. I ordered my guide to climb a tree, and then crawled down a sort of khor of which the pool formed part. I had, however, soon to leave this line, but found the alternative lay through high grass. When about seventy yards from my quarry, who was now a bit suspicious, I climbed a tree, the grass four feet high absolutely screening the view. I was nothing loath to do so—it was a case of “mix it strong, ma'am, and force me to take it.” I fired with a solid .303, and down he dropped—rose—I fired again, and he rolled over. I was doubtful of the genuine-

ness of his death, as the buffalo has the name of shamming, so when ten yards off I fired a soft-nosed bullet at his chest. There was no movement, but on examination I found that the last bullet had only made a small mark on the outside of the skin. My first one had penetrated the heart, the second the spine. The horns were very old, the tips completely broken off. The villagers called him the "grandfather of buffaloes." I *was* pleased. So were the villagers, who besides getting the meat had cut the hide into sandals before it was cold.

I halted that night at a stream, that might have been taken out of an English county. It was about 12 feet broad, 5-foot banks, between which flowed a foot of water, and was fringed by green trees. Beyond it was a ridge which Tibsherani Effendi told me reminded him of his beloved Lebanon. It certainly looked grand, extending from east to west, and rather bare of trees. We were now well into the hills which form the Nile-Congo watershed. One morning we went through a lovely little pass. Two high, tree-covered, conical hills, with a small khor between them, formed a portal through which our path ran. The streams we passed now held a good deal of water. At one there was a small waterfall.

Not far from here lay Gila, the village of ex-Sultan Ibrahim Dardug. It lay under the big hill of Giyawa.

Dardug was an ex-emir of the Khalifa. As a boy he was carried off a slave to Kordofan, and subsequent to the reconquest in 1898 resided at Nahud. Hearing that we were going to reoccupy the Bahr

el Ghazal province, that the Sultan of the Bingos was dead, and that that tribe was split up between other Sultans, he came down to Gila, and assumed the sultanate on the grounds that his father, a distant scion of the royal house, had been wazir to the late Sultan, and that the Bingos had preferred any yoke to that of Abu Zergal, the rightful heir. He then marched off to greet Sparkes Pasha at Wau. An emir of the Khalifa was, as one can well understand, a graduate at a high school of tact. Moreover, at the time, all claims were recognised, as were those of small lairds in the '45 by the Hanoverians. Armed with a formidable-looking document which stated that the Government came to bring peace and plenty to the country, he came back to Gila. Here he described the proclamation as a patent of nobility and recognition of his claim by Government, who, he said, had asked his permission to come to the province (somewhat contradictory!). The dependants of the old Bingo Sultan rushed back to him. Musa Hamed and Saïd Baldas, from whom they seceded, did not know what to make of it. His knowledge of the Omdurman merchants brought a stream of rifles into the district and a ready market for ivory. He had become a factor to be reckoned with. He treated orders from Fell with respect when in his presence, with contumely when out of it. When he came to meet the Sirdar he was confined and deposed. As to the sentence, there is little doubt of its justice, and the benefit to the district by his removal.

In appearance Dardug was rather grey, with a

narrow, sunken, ascetic face, full of cunning and ferocity. In height 5 feet 7 inches, he had the cringing manners of the mulazimen of the Khalifa. His eldest son was a fine-looking young fellow, who, however, got into trouble. The various members of the Dardug family were superior to the natives around. His territory used to cover 4400 (110 by 40) square miles, which held close on 2000 inhabitants. It used to be divided into two by that of Saïd Baldas.

No police came to greet us from the town. As I entered it, however, the Anglo-Egyptian flags were hoisted on two poles outside the ex-Sultan's "palace," and his brother, followed by a lot of people carrying food for my party, hurried out, apologising for the small show of hospitality, and assuring us that, till I rode into his village, he was unaware (*sic*) of my presence in the district. His rest-house was scrupulously clean, the ground of the village square well swept.

When crossing the spurs of J. Giyawa I was struck by the huge peninsula of hills that stretches eastwards to Tearan, and forms the Bahr el Arab-Boru watershed. The highest hills were in the Nile-Congo watershed, west of my route. From them descended a number of the Bahr el Arab tributaries. The Reikei, the largest we crossed on our way north, was about 10 yards broad, with banks 12 feet high.

We reached Kafiakingi, Sultan Murad Ibrahim's capital, after a few long marches. Four miles south of it lies Duku, where his principal sheikhs used to live. When passing through it, on this occasion, the sheikhs

who came to meet me seemed so hurt, not so much at my not stopping there, but at my not drinking "a cup of water," that, to please them, I had to break through my rule of not drinking on the march, and have some.

The country had changed greatly in the last few miles. We were no longer in the hills, and the ground was much more sandy, "Kordofan-like," than otherwise.

Just before reaching the very excellent huts that the Sultan was running up for me I met the latter, who had only then been apprised of my approach.

We had had to capture a guide, as he had refused to show us the way, and the long march and the 10 A.M. sun combined, with this contretemps, in making me rather wroth. But when I saw one man hoisting the Sultan into his scarlet robe of honour, for which he had sent, another trying to make his new tarbush stay on his head, another to lasso him with the tinsel slings of his scimitar, and then turned to my party—myself the worse for wear, two rank tatterdemalions carrying on top of their all, on their heads, a big piece of raw meat from the last-killed antelope, and proudly bearing aloft the two flags, a yard or so square each, and behind them my orderly driving a donkey, and with one puttee on and the other round the neck of a wretched naked native, it was all I could do, without laughing, to repeat the endless "taïb aiwa taïb el Hamdililah"'s of salutation, rendered necessary by politeness.

Murad Ibrahim, of the Kreish Hofraui—which latter

term means "miners," having reference to the copper mines about fifty miles away, which they worked—was a weird little man. He was supposed to be a sort of Macbeth, which perhaps accounted for his jumpy manner. He was about thirty-five years of age at the time, 5 feet 3 inches in height, with a wizened, frightened face. He was later deposed in 1908. I left Kafiakingi the same afternoon, leaving behind me the escort I had had till then, and taking a few men who had been sent there by Fell to form a post. My destination was Hofrat el Nahas ("the holes of copper"), reputed to be one of Solomon's mines.

Just after starting I noticed that one of the younger soldiers, who had accompanied me from Dem Zubeir, had attached himself to my party. He was a fine, big Niam-Niam, his teeth filed in true cannibal style. He explained his presence by saying that where his officer went he followed.

Nine men and two carriers formed my party. As there was no road most of the way, I decided that we should keep together (a quite unnecessary precaution). Our night halt was at a bend of the Barada River, one of the sources of the Bahr el Arab.

There has been some discussion as to the name of the river. My successor maintained that it was Bahr (river), 'Aada (custom). Apart from the fact that having heard, previous to reaching it, discussions on the subject, I personally made very searching inquiries on the spot, and without trying to explain the difference of pronounciation, it is merely necessary to point out that Bahr 'Aada is not Arabic. It should be Bahr

EL 'Aada if anything. The river was bordered by dried-up swamp on both banks. Where we crossed it we had to go through long grass for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles—the river flowing in the centre. The river was almost dry, 30 yards across, with banks 15 feet high, and sandy bed. From here to the Umbelacha, the main stream of the Bahr el Arab, is, from January to May, a rather waterless march. Going, there was just enough for my small party, but coming back, twenty-four hours later, the water-holes had practically dried up.

We saw a lot of roan antelope, and, on my return march, an elephant which I was unable to attack—shortage of water and inability to carry back the trophies being the reasons.

To give an idea of the quantity of game about, I might insert here a list of what I remember seeing on one morning's march, and find recorded in a letter: Buffalo, leopard, roan antelope, Vaughan's cob, dikdik, hartebeest (Jackson's), waterbuck, bush-buck, besides which I passed the fresh tracks of lion, elephant, rhinoceros, and giraffe.

From J. Siomo, called by Sparkes Pasha (the first white man to visit the mines) J. Telata from the fact of its consisting of three little peaks, I got a fine view. Near it I put up a rhinoceros in a bamboo brake.

When about ten miles from the mines I left my party, and with three men went on to them. The remainder were to collect water by squeezing it out of the mud through a rag, as we had had to do already.

When we reached the mines we were not much impressed. There were a lot of shallow pits about

thirty yards across and ten to twenty feet deep. I should say they covered an area of about half a mile square. A little geological knowledge would have made my visit a useful one. I bought a huge ingot of horseshoe shape, seven inches across by two thick, but later, when my belongings were sent to me from Dem Zubeir, this interesting relic was mislaid.

From the copper bed to the river Umbelacha was only a few steps. The river was a fine one about seventy yards or more across, with banks of twelve to fifteen feet high. The bed was sandy, with huge, flat bars of rock running across it here and there. The country to the north and west appeared much less hilly than to the south. In the vicinity on both sides of the river were the tangled scrub over the areas formerly under cultivation, and the ruins of huts. The Sultan asked to be allowed to—and subsequently did—remove his capital to this place, its old site.

We rejoined our party after a short halt, and found a little water; even following the tracks of monkeys failed to reveal a pool. When eventually we reached the Barada, having drunk at one inadequate pool on the way, two men had dropped out (they rejoined us during the night). Though it was night when we reached the river, we were well lighted by the grass, which was now on fire. It took us some zigzagging about to reach the river. When we crossed, the right bank not being alight, our guide chose, as a cheerful subject of conversation, the probability of putting up a lion as we pushed through the high grass. I breathed more freely when we reached the open forest.

On my return to Kafiakingi a most unpleasant duty had to be performed. This was one centre of the illicit ivory trade. Four days before, in a discussion on the subject, the merchants had informed me that illicit trade was unheard of, and that the two or three hundred kine they had with them were to be sold for cash. Therefore on my return I ordered a search to be made of the merchants' quarter. Thirteen large tusks were found, and no less than 109 small female and immature male tusks! To people who read with equanimity that in Portuguese Africa 4000 elephants were surrounded and shot, and that the average weight of the tusks was under 10 lbs., it may seem no enormity that cows and calves should be so ruthlessly murdered. To us it was a relief to be able to put the law in motion against those whose violation of it produced such results. Merchants from Wadai were more leniently treated than those from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Repugnant, however, as this work was, the very strict injunctions of the Mudir left me no other course, except that of shirking my duty.

A certain sheikh, Andal Abdulahi, was here handed over to me. He was wanted—I forget what for—at Wau. As he was a man of note, and I knew that his visit to Wau was only for a reprimand, I did not treat him as a "prisoner."

My party was now fairly large, for I had recruited *en route*, and it now numbered about seventy men. With these I started east for Kabalosu, another great centre of trade. Before starting I was rather curious to see how the enforcement of the ivory ordinance would

be taken. The Sultan and merchants turned up smiling and polite. Andal Abdulahi with two wives and two bazingers surrendered himself to Tibsherani, and we moved off.

On the road we crossed a number of quite important rivers. For example, before reaching J. Busa, there was the Vongo, Diofo, and Reikei, all about 10 yards broad, with banks 12 feet high, and slightly rocky beds; and the Sirri with 5-foot banks, and 82 yards sandy bed. Near the latter, one of our prisoners refused to walk another step. Examination by the doctor showed him to be all right, so I handed him over to a special guard so as not to delay the rest of the party. He did not turn up at our camp near J. Busa. There I left Tibsherani Eff. while I went on at a faster rate. I had halted for the day near a pool of water, and was trying with the aid of my mosquito curtain—which almost suffocated me, the heat was so great—to avoid the attentions of some particularly persistent tsetse fly, when I saw one of the Jehadia approaching our encampment. I could not make out what he could be doing, as I knew that my own party were all present, and that the party in rear could not possibly have caught us up. We had gone quite forty miles. He was the bearer of the following letter—a letter which I cherish as one of my most treasured possessions :—

“To Inspector W. D., B. cl G.

“I beg to inform you that ‘Kadi’ the man in charge of the merchant prison came just now (at

moonrise) and told me that the prisoner refused to walk with them and they were simply forcing him to march and dragging him forward. he arrived a few yards to this side of that big river (to which you have arrived at 6.35 this morning) and there he died,

P.T.O.

“And ‘Kadi’ knowing that this man is dead tied him up to a tree (for fear lest he should be pretending to be dead and after they had left him he would run away, this is ‘Kadi’s’ statement). I had in compliance with your orders sent back the onb” [corporal and men I sent back when the prisoner did not turn up] “with 2 other men but they met Kadi on his way back not very far from here, now I am sending back the onb and Kadi with 2 men to find out the truth and if the man is only sick to carry him in, if he is dead to bury him and mark the spot where they put him and to cut a piece of his small finger and to get it here, that is all what struck me to do at present. Waiting for your instructions. — Yours obediently,

N. G. TIBSHERANI, M.A., M.C.

“22.1.905.”

My soul turned to water when I read the first few lines of this message. It was all very well to deal firmly with a recalcitrant prisoner; but to force a sick man to walk, even to the length of his dying, that was quite another thing. I was horrified, more especially as I knew that there must be something in the tale, as “Kadi” was a very good man. As a matter of fact, he was the big Niam-Niam who had

followed me to Hofrat el Nahas. I continued the letter ; but when I came to the trophy Tibsherani Eff. proposed to secure, I lay back and screeched and shrieked with mirth. I thought to myself, as turned out to be the case, nothing can really be very wrong if I can laugh like this.

I sent back word to throw away the ivory if it was found necessary to carry the man, but dead or alive, not to mutilate him.



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CHAPTER XIV

Another prisoner escapes—Tibsherani Eff.'s letters—I doctor a merchant—
The Boru River—A lion—Ragaa—I search for illicit ivory—Back to
Dem Zubeir—Arrival of the President of the recruiting Commission—
Mabruk Eff. Fiki—I set out to explore the West Nile—Netting game
—An elephant—On the march.

POOR Tibsherani's misfortunes were not at an end. The following midnight I was awakened to receive this letter :—

“Sheikh Andal ran away this afternoon. it happened thus. we were moving from the Kh. Keikerei and he was as usuall guarded by 3 of the old men and was riding his donkey I was riding my donkey behind him when we arrived to the rocky mt. at 4.30 P.M. nearly my donkey stumped and I was putting him up. Andal and his three sentry men were still going on. I shouted to them to stop and wait for me and made a man who was behind me to call for them to stop they had only stepped into a thick grass and I heard 3 sucessive fires I run up to the spot and found the 3 men laughing and saying he ran away (jara)

P.T.O.

there is no doubt that these 3 men made up all these arrangements to let him escape, I have made them Prisoners for fear they would follow him 3 of

Murad's recruits were in charge of a donkey they simply left him and fled away also 2 carriers ran away. the onb did not come yet, this night I am making 3 sentries to guard the company especially the recruits, the prisoners and the rifles amt, donkies &c. I wish we had tied Andal his escape would have been made rather impossible" [He was so pessimistic that he added "rather" as an afterthought.] "It is impossible to have perfect work done by such undisciplined men as these I have made my murasla and the 2 remaining very old men to be on guard to-night with 2 others am now afraid the recruits will run away I shall be moving very slow. The donkies are tired and we are short now of three carriers (including the man who carried your paper to me). It is very unpleasant and annoying to have to transmit such bad news to you, I am now waiting for your immediate instructions and help if possible.

"I had intention not to move on tomorrow but the men have but very little food remaining and I have to move on but very slowly.

"A man of Andal fired also when our men fired (according to the 3 men's statements) but this is to complete the trick. (Sd. N. G. TIBSHERANI.

"23.1.905."

On receipt of this letter there was but one thing to do—hurry into Kabalosu and send out carriers and food, so I sent him a message to this effect.

The mountain he speaks of was not Busa, which is a hill six or seven hundred feet high, as I remember

it, but a little hill south of the road near which I stalked a roan. My men's keenness that I should shoot a wart-hog in sight spoilt my stalk, and was inexplicable, till I saw them attack the raw carcass of a hartebeest a few hours later. The younger men had come out without any food! and yet marched uncomplainingly on, half famished.

East of the Sirri, rivers like it with low banks and broad, sandy beds were quite a feature of the country, which was undulating and rocky. The Sheleikei, where we crossed, had an island between two beds 35 yards and 54 yards broad respectively; the Janverindi was 32 yards wide; the Khairbara, just below Kabalosu, was 45 yards. On the contrary the Kavaduku and Gotelo, a few miles either side of that town, were rocky, high banked, and about a dozen yards wide. They all flowed north to the Bahr el Arab.

Sultan Musa Hamed had come to meet me at Kabalosu. He did not lose much time in giving away his neighbours. On his information a Coptic dealer in rifles was captured. He had a good deal of corroborative evidence to give about the active slave trade that went on. He implicated El Hag Tahir, Sultan Nasr Andal's brother, who had a regular mart near J. Telgona. I made arrangements to capture him, but the French were before me. They took him with a caravan of slaves near Zemio's, on the Oubangi (tributary of Congo), and gave him five years.

At Kabalosu I was called on to doctor a merchant who was very sick. After a good purge and a dose of quinine he was much better, and sent me a couple

of pounds of dates as a present—fee I called it, as I joyfully ate them. The sheikh of the village, Gurdud, hearing that a post was to be established in it, was suddenly struck down by a disease which, I think, consisted principally of groans and a liberal application of paste to his neck. I think *I cured* him! When I met him later he said I had!

From Kabalosu I struck south for Ragaa. The track was over undulating country. Fairly high hills lay to east and west, and every now and then we crossed small plateaux on the summit of high rocky ridges—almost hills. There was no difficulty about water. Indeed, so limpid were the streams and so green the surrounding ground in places, that I might have fancied myself in Europe, were it not for the scattered *doleib* palms and the intense heat.

We had been marching continuously for four hours when we reached the Boru River one evening, having marched six in the morning. I was watering my donkey opposite a bush-covered island, and accompanied only by a guide and orderly, when a lion in it, a few yards off, began to roar. The river was about 70 yards wide, banks 15 feet high, and approached through high grass for some distance on either side. I fired my rifle into the darkness, and for a moment the roaring ceased, but began before we had finished watering. As all the surrounding country had just been burned it was evident that the game had fled, so I did not feel over happy when approaching the place I had selected for camp. The following morning I found that the lion had clawed at and cruelly

scored the flank of one of the baggage donkeys when they turned up later. I lost no time in collecting firewood. We carried flambeaux of grass when doing so. Soon the lions made themselves heard, bolting when the rest of the party approached, but returning at once. All night long one heard them. At about 3 A.M. my donkey emitted an earth-shaking bray. I bounded out of bed, thinking a lion was in camp, but was reassured by the sight of three or four huge bonfires surrounding it.

A dozen miles or more from the river, which, owing to the state of my nerves (it was the anniversary of the incident at Turda), I did not leave till daybreak, we came to a piece of sloping forest country containing many *doleib* palms. The view formed my breakfast, for the remainder of the party lost the path.

Four miles from Ragaa we came again on villages. Except Tigilli, about fifteen miles from Kabalosu, there were no other signs of habitations present or past—*babais* the latter are called—on the road.

The Sultan had asked me to search Ragaa, so I told his uncle that I would do so. All along the road from Kabalosu we had seen the tracks of a ridden donkey, so the uncle's protestations, that our visit was quite unexpected, to be disbelieved, needed not the evidence of a man whom I had left sick in the village as I had passed through on my way north. This man had seen ivory, bundles of guns, and other goods being hurried out of the town. Of course, on his unsupported word I did not wish to act. Even when at J. Zaka, a small hill 400 feet high, on the road

to Dem Zubeir, I saw the tracks left by the merchants (some grains of rice, which luxury only they and sheikhs eat). I did not follow them. My orders were to strictly inspect in the "course" of my patrols. I did not see the necessity of altering my "course" in order to swell my bag by some unfortunate traders.

I presently inspected every house. I was considerably annoyed when later the Sultan was egged on to say that we had routed up his harem. His houses did not contain any women, if I remember rightly. In any case they had full warning from the Sultan himself of the inspection he had invited.

The road thence to my headquarters was no long one. The Sopo River, the only important one we crossed till reaching the Biri, flowed in a bed formed of stones and boulders. We were not sorry to cross the latter and stay the night at Sh. Matar's village, five miles from Dem Zubeir. Owing to a misunderstanding, we had marched quite thirty to forty miles that day.

I rode into Dem Zubeir the next morning. The patrol had lasted thirty-nine days, and covered 780 miles or so. As I approached, a red brick tower greeted me. This was Wahbi Eff.'s patent grain store.

This pattern officer had already got everything well in hand. The red bricks looked lovely. A new kiln was just ready to be fired. Work began at dawn and ended at dusk. When the kilns were burning I was sure, no matter what hour I visited them, 11 P.M.,

3 A.M., or any hour, to find Wahbi Eff. superintending the stoking, &c.

Fit? there were none so fit as we. There is nothing like being busy and interested to keep one fit in the tropics. Wahbi Eff. was never sick while with me, though both before my arrival and after my departure he suffered from malaria, work being *necessarily* at a standstill.

My first white visitor was Bishop Geyer. He was looking for a fresh field of missionary enterprise. I well remember the dates he was with me, for he celebrated Mass here on St. Joseph's Feast (19th March). He travels at a wonderful rate, and lives like a native, with no servants to get things ready at halts, &c. Low be it spoken, I think he enjoys this life far more than he would pacing the stately corridors of the Vatican, apart from the good he thinks his mission does.

It happened that at the time the principal sultans of the district were at Dem Zubeir, so they were introduced to him, and he later wrote that they made things easy for him in his tour round the country. Before starting north he made a few days' trip due west, and stood happy on the crest of the Nile-Congo watershed.

Scarcely was he gone when the President of the recruiting Commission arrived, preceded by two enormous flags, and followed by an escort of—five men! He stayed a few days with me, and managed to get one recruit—a man discharged for blindness from the Jehadia. Not knowing that the civil authorities had scoffed at the idea of getting recruits in the

province, I got fourteen men of the Jehadia to volunteer for the regulars. There was a great deal of fuss about this. The military authorities wished to keep the recruits ; the civil ones were determined that they should not. A compromise was arrived at, and about five returned to the irregulars. Recruiting in this province was a farce. The Jehadia was conscripted. Some deserted, but most became good soldiers. No Sultan would voluntarily allow a single man to leave him—least of all to join the regulars.

The native officer with the Commission was the celebrated Mabruk Eff. Fiki, to whom Major Austin, R.E., says he owes the extrication of his party in his Sobat to Mombasa exploration. A magnificent officer, his weak point was his wish to be thought extravagant. He described with detail his purchase of a rifle his commanding officer had given him. Even the gold watch H.M. the late King gave him (and Dr. Garner !) he stated he had bought.

I cannot help mentioning that the men who accompanied Austin say that they were promised a medal, and still look for it. Well they deserved it. The poor pawn, however, is generally forgotten except in after-dinner speeches.

The recruiting Commission, though a thankless job, had its compensations. As no recruits were forthcoming, most of the time was spent shooting. The amount of game that fell to the president's rifle was so great that obtaining carriers became impossible for the time. Every available man was away carrying the trophies, and gorging himself with meat.

Once or twice I left the station and went a short distance into the surrounding country. The amount of babais, now the home of shade-seeking game, told of the teeming population travellers in Zubeir's time had found here.

Having so good an executive officer as Wahbi Eff., there was no point in my staying at Dem Zubeir. I had privately set myself the task of determining the course of the western sources of the Nile, if this could be done in connection with my own work. I had already crossed near the sources of all the western tributaries of the Nile from the Bahr el Arab southward, and now a visit of inspection in the uninhabited district of Dem Bekeir, to which it was proposed to transplant Sultan Saïd Baldas and his people, would bring me to a tributary of the Jur, *i.e.* a southern source of the Nile.

As it was possible that we might meet parties of Niam-Niam, fugitives from the fighting which was (*not*) going on in the south, I took with me an escort of twenty Jehadia and the doctor, Tibsherani Eff., who was refreshed by his eighteen days' rest. A sub-sheikh of Saïd Baldas with several men also accompanied me.

For the first few miles we passed through the scattered villages of Sultan Musa Kamindigo. I do not know what my excuse can be for not introducing the two local sultans before. Their people did all the work of the district in the way of carrying and working.

Musa Kamindigo, lord of the Kreish, was a funny old fellow. His villages covered an area of about

2500 (50 × 50) square miles, and contained about 3000 agriculturists. He was a stooping elderly man, who once had been of importance. Not unlike Atiok Chiok in appearance, he and his people had also become debased by propinquity to a government station.

Sultan Yango, of the Banda, lived in a village containing about 450 inhabitants. He had only recently arrived from French territory, and every day his numbers were swelling. He was old, with a big head and an ugly negroid face. His gala costume consisted of a flannelette shirt of pinky-red tartan and capacious drawers made of bed-ticking, with a large black and white chess-board pattern on it.

The country south of Dem Zubeir was finer than that to the north. Huge trees, both in height and girth, were everywhere. The country was undulating, and water in khors plentiful.

At one village the sid-el-beit (master of the house) brought me some of his asida (porridge) in a bowl. I would neither recommend it nor the vegetable sauce served with it. He showed me the great nets, made of native fibre, with 8-inch meshes, in which game is captured. Almost every group of huts had one or two. The procedure of the chase is as follows. The net being stretched between trees, a huge circle is made, and the hunters endeavour to drive a hartebeest, roan, or even buffalo into the nets. When tangled in them the quarry is despatched with spears.

We soon found ourselves in the pathless forest—

though pathless is a misnomer, considering the use the numerous game tracks, especially those of elephants, were to us.

Here we would cross a half-dried swamp, its bright green surrounded by, indeed at times surrounding, big trees, and reminding one of the "lawn" of an Irish country house. Game was galore, but, save shooting for meat, I could not delay the column. One would see a roan spring out and, with horns laid back, race away between the mighty trees; or a herd of water-buck would watch us intently before taking to flight. Perhaps it was the little dikdik who scurried from his form to halt a bit further on, with ears pricked, to stare at us.

One afternoon I was within ten yards of a small khor when I heard my orderly snap his fingers—the well-known signal—but till two enormous ears swung forward just in front of me, I could not make out the elephant who was standing screened by the foliage on the other side of the watercourse. Before I could change the soft-nosed cartridges in my .303 for solids, he got suspicious, walked away, and I was unable to catch him up. I was naturally disgusted with my want of luck. As Tibsherani Eff. now came up with the rest of the party, I went on with him. We had not gone far before we saw a huge elephant at the end of a clearing. I stalked up to it and fired, but it bolted a short way. I followed and gave it a second shot, and it joined the herd which now could be heard making off. I sent men after it, as I could not wait and was sure I had killed it, but if they found the

carcase they must have hidden the ivory, for I never retrieved it.

Not far from the spot was a small swamp near some *doleib* palms. I should say here that west of the longitude of Wau, in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, there is not a swamp that is the slightest impediment to walking, except perhaps in heavy rains and before the forest fires have burned dried tangled growths.

The Kuru River, too, was near. It was about fifteen yards wide, with banks nine feet high, a rocky bed forming a number of pools, down which the water trickled. Lovely trees, garlanded with creepers, hung over the water in which they were mirrored. Seldom have I seen anything more picturesque—but remember Africa is a place where the big contrasts demand superlatives.

At the halts I plotted my map, and found that my guide was bringing me much further west than the route showed by Junker. Of course, on a march where the men eat "*belila*," which is just *dura* grains boiled, I could not allow myself any books, so occupied my time thus. To correct his direction, the guide and I climbed a small hill, twenty feet high, in front of us. What a sight met our eyes! The ground fell away quite 300 feet at a sharp slope. Below us we saw the tops of the forest trees waving away to the horizon, the surface broken here and there by small peaks. On the horizon, too, in places showed small ranges. The watershed must be miles west of the line marked by French cartographers.

My guide now knew where he was. I could barely

tear myself away to make for J. Yandu, the hill under which Dem Bekeir used to be. As we had passed no water during that march, and, in our confidence of so doing, neglected to fill our water-bottles, it was imperative to march on.

We descended a sharp slope of about 150 feet, and followed a direction at right angles to our former one. Then, as always, in the likelihood of the stragglers, as I named all but my guide and orderly, my sole companions, losing the way, we lit a patch of unburned grass, and after going a mile or so lit another. The pillars of smoke gave them the direction.

We soon reached the foot of the hill after crossing what, in the rains, must be a swamp. *En route* we had disturbed some bees, but none of us were stung, and a few broken twigs on our track served as a warning to those that followed.

The guide found no water at the place he hoped to. The wells among the ruins of the large village on the south side of the hill had long ago fallen in. Digging in the quondam swamp produced none, and though every one, except Tibsherani Eff. and myself, sallied out to search, we went thirsty to bed.

Next morning I knew what it is to be really thirsty. My tongue was round, rough, and thick, and clung to the roof and sides of my mouth. According to Junker's map, the Pongo River should be four miles south of us, so I gave the guide the direction and started over a col which joined the twin peaks of J. Yandu, passed the "babai" of Dem Bekeir, and followed him. My compass soon told

me that he was following the slope of the ground, and not marching due south, so I, compass in hand, led my party, now augmented by a couple of men. After marching four miles we came on a marshy khor. The rest of my party, led by a friend of the guide, marched down the slope for more than four hours before they hit the khor, on which I had been sitting since daybreak.

Never after that was that unfailing water-finder (*sic*), the prismatic compass, questioned. The compass has other qualities. Sultan Atiok Chiok asked me if with it I saw into the hearts of the people among whom I was going. When I answered him with generalities about hitherto unvisited tribes, he was much impressed.

CHAPTER XV

We reach the Pongo—I follow a wounded antelope and lose myself—And find my party by the smoke of a fire—Elephant—I run for my life—A useful lesson—Rubber vines—Our route—My object attained—I return—Tibsherani has an adventure—A lion and a forest fire—An “abode of love”—Dinka morality—Strange country.

IN the afternoon, after an early start, we passed a stagnant khor, much like an English stream, near which had been the village of a sheikh who now lives ten miles west of Wau.

Some miles further brought us to the Pongo, or Ji as it is known in this reach. Dem Bekeir must have moved miles north since Junker's day, perhaps west too.

This shows how deceptive even good maps may become in wild Africa. I maintain that only mountains and rivers, &c., should be inserted in maps intended to serve as permanent records. A strong argument against this is that often the name of a village is carried to and fro in the vicinity where first found, whereas each tribe, and even each generation, has a different name for natural features, *e.g.* a short river like the Pibor has, to my knowledge, the names of Pibor, Yayo, Nyanabec, Gnatila, and most likely has more.

The Ji or Pongo had sloping banks seven or eight

feet high. The bed was narrow and formed of sandy pools, with rocks dividing them, along which the water ran at about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. How grateful to the ear was the gurgling noise. Trees interlaced their branches over the stream. Forest, glade, and brake covered both banks. The tough grass growing in tufts instead of turf, which one never sees, rather spoilt the sylvan simplicity of the place.

This had been a very poor day's march. In the middle of the afternoon I wounded a roan antelope. It was a few yards off and rather tail on to me, and I made the unpardonable mistake of not making sure of my shot. I followed it for some distance, and then sent my orderly, my only companion, as I now had no guide, back to show the rest of the party the new direction. I soon, however, lost the tracks of my quarry, and after making a few casts suddenly realised that I had lost myself.

Naturally the moment I realised this I began to feel thirsty, so plucking an armful of leaves, not unlike those of a chestnut tree, and dropping them every yard or so to show me the way back, I followed the slope of the ground, and in a couple of miles found a muddy patch, and greedily drank the, to me, lovely fluid contained in elephant tracks.

I retraced my steps, and seeing that I had spoken of a long march, and concluding that Tibsherani Eff. would not think of sending to look for me till nightfall, I determined, with the aid of my compass, to march due north to the Wau-Dem Zubeir road, which I should reach in about three days. My

bandolier contained about twenty rounds, and I had matches in my pocket. And a man with a compass is never lost. The question which troubled me was where to spend the nights. If I slept in the fork of a tree, a leopard might be my bedfellow; if on the ground, a lion.

Before starting I climbed a high tree, and, to my delight, saw a column of smoke rising some miles off. I took its bearing, and, quite prepared to find it an ordinary though late forest fire, made for it. Many acres of grass had been burned by the time I reached it. By the way, these fires do practically no damage to adult trees. I dashed through the flames, no great feat, and climbed a tree, the smouldering bark of those passed by the fire rendering them insurmountable. Again Providence befriended me, for another growing column of smoke convinced me that the first fire was no accidental one. I soon came on my party after three to four hours' wandering. We moved off immediately all the party had reassembled, for, with my continued absence, it had halted and sent out scouts to look for me, whom the shots we fired as signals recalled. We were marching along the outer edge of a plain about a mile wide, through which ran a khor. We came on an isolated wood, about five hundred yards in length and fifty in breadth. It was thick with giant ferns, and I fancy it must have been one of the gallery woods described by early explorers of these parts. With its immense trees, it looked, as they described it, like a cathedral in gala dress.

Game was now fairly scarce. There were numbers

of large chimpanzees (?) and other apes. The country, however, between the Pongo and the Wau or Busseiri Rivers was alive with elephant. I was, as well may be imagined, much disappointed at not retrieving my former elephants, so when, close to the Pongo, I came on a herd, I threw to the winds the warning of those who said, "Never interfere with a herd in which there are young." The herd I selected was grazing, the bull in rear. From a few yards I gave him the shoulder shot. He ran a hundred yards, and the herd stopped and looked at him. I had to make a long stalk to get near him again. He was swinging his near foreleg when I did so. I fired, but retired as the herd gathered round him and moved off with him to where I had had my first shot. I followed, and my next shot, from a distance of about fifty yards—I could get no nearer—brought the herd forward at a run towards the sound. My quarry scarcely moved. I returned to my old stand. In the meantime I had noticed that some men of the party had turned up, and those who had not already done so took off their boots. I fired again. The herd gave one united scream and charged with uplifted trunks. I ran as I never ran before and hope never to have to run again. Everything on me—watch, compass, knife, &c.—seemed to rattle like sleigh-bells. I forgot to say that my rifle, a .303, had jammed each time I fired, the breech being badly pitted. The last time I had fired I had had to stamp the breech open, so I could not reload. I had just determined to throw it away, when a khor, 12 feet deep and 4 yards wide, crossed my path.

I jumped into and ran along it, impeded at every step by low-lying branches. Seeing a large pool, I jumped into it, rifle and all, and tried to sink. Alas ! when my head was under water I was conscious that my feet were above it, and *vice versa*. On the bank above I could hear the elephants tramping and screaming, and some distance away some shouting. Presently, at my very feet the whole herd thundered across the khor. At the time I would have given a good deal if the incident had taken only as long in happening as it takes telling. Did I run three hundred yards, or thirty ? Was I five minutes in the water, or only as many seconds ? I will never know.

The incident taught me a few useful facts. It is useless to attack elephant with a small-bore rifle unless one is a crack shot. The heart is so big that, unless one severs the great arteries at the top, the wounded animal may go miles before succumbing. It is generally fatal to get into a watercourse. If the elephant get one's wind, he has one like a rat in a trap. The great elephant hunters, the Mandalla, tell me that they will never tackle even a sorely wounded elephant in a khor. From them I also heard that when chased one should shout loudly. The intelligence of the pursuer leads him to look for the companion to whom one shouts. Hence he probably overruns one's trail. Shouts like monkeys' "hough !" are also useful, as elephants are terrified of them. Monkeys give them a bad time, especially when they are young, chase and pinch them, jump on their backs and pull out their hair.

I looked like Neptune when I rejoined my party, which had now come up. All around elephants were trumpeting like mad. It was dusk, so I halted where I was, in order to send next morning a couple of men to cut out the trophies I was certain needed but the knife to secure. I was an idiot not to stay myself, but I did not feel justified in wasting the time. I retrieved nothing. For the next five days we passed, in different herds, quite a hundred elephants a day. When marching in the dark it was not pleasant, not to say dangerous, to hear the echoes of the forest awakened by a herd breaking away quite close to us, the fear being that the inquisitive calves would come to investigate and be followed by their mammas to protect them.

The trees were not so large as further north. It was, however, picturesque. The rocky, undulating country formed valleys, in one of which my men declared they saw the tracks of eland. I could not make them out myself.

One morning we halted near a string of pools through which the water perceptibly trickled. There was a great quantity of rubber vines about. At the edge of the pool was the track of rhinoceros, accentuated by the scar he rips along the path as he walks. Natives are convinced that he does this with his horn, which, being of the nature of matted hair and not joined to the bone of the head, they maintain hangs over his nose like a busby bag when he is unsuspicious. Ridiculous, of course.

Of course, we being much further west than the

route followed by Junker, the Busseiri took some time to reach. I halted in a shady glen, out of which we had turned a herd of hartebeest and some gazelle. I was too tired to follow them, but as we were short of meat I allowed a couple of men to go out on their own account. My plan on such occasions, *i.e.* when bad luck had followed my stalks, was to give a man two rounds. If he got anything, well and good, I paid; if he did not, he paid for the ammunition. Though his weapon was an old Remington, I never remember one of them paying. Remember, of course, that the locally enlisted Jehadia were accustomed, from boyhood up, to stalk game to spear it, so got fairly close.

These men came back with the welcome news that the Busseiri, as this branch of the Wau River is called, was only a few miles south of us. I followed the glen, which soon merged into a dried-up swamp on which were a number of marabout stalks. This brought me to the river in the middle of another, which, when overflowed, would be $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad. On the opposite side, at the edge of the trees, was a large herd of waterbuck. As the men had killed, I stalked for view, crossing the sandy river-bed 22 yards broad. The perpendicular banks, between which a faint trickle of water flowed from pool to pool (this was the height of the hot weather), were about 20 feet high. From its size one would say that the source of the river must be quite 40 miles further west. This, if so, would mean that when the frontier is demarcated we will find ourselves the possessors of

another 30,000 square miles of country south of the Bahr el Arab.

I could now turn back. South of me was the territory of the Sultan Tambara (Niam-Niam). The wakils of Saïd Baldas, who had come with me, declared themselves highly satisfied with the country. I had also carried a traverse near the sources of all the western sources of the Nile, from the northernmost one to those of the southern rivers. The swamp I mentioned stopped two miles down-stream, when the river on both sides ran between small containing hills. The branches of trees on either bank might perhaps scratch a steamer's paint, but I feel sure one could penetrate much further west than this.

We halted for the night, prepared to receive the Niam-Niams if they came, but in this almost virgin wilderness we were undisturbed save by the yowling of leopards, whose tracks we saw next morning. We marched along the right bank till daybreak, and then crossed. That day we found water with the aid of a wart-hog! The time to halt was past, but there was no sign of water. I saw a wart-hog, the flesh of which is almost the only tasty one in the forest, and shot it. His stomach showed us that he had just drunk. A few casts round brought to light a pool hidden under the overhanging roots of a big tree.

Our way lay over long undulations. Often the now tangled dry grass had been spared by forest fires and made the way difficult. At one place, Babai Khair-mulla, so called after the famous slave-raider, we found what may have been, as suggested, a French settle-



GOLO WOMEN WHO HAVE BROUGHT IN GRAIN FOR SALE TO
GOVERNMENT.



RUBBER (LANDOLPHIA) SEEDLINGS IN THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM AT
WAU.

ment. There was a long string of large pools, some many yards long by 20 wide, where we put up some teal. Also the remains of gardens and the "gudwal" (raised water channel) of a shaduf. The broad tracks of elephants made a royal road for us.

At this place Tibsherani Eff. had an adventure. He came panting in to where I was seated near a pool, with the exclamation, "Sir, I have run quite 400 yards!" Such a feat needed explanation. It appeared that, shortly after my guide and self had passed, a herd of elephant grazing approached our tracks. When it saw Tibsherani's party, one of the cows, with ears outstretched, had trotted out to investigate it. It took quite a time to collect the scattered men and our belongings.

An inquisitive elephant can be quite nasty. Near Dem Zubeir one of them seized a donkey and flung it into a high tree. The native officer (a bad specimen) in charge of it refused to take the responsibility of shooting it, as he feared that he might have to pay for it, so it starved there.

A few miles from the above Babai we came on Babai Momei on the Pongo River. Here the remains of fallen-in wells and the scope of the ruins showed that it once was an important place. It was on a long slope on the right bank of the river.

The Pongo had already reached adolescence, for it was almost as large and much the same as the Busseiri. One night we had to halt without water. While looking for it, one of the men found a fine pair of tusks. To enable the rest of the party to find us—

it was very late—I set a fallen tree alight. It made a bonfire many feet high, but, to show the density of the high forest, it was not seen till quite close by the incomers.

From the Pongo northwards we passed many babais, though water was sometimes difficult to find. The old inhabitants must have used wells. In one place we dug holes in a swamp and drank the water that filtered into them.

When close to the Kuru we were rather amused by the result of a united shout to frighten a small herd of giraffe who stupidly stood close by and watched us. We were forcing our way through a depression filled for many yards across with dry tangled grass, two to three feet high. Our shout frightened a lion, perhaps spoilt his intended dinner, for away he bounded from quite close. He repaid us. One of my donkeys was very stubborn—most likely dying from trypanosomiasis. He lay down. I forbade the native in charge to beat him, as once the black man commences he is likely to lose control of himself, but tried the Arab remedy (known further north, *vide* "The Strayings of Sandy") to make a stubborn camel, "a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan child in one," rise. This is to approach the brute with fire. He does not wait to be even scorched. The tangled grass, however, finished him. The man in charge of him watched him lie down to die. Not knowing what to do, he remained close to him, and was found by a man, whom I sent out to bring him in, seated on one side of the donkey with a lion on the other—not hand in hand, of

course. In the meantime a really bad forest fire had started on our tracks. The grass, thick, tangled, and dry, formed fine fuel, and the fire roared heavenwards like a furnace. I was indeed relieved to find that the two men had run down the depression and reached a khor, which they crossed, and so made their way to camp unscathed. At our halting-place we found a bed of grass and a stick, three feet long, with a dozen or more very tasty fish just roasted on it. We had come on an "abode of love."

Marriage among natives is a question of £ s. d. The older men have the hoes, &c., of currency, and so buy up the women, who are scarce. While the rains last these are dutiful enough. Once the dry weather begins, away go the bachelors into the pathless jungle, and one fine evening the patriarchs find no supper ready. The young wives have disappeared. Fruit, honey, fish, and game galore make the idyll a perfect one. With the rains the swains return. *Of course* they know nothing of this girl or that, and are very angry at the accusations of impropriety levelled at them by their elders. Shortly after the young wives return, and are quite brazen. If their condition be interesting, it is sufficient to say that Angrowo or some other sylvan deity has favoured them. Children, especially girls, are a good speculation, so "Let 'em all come," say the elders, as they long for their own young days.

The Kuru River (called Chell by the Dinkas) runs in a very rocky bed from here to its junction with the equally rocky Biri. The trees on its banks were

usually large, and every now and then we came on open glades.

We had followed it for some considerable distance when we came upon footprints on newly burned grass. My guide and I were not left long alone, for a couple of my men, on seeing the marks, came running to join me. It was still difficult for them to realise that every one is not an enemy nowadays. We presently came on a party of practically naked Mandalla, who led me to their camp. The bag of this party consisted of two animals like badgers, a dikdik, and a quantity of rats, which they got by firing patches of grass and spearing what came out. Arrived at their camp, I was received by the elders while my guides went off to dress. I was told that they had been unlucky in not coming on elephants. They were hard up for food, for I saw my men giving them the game they had. I promised to shoot them something, and did shortly afterwards out of a herd of waterbuck. It proved the truth of "Cast thy bread upon the waters and it will return to thee," for when I patrolled their country later I was given a triumphal progress. After all, the Bible is the accumulated wisdom of æons.

Except those of a Uganda cob and wart-hog, I brought no heads back on this trip, as the roan, waterbuck, &c., I shot were smaller than those I already had killed. With limited transport one cannot accumulate trophies.

The country now was rather strange. First on one bank it would be high, then on the other. I had left the river to avoid going round a bend, when I came to

a fall of ground at the foot of which, two hundred feet or more below me, the river, quite thirty yards broad and full of water, meandered through limitless forest.

I have seen many of the sights of the world : the rugged grandeur of the Himalayas, the blue waters of the Swiss and Italian lakes. They are fine. They far surpass the paltry height, the tree-screened river, and unchanging green of Equatorial Africa. I need no one to tell me this. But this I know, Nanda Devi did not impress me more than many a peak a couple of hundred feet high, and the lovely views on Lucerne or Como gave me less pleasure than the aspect of the crocodile-haunted pools of many a tropical river. Why? Let me answer by another question. Why do we hear "the East a-calling"? Why do we hasten back to it? Not, surely, the acrid smell of the native village; not the broiling discomfort of the sun; not the sweaty brow, the heavy helmet, nor the clinging clothes; not the steak from the coarse-fleshed antelope, and the dry army biscuit washed down with water off which, too often, one blows the slime, feeling that one is lucky to get it; not the possibility of fevers, the bites of the tsetse, serut, and mosquito: surely not these call us. Answer your own question, ye speakers of the Why—I cannot, and others cannot either, though they may try. I often wonder why we maffick over an explorer. He lives a life compassing in its full the freedom and ecstasy of sensations his very being longs for. Rather admire the man chained, all unwilling, to an office stool. Him, too, who with

no hope of gain, tramps the unknown parts of the world against his inclination.

We leapt from rock to rock to get down to the river. Close to the latter, in the bank of a small khor, was a soft white rock which elephants had quarried with their tusks. When first detached the rock had a rather saline flavour. Around were tracks of innumerable animals who frequented this salt-lick.

We reached the Wau-Dem Zubeir road, where it crosses the Kuru River and Dem Zubeir, after a twelve days' absence, in which we had covered a distance of about 230 miles, of which 50 only were on native tracks.

CHAPTER XVI

Marching and camping arrangements—My daily duties—The young wife and the bundle of straws—A Dervish movement—The telepathy between natives—The Dem Zubeir elephant hunter—Banda morals—White ants—The need of zeribas—Fertitau fishermen—Scenes on our way—The Kuru—A chance at a rhinoceros.

MY marching and camping engagements may be of interest—even a guide.

At 3 A.M. my servant brought me a cup of cocoa, sugar, and a biscuit. The latter I put in my pocket. Quarter of an hour later, the loads being made up, we started. My orderly, guide (with my rifle, water-bottle, &c.), and self went on ahead; the rest came along in their own time. At sunrise I divested myself of extra clothing, which I deposited on the path for one of the carriers to pick up, and assumed my helmet. At 9 A.M. I halted, spread my furwa on the ground, and with my helmet resting on the bridge of my nose, went to sleep. At 11 A.M. my servant brought me tea with sugar, an antelope steak or village chicken, and some biscuits—I had eaten the one I had put in my pocket. After breakfast I had my bath, if there was water for it. I then slept, a blanket making capital shade. At 3 P.M. I started again, to halt at 6 P.M. My warmed-up dinner—the same as breakfast, with the addition of soup—was brought me a few minutes

after the arrival of the carriers, and I then went to bed. At sundown I put on some warmer clothing, which the guide carried for me. Our camp was a square. One side my camp bed, with mosquito-curtains (to keep off insects, as mosquitoes are few in the bush). On the opposite side the carriers cut grass and laid it as beds, and built small fires between which warmed them front and back. On the two other sides were the escort. Animals, if any, and baggage were put in the middle. Occasionally I was accompanied by more than one man, but as a rule, Morgan Nasr, "my guide, philosopher, and friend," was the only man of the Jehadia with me. I have already described how he was enlisted in that corps. He was a fine specimen of black, with good copper-coloured features, rather ugly, but merry. About twenty years of age, 5 feet 9 inches in height, and well-proportioned, I am indebted to him for a lot of folk-lore. At times, too, he would dive off the path to bring me a bunch of edible berries or a root, and used to amuse me by catechising me later, "Now, what do you recognise?" he would say, "surely that is the same sort of bush from which I plucked you the fruit yesterday when the sun was so high." He took a great interest in the political situation of Europe!

For the next six weeks I was busy sending grain and ivory to Wau, and superintending the building operations in the station.

I had also to dispose of small cases, and listen to the sultans' complaints against each other. Daily came whispers, alas, too well substantiated, of illicit ivory trade,

gun-running, and — slave-trading. The government monopoly in ivory which had existed, and practically did still exist, was the cause of much unpleasantness. When Sultan Nasr Andal came to see the Sirdar, Wahbi Eff., who knew that he was a "fancy man," sent with him all the ivory he (Nasr) had recently sold. He was seen arriving, followed by about eighty men carrying ivory. "See what a magnificent present that 'pukka' sultan is bringing the Sirdar," was the remark of the older officials. When the Sirdar had left it was discovered that this ivory had already been paid for by Wahbi Eff., but that Nasr Andal wished to complain of the price he had got! An instance of his underhand practices is this. I had been told to purchase all ivory collected before a certain date—that of promulgating the ivory ordinance in the district—so asked Nasr Andal to sell all he had. He declared that he had none; but next day sold 1600 lbs. to the Greek, Pantazogli, to whom I had given a permit. This Greek, by the way, bought a great quantity of ivory in the French Congo. Unlike that on our side of the watershed, which is short and thick, the tusks he bought were shaped like those of a mastadon, and much lighter built and longer for the same weight.

Among the complainants I remember was a woman, whose principal complaint was that her husband had married a young new wife. She appeared in court with a bundle of short straws, quite four inches thick. When asked what she had to say, she dramatically pulled out one straw, flung it on the

ground, and after a pause, said, "He gives me no scent;" another straw, "He gives me no soap," and so on till fifty straws, about a third of the bundle, were scattered on the ground. "Well, go on," said I. She looked at me for a minute, and then said, "These other straws are complaints which I won't tell a young man like you!"

More serious was the dissatisfaction among the sultans, because I had not inspected Sultan Nasr Andal's village. Although I knew that it was swept and garnished, I determined, *pro forma*, to inspect it. I rather hoped to find something at J. Telgona, a recognised slave-market.

In the meantime Sultan Dardug's son had got into trouble, and his village had to be suddenly inspected. In it was found a *raya* (a religious banner), with the following legend on it:—

"In the name of God, the merciful and gracious.
Help *him*, Oh God, and we salute thee.
When God looks favourably Victory is near."

The question raised was, Who is this "*him*?"—the word that took the place of the name of the Mahdi or Khalifa. It soon became known that a regular Dervish movement had been going on in the north-west of the district.

While still in Dem Zubeir I got an instance of the telepathy that exists among natives—the intervening space being uninhabited, there was no question of shouting, as is done along the Egyptian Nile. It was rumoured that the Governor of the province was dead.

Two days after I heard this, I got a letter to say that he was very ill, and a few days later that he was dead. I had known Boulnois for only a short time, though serving under his orders for some months. He struck me as a man full of energy and resource. He knew his own mind, and was afraid of no responsibility. He had a lucky star. In him the army lost the makings of a great leader.

A Dem Zubeir "character" was the elephant-hunter, who regularly brought tusks to the Mamur for sale. Armed with a muzzle-loading gun, filled with as much gunpowder, bits of iron, stones, &c., as it would hold, he would doggedly follow a herd till a bull separated himself from it. When his intended victim was asleep at midday he would approach to within ten yards, set the gun on a tripod, and pull the trigger. When he recovered consciousness he would crawl home and send his pals to fetch the spoils.

While at Dem Zubeir this time I paid a visit to Sultan Yango's village. The Banda houses are far better built than those of other Fertitai, and not on piles as are most of the latter. The walls were of mud, or wattle plastered with it, and on them were a number of rude drawings; one represented a British officer talking to a native one.

In this tribe the boys and unmarried men live together in large sheds, in the building of which they take great pride, and so have the best residences in the village. Other tribes have much the same customs. The girls sleep in their parents' huts. Among the Dinkas, it might be mentioned as of interest, the

unmarried of both sexes live in big sheds together. A girl is not considered to have lost her virginity, and fetches as good a price, even though she has added to the population before a recognised marriage.

I left Dem Zubeir just as the rains started. My first objective was the Kuru River, where I had had a lot of bricks burned, wherewith to make a bridge, in the hopes of finding stone to make lime with. I should add that I did not find any. I had also to report on the clearing of the road. Wahbi Eff. had seen to this, and made it wonderfully straight. To force the natives to use it he had felled trees on the old path. Now the track swung zigzag along the new clearing. My third job was to clear and cover another well at Dem Idris. Thence I intended to go to Kos-singa *via* Telgona, to the Bahr el Arab, through the Mandalla country, and to Kafiakingi, where the native officer I had sent there with twenty men reported a certain amount of unrest; and so back to Dem Zubeir. Shortly after starting we passed a number of giraffe and hartebeest, from the latter of which I took toll. At some of the rest-houses I suffered from the ravages of the white ants. In a night they ate a corner of my mosquito curtain that touched the ground, and pared quite an appreciable amount off my boots at the same time.

At Khor Affifi I asked the custodian of the rest-house (I had planted the nucleus of a village at each of them) why he had no zeriba round his own huts. He replied that he had been too busy clearing the forest for his cultivation. A few days later I passed

through the same place and found a stout zeriba, leaning outward at an angle of about 30° , all but completed. I then heard that the night after I left a woman left her hut to fetch water, and promptly found herself facing a lion. She screamed, and every one (five all told) turned out, waving clothes at four lions who were in the square, not fifty yards in diameter, formed by the huts. I remained there a day to help them to complete their stronghold, but neither saw nor heard lions.

I had intended to go from Dem Indris to Chakchak, but the guide I had declared that the way was waterless, so as only a few showers had fallen, and we could not depend on the rains for water, I had to change my plans. I therefore followed the "Mandalla road" to Kossinga. It is used by the Mandalla on their expeditions south to hunt elephants.

Just after we turned up this road we passed a fair-sized hill. It was quite invisible from the road, owing to the height and thickness of the forest. These hills, scattered all over it, would make the triangulation of the district a work of the greatest simplicity. I left my whole party cutting up an antelope I had shot, and, as I knew the direction, I went on. My sole companion was a bugler, whom I was bringing to Kafiakingi. Chabinji, whom the Mamur, a great proselytiser, transformed into the young Moslem, Mabruk Suliman, was taken from a man caught red-handed selling slaves. He came from near the Welle River, but was not a Niam-Niam, as the A'Zendei are usually called—a term of reproach (the sound is supposed to represent

the munching of human flesh), as great as "Habeshi" is to the Abyssinian. When we halted he made me a grand couch of leaves on the damp ground, on which, evidently, a heavy shower had fallen before our arrival. It was 4 P.M. before the rest of the party found us.

On reaching the Kuru I left the Mandalla road, in order to fix the junction of the Biri and that river. The scenery along it was very fine. For instance, at one camp where a lion serenaded us, we were on a plateau a hundred feet above the stream.

Every little khor held water from the first showers. We came upon the last parties of Fertitai, busy fishing and drying their catch, or gathering honey, &c. In one hunting village my men keenly bartered away the antelope meat they had for strips of crocodile. I tasted the latter. It was rather coarse, with a juicy, beefy flavour.

The fishing operations are of interest.

Both ends of a pool are dammed up. Then, shoulder to shoulder, stabbing with their spears, the fishermen advance, and soon account for every living thing in it. If the pool is deep they bruise a bulb found in great quantities in the forest. This they sprinkle up-stream. It stupefies the fish, who float to the surface and are captured. The same is done with a large red flower (I described it as growing in Southern Kordofan). It is supposed to blind crocodiles. Honey collecting is easy. When a tree containing a bee's nest is passed the finder lights a fire about it, and, protected by the smoke, cuts it

down. The honey has a peculiar and rather nice flavour. It is very watery.

Near the junction of the rivers the trees dwindled greatly in size. I saw a lot of game, including a herd of fifteen male waterbuck drinking. They made a lovely picture, with a background of the well-wooded opposite bank of the Kuru. The junction of the rivers must in the rains have resembled that of the Agwei and Pibor. The spit of land which divided them was almost void of trees. The Kuru was broad and sandy, the Biri narrow and rocky to the last. I am sure that once the mouth of the Bahr el Arab is cleared river steamboats could come even much further south than this.

On the left bank of the Biri was a solitary *doleib* palm. Not far from it Commander Fell, R.N., in floating down from Dem Zubeir to Chakchak in a *canvas* boat, was attacked by crocodiles. At one place he had to carry his belongings round a cataract. He told me that the agony he suffered in helping his two companions was awful. It showed him what wonderful fellows carriers are. The boat cut deep into his shoulder. Were I to mention "grit" I would lay myself open to the charge of gilding gold.

The rest-house and ferry is four miles due north of the river junction. At the latter place the Kuru assumes the Dinka name Chell. It is quite a hundred yards broad at the ferry. I read that the oases in Upper Egypt are fed with the water from the Bahr el Ghazal. When one thinks of the imperceptible amount that enters Lake No, and the myriads of

cubic feet that flow down the grand rivers of that province only to disappear, one can well believe that statement.

I followed the (already mapped) road towards Chak-chak. There was practically no game along the road. Its absence accounted for the attenuated bodies of the tsetse flies, and the violence the few we met displayed in attacking us.

The country was peculiar, the trees further apart and smaller than elsewhere. Occasionally there were inexplicable breaks and hummocks in the ground, and here and there huge slabs of rock, and groups of boulders, ten feet high. Further on we came again on large trees. Near a rest-house were the standards—like a towel-horse—on which a hunting party had dried the meat of some animal they had killed.

As we walked along we frequently came upon “notices” on the trees. One would be blazed a foot square, another would carry a number of small cuts. Like North American Indians, the children of Nature in these parts are not slow in devising means of communicating with friends who may follow them.

I need not go into endless repetitions of the scenery, which the newly sprouting grass, answering to the fairy wand of the rain-god, rendered particularly alluring. Vista after vista passes before my eyes as I follow the blurred lines in my field-book; but, being no master of words, I feel any attempt on my part to do them justice is worse than useless.

Some miles from Sh. Ramadan’s village I shot a hartebeest, and a second shot brought a female down

by mistake. She was in milk, and I drank some of it. It was such as any other.

I do not think I have mentioned how we used to indicate to our party that an animal had been shot. If the trophy was worth keeping, the head would be cut off. If not, a joint, or even an ear, would be laid on the path, or hung on the fork of a tree, and a line of leaves show the direction of the kill. Only once was a large joint taken by a beast of prey before my carriers came up to it.

To get to Sh. Ramadan's we had to go down a sharp ledge of rock. When there I told him that he might send his people to fetch some of the meat I had killed for himself. In true Dinka fashion he did not seem a bit obliged. I begged him not to make a favour of accepting the present, as lions and hyenas would make short work of what my people left. He then sent for it.

From this place we struck across country for Beit Itman—the village at which I had halted when marching from Kossinga to Chakchak.

Our path led us at first across a bit of country that very much resembled the dried-up bed of a river. The "banks" steep, 20 feet high and 100 yards apart, were, like the putative bed of the stream, covered by trees.

The Kuru, where we crossed it, was still a series of pools. The right bank was high and wooded, the left a broad plain. The latter was full of game of every sort. It looked like the pictures of a "Sportsman's Paradise," which one sees in old books of

travel. To the left a small herd of buffalo were standing swinging tails and heads; from the edge of the forest came a herd of waterbuck on their way to water. Jackson hartebeest were in scores on my right, and a few single roan stood boldly out. Numbers of cob were scattered everywhere in herds and singly. My men pointed out rhinoceros and lion, but I could not distinguish either.

Before dark I shot a cob for the pot and camped. We heard lions in the distance during the night, but our three great fires were not wanted. I think I was the only person in the district nervous of lion. A man, quite close to Dem Zubeir, despatched a fine one single-handed with his spear. A native officer, unconsciously I must admit, pursued one from thicket to thicket in mistake for a Jackson hartebeest.

On going on, the tracks of rhinoceros and giraffe were everywhere. Again and again we passed the scar the former makes on his path.

The watershed between the Chell and Sopo appears to be very flat, the trees on it of moderate size, with here and there small tangled clumps of bushes. Several places are undoubtedly swamps in wet weather. Above one of these we came upon a long series of parallel comb-like ridges of rock, with some white quartz about. A prospector would have been in his element.

As we marched I was always on the look-out for the Chakchak-Kossinga track. Tracks of elephant and other game would have deceived me, but to



EL KAIMAKAN SWENY BEY AND BIMBASHI HUTCHINSON, D.S.O.
(RIVER JUR WITH MY HOUSE AND SERVANT IN BACKGROUND)



OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS AT THE "EED" RECEPTION AT WAU.
(MABRUK EFFENDI FIKI SEATED ON RIGHT)

Morgan they were as different as a home-made blouse is to a creation of Paquin's to a woman.

It was daylight when we marched into Beit Itman this time, so I saw that it was quite a large settlement.

We left it by direct route to J. Telgona. There was a path for a few miles of the way to the new clearing, made by a man called Ali, who had settled there with his family. He was the father of one of the boldest women I have seen among blacks—more of a man than a woman.

Before reaching Beit (the house of) Ali I came upon a rhinoceros. We saw him at the end of a long glade, from the place where I had just shot a water-buck. There was a strict order against killing rhinoceros unless they charged. I do not think that I quite kept the spirit of the regulation, for I walked in my original direction, though it brought me within thirty yards of him. A tempter at my elbow, in the person of my servant, kept whispering as he touched his side, "Hit him here, sir!" A troop of wart-hogs, 100 yards the far side of the rhinoceros, took fright, and tails erect, bolted. At last he turned round, ran a couple of steps towards me, and then turned about and bolted. As that could not be called a charge, I lost my chance. He had quite good horns, and was of the white or grass-eating, square-lipped species, which is the sort in this part of the country. They are pretty numerous.

CHAPTER XVII

I shoot a hartebeeste—And resolve to “mak siccar” in future—A farewell letter from Tibsherani Eff.—Sultan Nasr Andal's slaves are not slaves—His courtly manners—Dinner with Wahbi Eff.—Another sportsman's paradise—Sport and slaughter among the hippos—Daala—Our first Mandalla village—We are the first white men to enter it—Umbegago and a change in scenery—Wet weather villages—An amusing incident—“Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?”—Rivers great and small.

THE distance between Beit Itman and J. Telgona was much further than the compiled map, which I so often abuse, had led me to suppose, so that, although we started early, it was past midday before we reached the Boru River. The country we passed was covered with big trees, and in places park-like. No showers had yet fallen so far north.

About half-way from Beit Ali we crossed the back of a long low hill with its highest peak on our right, J. Tul (from Tawil=long). The country about was, as one might expect, rocky, and covered with bamboo. I put up a couple of rhinoceros. This animal likes the vicinity of low hills. From the top of the hill I saw the five peaks of J. Telgona far away, so telling the remainder to come on slowly, I took with me Ali's son and son-in-law, my guides, and two of the Jehadia, who insisted on coming with me. It was well they did, as the guide's Arabic was almost a

distinct dialect and I would have lost a lot I heard about forest devils. Not many miles from J. Tul we came on to the "buta" of the river Sopo. A "buta" is the treeless plain, submerged in the rains, and covered with coarse grass in the dry weather, which one finds in many parts of the banks of tropical rivers.

My guides asked me to shoot a hartebeest for them. I did so in two shots, one in the region of the lungs, the other at the base of the horns, which I measured, found small, and decided not to keep. It soon became evident that the vultures would take toll of the carcass. I had gone about a mile from it when, looking round, I saw the poor beast raise itself to a sitting posture, to be beaten down by the vultures which crowded the air above it. I waited, as I hoped that he was dead, but up he got again. The sight made me feel sick. I cursed the ill-luck that had let me, for want of a knife, leave its throat uncut. I started running towards it, the matted grass and irregularities of the dried-up swamp impeding my progress, firing at intervals into the scrimmage which every now and then took place. I repeat this gruesome story as a lesson to others. On the carcass I registered a vow to "mak siccar" another time.

On another occasion I had a more or less similar experience. I bowled a cob over with a spine shot, but as my knife was blunt and took time in cutting through the skin of the throat, I sent my gun-carrier to fetch another from one of my men who was passing. Suddenly the cob got up, and before I could throw myself on him, was off.

As the previous instance put two miles on to a very long march, it drove home the lesson.

The Sopo, where we crossed it, ran in a broad, sandy bed, with huge pools at every hundred yards, in the middle of the "buta." Again we found ourselves in a "Sportsman's Paradise," waterbuck, hartebeest, and cob galore. I stalked a herd of the latter, but it got away before I could fire without browning the lot. This waste of time disgusted me—I wanted meat for ourselves—so I walked boldly up to the next I saw. On the way I put up a fine cob on my right and a hartebeest on my left. My right barrel (black powder .500) bowled the first over like a rabbit, and my left repeated the performance with the second. I tried to look as if I always did that sort of thing. Had I complied with the requests of my companions, I would have raised a hecatomb of game.

We now passed a number of ditch-like khors, then circumvented some long pools, and found ourselves on an island of doleib palms. On the north side of this was one of the secondary beds of the Boru, and then another, deeper and evidently the principal one.

The left bank of the Boru offered a splendid site for the headquarters of the district. I understand that, to avoid annoying Sultan Nasr Andal, Ragaa, on a rocky unnavigable stream, was later selected. J. Telgona, too, was the northernmost limit of the tsetse fly at the time.

Arrived at Dem Obo, under J. Telgona, I rather expected a letter from Wahbi Eff. I had arranged that he and Tibsherani Eff. should be timed to arrive at Kossinga and Ragaa respectively, when I got to

Telgona. Alas, constant taking of temperature and medicine and no exercise had laid the latter on his back. His letter to me, a farewell one, as he expected his "relief" at once, was filled with technical terms, describing his symptoms, and ended in the hope of meeting in a better world. We did meet, months later, at Halfa. Wahbi Eff. determined to combine the two patrols, and so went by Ragaa to Kossinga. Between these two places he surprised a caravan of slaves going to Nasr Andal. It consisted of five men (bazingers), five girls in budding womanhood, and thirty-three or forty-three (I forget which) small boys, the whole led by a Zanzibari, who declared that he had been guide to Stanley, &c., and was now wakil of a Niam-Niam Sultan in French territory.

I hired Sheikh Obo's donkey and started to Kossinga, twenty-five miles or so to the south. Before reaching the Boru again, we passed through a forest of doleib palms. I tried the fruit—a hard orange ball, three inches in diameter. It tasted like oakum of mango flavour, peppered with a little cayenne. I did not get the fibres out of my teeth for a long time. Leaving this belt of palms we skirted the right of a plain, through which the river ran, and then crossed the latter, which was quite 200 yards wide, with banks twenty feet high, from which emerged a quantity of birds like red starlings. The right bank was covered to its very edge by small timber and undergrowth. Presently we found ourselves on a "buta," known in these parts as a "dahl," which was covered with game.

I pushed on on my donkey. Rain had fallen near

Kossinga, so I had to dismount and walk a bit over the slimy black cotton soil. Imagine my astonishment to see my party, five all told, just behind me. They had walked quite forty miles the day before, and at a great rate covered the distance this day. The Jehadia were fine fellows.

I passed a quantity of land cleared for cultivation. To keep game out thin withes and branches are fastened from tree to tree around it at about a height of three feet six inches. When the antelope come against this *unnatural* barrier, they fear a trap and retire.

Sultan Nasr Andal came running out to meet me, explaining that the slaves were not slaves. I did not know what he was talking about till Wahbi Eff., hearing us, came out of his house. He had been writing me a letter in English. I had not known, till then, that he knew it at all. A fellah of the fellahin, he had taught himself.

The chief of the caravan was summoned and convicted himself. His tale of being an ambassador to the Mudir from the Sultan of Rafai was too thin, unsupported by credentials or presents. I referred the matter to Wau, where it was thought advisable to accept his story in spite of a letter to Sultan Nasr Andal, which Wahbi Eff. had confiscated, in which it said that the writer sent him (Nasr) two small tusks, and "what he asked for." Two months later I found the men of the party in the Mongaiyat hills. They said the girls and boys (none of the latter were more than twelve years old) had gone

(*sic*) back alone to French territory. Our chief difficulty, in dealing with the party, was that none of us knew any language in which the slaves were conversant.

Wahbi Eff. gave me dinner. He had a great recipe for preserving mutton, which tasted so much better than skinny fowl or coarse venison. The mutton was fried, or rather boiled, in well-salted boiling fat, and so treated would last a month.

In all dealings with natives and others I have tried to draw a distinct line between official and social intercourse. Nasr, as an important Sultan, came to tea, and was amusing in an elephantine way. His "tea" consisted of half a bottle of whisky neat. He then saw me off. He has learned quite courtly manners from the Arabs.

I slept half-way to Dem Obo at Sangrefut. I was told that this word, a joke of its sheikh, Onbashi, means, "pass on, there is nothing here for you." I had been asked to stay here, however. The people declared that they were starving, and asked me to shoot them something. I spent a morning doing so. We soon came to another sportsman's paradise. I so often allude to this Elysium that I hasten to say that I have passed only four. I wounded a fine cob which bolted from his herd and joined another on the other side of a khor. I followed and saw the treatment meted out to trespassers in the lower creation. Barely had he arrived when a bull challenged him. I and the herd watched the fight with interest. The wounded one, with a bellow, at last

gave in. The conqueror butted him twice, and as he lay as if dead, surveyed him. I fired and brought the conqueror down. He carried a lovely head. One of my companions, however, could not contain himself, but dashed forward to "hallal" the beast (the Mahomedans, like Jews, eat Kosher meat). When he was within a yard of the first-hit animal, it bounded up, and I saw man and beast disappear over the plain, putting every sort of game to flight. I shot one or two other things on the way to a pool where there were a lot of hippopotami. Arrived at the pool, I took up a position and fired at the first male head—rather ginger-coloured—that appeared above water. It lurched forward and disappeared. Another unsuspecting animal shared the same fate, and a third was wounded and had to be despatched. This sort of slaughter was no sport. It was like knocking a swimmer on the head with an axe as he tries to climb into one's boat. Famine or no famine, I purpose never to shoot hippo in this way again.

At Kossinga an addition had been made to my party. This was Andal Abdulahi, a half-brother of the Sultan's, the chief of the bazingers, and future murderer, at the Sultan's command, of the latter's whole brother Obo.

Andal Abdulahi was the son of Nasr's father by an Arab mother. He shared the vices of both without their virtues. He was about thirty years of age (in 1905), and had been a lot with French officers. According to him France was the greatest of nations, ruled by an emperor who conquered the

world. England was a tiny country owing allegiance to a mere woman. England was so poor that she could give nothing; France so rich, as the monthly payments to the Sultan showed, that she did not know what to do with her wealth. "We hear, however," shrewdly remarked the sheikh, "that taking, not giving, is the rule in French Congo, otherwise it would be a good thing to follow the givers of presents."

J. Telgona, with its five peaks, looks like a giant hand emerging from its wrist upwards from the earth, and is situated in a vast tree-covered plain. We passed between the thumb and forefinger, and halted at a village which drew its supply of water from wells. Abdulahi was much put out at my paying for the water. Water and growing wood are always free. I wished, however, to make my payment wages in advance for making new wells. Heedless generosity defeats itself. An officer I knew was known as Abudahab (father of gold), as he dispensed such a lot in presents. Those who followed in his footsteps found the natural civility of the inhabitants killed by the lust for gold.

The trees about were not large, and clumps of bushes were frequent. Near Telgona I gathered a lot of fruit from the hemeid, a tall tree with a silver bark. The fruit, in appearance like a yellow plum, consisted of a tough bitter skin, containing a large stone, covered with a grape-like substance that tasted like stewed apples.

On the road I learned a lot about Gessi, Lupton,

and the French. The description of the latter's luxurious mode of travel (in hammocks), "like a sick woman on an angareb" (native bedstead), raised shrieks of laughter from all who heard it—the *bon-mots*, by the way, being shouted back till the welkin rang with the laughter of those following a mile or more behind us.

Daala was the first real Mandalla village I entered. It is on the Khor Dabura, which Felkin marked on his map with a thick line, and so gave rise to the error that there were three, not two, great tributaries of the Nile from the west. The sheikh was a fine fellow. All the people were clad in the flowing robes with which Kordofan had made me familiar. They appeared to me to be black Arabs rather than Fertitai. They carried huge Baggara spears. I asked why they did so in their village, and was answered, "Would any man go unarmed to the well like a woman?"

No tsetse fly rendered our march hideous. We saw not one. Till J. Tearan was sighted, about 50 miles north of J. Telgona, the country presented no marked features. Round Tearan the country, more densely wooded, became more densely populated. The villages, the houses on piles, floor four feet from the ground, were set in masses of big trees, bush, and doleib palms.

Everywhere the natives complained against "muk-dum" (viceroy) Nasr, and begged to be relieved of the grievous taxes of the Government (there were none that we knew of) levied by the Sultan. "But levy any tax as long as you take us neither as carriers or

soldiers." The Mandalla were very curious about our visit. None had ever seen a white man ; they had heard he was a bogie to be protected from, and yet here was a party paying its way and offering no violence to person or feelings !

At Tearan I sent my boy to discover for me what the women sing as they thump the grain in wooden mortars with big six foot by four inch decorated poles. The air was quite pretty. I am able to add this gem to the poetry of the world. "Two thousand (grains of corn) bang 2000 ; 2000 cry there is no God but God." I almost wish I had let well alone, for when I come across that number, even prosaically placed on the back of a motor car, the refrain buzzes through my head and won't leave it.

From Tearan I went by a round-about way to the Bahr el Arab, as all declared that the direct route was too droughty. I came back by the latter. Umbegago, our first halting-place, was reached at dusk. The sheikh and his friends were having a friendly chat before going to bed, and took no notice of my entry, whereupon the guide from Tearan, where I had made great friends of the sheikh, dashed among them demanding where their manners were, &c. I laughingly called him off. The poor sheikh had never heard of an inspector, and though the soul of politeness and hospitality, was not much impressed when he did, I fancy.

At Umbegago I split up my party. I took with me a few men and Sheikh Abdulahi, who wished to inspect his brother's cattle at our destination, Sheikh

Shenoa's village. We had, first of all, to secure receptacles for water, so I hired all the gourds I could and put them on the carriers. I put my kit on my riding donkey. At this place and time the pin of my prismatic compass fell out, but I made good the loss with a nail out of my camp bed.

The country about had been steadily changing. It must be remembered that we were but little south of the latitude of Turda in Kordofan, which place it much resembled. Quite a feature of the road were the wet weather villages, deserted in the dry weather through want of water.

Our guide was very religious. The season before he had been cruelly broken up by an elephant he and a party had been hunting. Need I add that broken and badly-set limbs were the order of the day among the Mandalla. These great elephant-hunters kill their quarry with Baggara spears. The head, the size of a small shovel, is fixed to an 18-foot-long bamboo. The hunters strip naked and tackle the first elephant they meet. The parties usually consist of six men. They tried killing buffaloes in the same way, but their first accounted for nearly half the hunters.

The elephant tracks we passed were small. I was told here and elsewhere that the elephant of these parts is lanky, small-footed, poor of tusk, and very fierce.

I remember that on this march from Umbegago I was very musical (save the mark !), and whistled and sang the air of every tune—religious, comic, heroic, or sentimental—that I knew.

We passed a party of Rizeghat Arabs, camped with their flocks round a large fire to keep off lions. Our way lay over more open country, and many bits were dried, black cotton soil swamp. We slept for three hours, and by 8 A.M. reached the Bahr el Arab. At about dawn we found ourselves in very open country, and when about five miles from the river entered its "buta." There I shot a tiang with a very large head, and of the colour of a Jackson hartebeest. He remains to be identified, as the Kordofan tiang, I am assured, is a small animal of the same colour as the ordinary one, but with a heavier head. Some one may yet be made happy by standing godfather to it.

This reminds me of an amusing incident. When I first reached Wau a stock subject of conversation was the difference between the local cob and the ordinary one (*Cobus leucotis*). A year later a keen sportsman joined us, and having shot one of the former, sent it to be classified. He was astonished to hear that it had been recognised as a separate species and named after himself.

Sheikh Shenoa's village was the ordinary conglomeration of rude shelters of nomad Arabs. It was a mile or so from the river, on Khor Marara. He brought me to the Bahr el Arab. A series of slime-covered pools, in a waterway cut 20 feet deep and 20 yards broad in clay, formed the main stream. A few big trees were scattered along the banks. The "buta," which in flood is covered to the depth of several feet, stretched for miles on either bank. The sheikh brought me water as thick as thin gruel in a big half

gourd, big as a wash-basin. I thought of Gunga Din's draught, "It was crawlin' and it stunk," as he guided a trickle of it into my mouth by letting it flow between his two forefingers laid along the side of the vessel, tips a quarter of an inch apart. I had been parched.

That afternoon about twenty Rizeghat sheikhs (minor) turned up—fine manly men, who reminded me of my favourite N.C.O. of that tribe in the Hagana.

The conversation turned on all subjects—the might of their head sheikh, Musa Madibu, in whose forearm the radius and ulna were joined in one bone, and a blow from whose fist felled an ox. They asked why we paid tribute to the Sultan of Darfur! Told me that one of their tribe had been excused paying tribute by Gordon in this wise. Hearing that the Governor-General was fond of eggs, he collected thousands, and had them ready in large baskets for him when he arrived in his village. They described their method of riding down giraffe, which is the same as that of the Selim Baggara with buffalo: the only difference being that, in one case, they watch the hindquarters to avoid a cow-kick; in the other, the fore to avoid being gored.

My questions related to the river we were on: whence it came, where it flowed, &c. The route to Shakka—or, to be more correct, to Abu Gabra, where the wells are—was minutely described, as also that to Kalaka. I subsequently verified the information I then received by questioning the emirs (political

prisoners) at Halfa, who had led expeditions as far as J. Liffi, near Ragaa.

Between Shenoa and Shakka there is no watercourse of any kind. Between Shenoa and Kalaka one crossed the Ibra, which joins the Bahr el Arab higher up than we were, and is said to flow from a swamp, the Miraia, into which the water-system of Darfur empties itself.

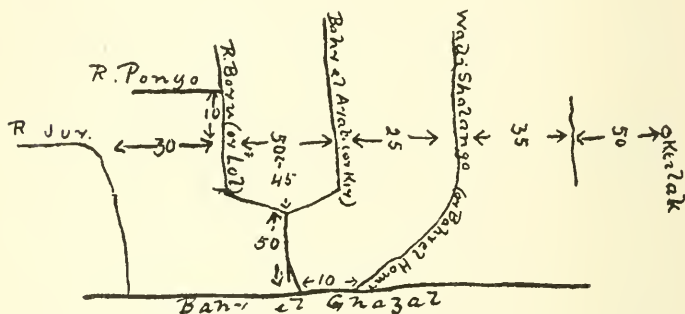
This conclusively proved that there are no other western sources to the Nile except those I mapped. It is true that Captain Percival, D.S.O. (Northumberland Fusiliers), passed a river of importance some twenty-five miles north of the Bahr el Arab (Kir). I should surmise that this may be what is known as the Wadi Shalango, near Turda. In any case, it takes its rise in the highlands of Kordofan. To suppose that the Khor Dabura is the large stream some cartographers have thought to exist between the Boru and the continuation of the Umbelacha is incorrect, for its size at the place I crossed it is too insignificant, when one considers the character of the country through which it flows, to render it possible that it should reach that of the Kir where Percival crossed that river, only 100 miles or less further on.

As for the other rivers—the Barada, the Sheleikei, the Gotelo, and other important streams—if no river exists between Shenoa and Shakka, it is evident that they are tributaries of the river that flows past that sheikh's grazing-ground. Of course there is no suggestion of their flowing west.

I think the following diagram puts the matter in a nutshell. It is compiled from the two marches of

Captain Percival, D.S.O. (Northumberland Fusiliers), and my own surveys. The figures show approximately the intervening miles.

The river, fifty miles south of Keilak, must either join what I call the Bahr el Homr (from the fact that a river is known to exist of that name, and also that the Homr tribe live on the Shalango), or, like



many other Kordofan rivers, must lose itself in the sand.

I consider that I determined the course of the western sources of the Nile, for Percival crossed them near their junctions with the Bahr el Ghazal, and was of opinion that three, not two, great rivers form it. The rivers that flow from Kordofan are surely northern sources. Anyhow, let that be as it may, and let me crow on my hill till some other cock knocks me off by proving me wrong.

CHAPTER XVIII

I shoot roan—My enthusiastic welcome—Gotelo—A beautiful river—A mad Sultan takes to the woods—We march with all military precautions—Punitive expeditions—The wonder-tree of Khandak—Much ceremonial—My first buffalo—The modeikei, a new fruit—Good-bye to shooting—Rocky territory.

ONE of the Rizeghat offered himself as a shikari, so, after a long talk and rest, I went off with him. He asked, after the manner of a waiter with a menu, what I would like to shoot, mentioning almost every sort of game. I selected roan, and he brought me to their grazing-place. There herds of every conceivable sort of wild herbivora disputed with the cattle of the Rizeghat the rights of pasture. It was a wondrous sight—one I would recommend to the head-hunter, but more so to him to whom the study of wild life is joy. I stayed only one night on the river, much as I longed to prolong my visit.

When my map was plotted I saw that a return *via* Tearan was not impossible. The march over waterless country in the muggy heat was a hard one. Sheikh Abdulahi and his men fell out, and we had to send water to them. When near Tearan we were so thirsty that we made straight for the wells to avoid the delay of water being sent for. Here, as in Kordofan, the dilwa, a leather bucket that holds as a rule but a few

pints, is used to draw water with. In Kordofan, where wells are often a couple of hundred feet down to water, the drawing of a few gallons is a Herculean task.

The people about complained that, for some years, Khor Tearan in which, in the dry weather, the wells are sunk (the same as in Khor Dabura) had been drying up. The chief wells are at Bir Dudu, a couple of miles away. I strolled over to them by myself, and found a shouting, gesticulating, scrambling crowd about them. A party was starting on a journey. I sat in the shade of a tree, and was soon joined by some men and boys. They were much struck by the thick soles of my boots. It was almost the first time in the Sudan I had observed curiosity. I made my compass swing round with a knife and "salaam" to order. I also told a mangled version of Sinbad-cum-Ali Baba, and heard one or two stories in return. As, a couple of hours later, my party turned up, my friends became the stolid, polite people one always meets. By the way a number of men had turned up to shake hands, and ask if I did not remember them at Daala, Shuga, &c.

My return to Umbegago was greeted with inexplicable enthusiasm. I was saluted as "Effendina," the title of the Khedive. A miniature sandstorm was raised in clearing a spot for me to rest on. The men I had left behind had evidently raised their own importance by inflating that of their chief. Who so proud in a province as the head servant of its Governor? From here to Kabalosu my party and myself had a

triumphant progress. Every village we passed begged us to halt, and seemed quite hurt when we could not. Numberless basins of asida, &c., were waiting for us by the roadside, and sheep, chickens, and eggs were even brought to me, the owners refusing payment, though accepting it, not too unwillingly, in the end. Are not these people almost Arabs ?

It was most embarrassing ; for wherever I halted I had company, all of whom claimed my acquaintance as at Bir Dudu. Also came some who had been of the hunting party, now just returning, which I had met south of Dem Zubeir. I listened to long speeches, the substance of most being that, in spite of what they had been told would happen, I had now traversed their country, insisted on paying for everything, seized no women or children, impressed no carriers. So would I name the real taxes the Government levied. As there were none, I said so.

The country itself changed slightly. We passed a fair number of khors. The trees were still rather scattered, and the ground undulating and gravelly. One mass of gravel hummocks rejoiced in the dignity of a name, that of Uji. In places it reminded me of Kimberley. Outcrops of green earth were passed—due, no doubt, to the copper for which the watershed is famous.

At a place called Biyeisi I received alarming intelligence from Kafiakingi. I allowed the name of the halting-place to be my guide, and sent word to the native officer to keep his head.

The river Gotelo was of great interest. Its rocky

bed contained a small stream of beautifully clear water. A local inhabitant told me that it is never known to go dry. The bed was full of comb-like ridges of rock, which sloped down from the top of the banks to the middle of it.

At Kabalosu, a little further on, Sultan Musa Hamed and Sheikh Gurdud met me as old friends. I sent Musa home. His sense of hospitality had brought him up from Ragaa. Sheikh Abdulahi also started for Kossinga. I gave him and his bazingers pay at Jehadia rates for the doubtful advantage of his company. What pleased him most, however, was that I invited him to tea, consisting of tea with sugar and ammunition biscuits. The afternoon of my arrival some carriers came in for me from Kafiakingi. I had written to say that I would get some from Sheikh Gurdud, so was much surprised to see them. I was more surprised when their headman asked to speak to me alone. What he told me was this: Sultan Murad Ibrahim had taken to the woods, and, joining the outlawed Andal Abdulahi, threatened to attack our post. I asked for the sub-mamur's letter, but was told that when the carriers had left there was no time to write, neither would they have dared to carry a letter. The post was not yet attacked, though all—men, women, and children—were in the fort they had thrown up. I consulted Sheikh Gurdud, who said that, though he knew Murad was as mad as a hatter, he also knew that he was not mad enough to attack us.

The situation was of sufficient delicacy. Carriers do not volunteer for an immediate return march, so

the story might be true. On the other hand, the officer at Kafiakingi was inexperienced (he was not eighteen months out of the military school), though keen and level-headed. Moreover, a like rising could not be hatched unknown to neighbours. If I showed alarm the effect would be bad. If the Sultan committed himself by attacking us I would never forgive myself for allowing him to do so.

I decided to start, as I had intended, the following morning, and, when once on the uninhabited part of the road, to do a forced march. I carried this out, passing *en route* a second party of carriers sent for me, who represented the situation as unchanged. Need I say that we marched with all military precautions. In forty-eight hours the eighty to ninety mile march was accomplished. I rode a donkey myself a good part of the way. At dawn my skirmishers entered Kafiakingi. Old men and women stood waiting and wringing their hands outside their huts, not even stopping to pick up the small coins I threw them. The fort, neatly made as per text-book pattern, contained, as reported, the garrison and its belongings. The poor officer came out, expecting *κνδός*, no doubt, but I thought severity the best tonic for the evident panic. The garrison, save the quarter guard, was hurled to its quarters, the women to their harimat. The officer, however, had his revenge. "I have prepared two houses for your excellency, one in and the other outside the fort," he said. I had no alternative but to take the latter.

On news of my arrival reaching them, all the sheikhs of the Kreish Hofraui and their dependants turned up.

They truly were alarmed. Murad had already killed two of their men, and they dared not begin to sow, although the rains had just begun. I was to remember their loyalty when I went after the Sultan, they pleaded. I told them that there was no talk of attack. If the Sultan was fool enough to prefer the jungle to his bed, that was his affair. I gave them a letter to Murad telling him not to be foolish, and told them that unless they started cultivating I would in reality get angry.

That afternoon I walked round the place with the officer as my sole companion, and chatted with the mourners of the morning. At the Mesalit village I caused great laughter by asking if it were true, as Slatin states, that they make water-skins out of those taken from the corpses of their departed kin and enemies. Naturally they would not admit it. I retired to my isolated house with the feeling one would have in sleeping in a haunted room. I did not for a moment anticipate attack. If I had, no power on earth would have dragged me out of the fort.

The following day the sheikhs returned. Now I had rested I must be thinking of sallying forth. "The postman" (!) from Dem Zubeir had brought word that it was to catch Murad that I had come on patrol. I must say that I would have liked to do so, but hostile movements in such a country could do little good and much harm, so were out of the region of practical politics, save as reprisals. I pointed out that, as far as I was aware, Murad was innocent of all but want of courtesy, and told them to be sure to have started



MISSION PUPILS. THEY ARE TAUGHT TRADES (CARPENTER'S SHOP IN BACKGROUND) AND LEARN RELIGION BY EXAMPLE.



MAMUR OF WAU MARSHALLING THE TOWN SHEIKHS.

sowing when I came to "drink coffee" in their villages. In the meantime I was going to put the Jehadia through their musketry course, the principal object of the patrol, and would be far too busy to fly about the country after a man who was behaving like a child. Next day brought me a letter from Murad asking for the "Amaan," *i.e.* unconditional pardon. It was sent him, of course. I went with the officer and a shikari, whom I soon dismissed, as I saw no game, to Duku, where the principal sheikhs lived. I heard later that Murad and fifty bazingers were in one house, and positive that I had come to capture them. Everywhere sowing was going on. At a small forge a gunsmith was busy at his trade, surrounded by riflemen waiting their turns to have new screws or springs put into their Remingtons, or to have the back-sight taken off, as they almost invariably do. They think its presence heightens the flight of the bullet! I had tea in several houses, and started home as it got dark. The sheikhs who wished to form a guard to me on my way I sent back, and very nearly lost my way by not having a guide.

The ammunition for the course I had sent in dribblets in bales of trade goods, so I had plenty. The targets were made of my newspapers on a framework of saplings. At practice we always had a great crowd of spectators, to whom the high ant-hills about formed look-out places. Sheikhs were constant spectators. Even Sultan Saïd Baldas turned up to watch. All soon recognised the marking, and would cheer or jeer as "bull" or "miss" was signalled. If I noticed any

one jeering too loud I would call him over and make him fire a round. As they never hit by any chance, the Jehadia could join in the jeers—and did. The Jehadia shooting was quite good.

There is no doubt that the musketry course of a fair number of men—there were fifty or sixty of my men—in a disaffected district, such as Kafiakingi, has the greatest possible moral effect. Were I permitted to venture an opinion on the subject, I would say that, much as *la gloire* might suffer thereby, I would strongly deprecate the employment of punitive expeditions till the might of the British Raj had been shown by some such method. Of course, if attacked, there is no middle course. I always think the launching of an expedition at some ignorant savage—more often than not to give some one a promised brevet or decoration—is like a prize-fighter inveigling a pugnacious stranger into a fight. I am not an alarmist when I state that at the time disaffection of long standing was coming to a head in this part of the district. The Dervish movement was guided by Sultan Ibrahim Dardug, an ex-emir, and Mongash, the adviser of the Sultan. The musketry course persuaded the waverers that it was useless to wrestle with a power who could throw away ammunition as so much rubbish. In the fifteen days I spent in Kafiakingi I had many visits from the sheikhs. The political situation was soon thrashed out, so I tried to draw them about their history and religion, &c.

As far as the latter went they were pseudo-Moslems. I heard, however, of the “wonder-tree” of Khandak,

about ten to fifteen miles away. The priests attached to it will, for a consideration, communicate with the god. The ceremony is as follows. Having arranged matters with the priest, the votary brings a small bit of copper, ivory, or skin, &c., and assumes a crouching position near the tree. The priest does likewise, burying one's offering in a small hole in the ground. He then grunts, and the quantity of grunts and quality of answer depends, I should think, on the preliminaries to the ceremony.

I found it difficult to get anything out of my visitors at first, but at last it was agreed that I should tell one tale and be told one. Soon I often missed my turn.

At Kabalosu I had, of course, communicated with Boulnois' successor, and on arrival at Kafiakingi sent him a reassuring message. I now got orders to come in to do the chief inspector's work at Wau as soon as mine here would allow.

From the man whom I was to relieve I got a letter asking me to come in soon. This was followed by another, carried by a special runner, which said, "For God's sake, come in at once." I at once concluded that something very urgent was in question, and replied that I would be in in a fortnight, the distance being about four hundred miles. I left myself a good margin, as the rains had now started in earnest. As a matter of fact, I got a letter at Dem Zubeir telling me that there was no hurry, otherwise I would have done the distance easily in twelve days. I beg to impress on the reader that *I* rode a donkey a third of the way at least every day.

The sheikh of the westernmost village of the district under J. Migi had persistently refused to come to see me at Kafiakingi, so I determined to go to him, as he was close, and not much out of my way.

We had had a grand rest from the patrol that had brought us. It had lasted, including five days' halt, thirty-two days, and covered over 550 miles, of which about 400 was over virgin country mapped for the first time.

My road lay for a bit along the Vongo Khor, which was full of deep, picturesque pools. J. Nunga was an upstanding point of direction. On leaving the Vongo we entered what looked like an old bed of a lake. Steep hillocks and ridges, 50 yards apart and 15 feet high, and about 20 yards broad at the base, stood on the flat, stony surface. The road wound round or over them. It was an ideal place for an ambush. Later we reached a high plateau, crossing some streams, one a very boggy one, all flowing to the Barada. Just after dawn we climbed the shoulder of J. Nunga. The panorama to the west was punctuated by groups of distant hills. To the east and south was a huge crescent of them, of which Nunga and Migi appeared the horns.

A couple of miles from Sheikh Hamidan Migi's village was cleared of trees. The trunks had been used to make a formidable stockaded fort 100 yards square, the only one of its kind on the watershed, I believe. The logs formed walls, 10 feet high, and at each corner was a look-out tower.

On our approach, with flags flying as usual to show

our official standing—bodies of armed men are likely to be taken for marauders—the inhabitants fled. I made, as usual, for the market-place, and was met by an old sub-sheikh, who informed me that Sheikh Hamidan had unfortunately just left for a three days' trip. I refused to swallow the yarn, and after waiting till the afternoon levied a fine of guns on the village and proceeded on my way. I left a small party to bring the sheikh to Sultan Saïd Baldas, his overlord, which was done and he was released. My paying for my wants and not ordering all about to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, pleasurably surprised these unsophisticated children of Nature.

Our journey from this place to Khor Menerogo, near which I had shot my first buffalo, was highly interesting. Right into Dem Zubeir we could have halted in a village every night, which shows the population the watershed carries.

The scenery was lovely, up hill and down dale. The sub-sheikh of Migi, now full of information and anecdote, was our guide. He pointed out to us where the Umbelacha, a rocky stream 30 to 40 yards wide, flowed between hills 70 miles to the west. The Barada, too, a big river, flowed about half-way.

About four miles from the village we reached a col of Migi, whose principal peak, about 1000 feet above the former, was a mile or so to the south—a big overhanging rock. Khor after khor was passed, all full of water, mostly large. For instance, Mohedibi was 15 yards across, with banks 7 feet high. A stream they called the Vongo—but how it got round J. Nunga

beat me—was 16 yards across, with 14-foot high banks, and water so deep that my donkey had to swim. We jumped from one big boulder to another.

Just as night fell it began to rain. The steep, tree-clad hills were on either side, and along them or at their foot the path ran. The intense darkness was presently dispelled by a terrific thunderstorm. Till one has heard tropical thunder, on a dark night, in narrow valleys, one scarcely sees the realism of Kipling's fine lines :—

“Taman is two in one and rides the sky,
Curved like a stallion's croup from dusk to dawn,
And drums upon it with his heels, whereby
Is bred the neighing thunder of the hills.”

Our guide actually *felt* the way with his bare feet, and my orderly took off his boots to help him. At 9.30 P.M. we reached our objective, Sheikh Gessingeira's village. I should love to do that march in daylight to see if it was as hilly as I thought, for after leaving Migi, riding became impossible.

It had cleared up a bit when we halted. I lay down on my furwa and slept till about midnight. It then started to rain heavily. In the meantime some of my party had arrived, but the remainder, with the baggage, had gone astray and rejoined us next morning. Sheikh Gessingeira had turned out of two of his huts, so I made for one and found half-a-dozen of my men in it. They wished to turn out into the rain, but, of course, I would not hear of that. At 4 A.M. I awoke. One man's legs were across mine, another had his feet in the small of my back, and

some one had closed the door with a mat. I almost *cut* my way out of the dense atmosphere, and fortunately found it fine outside, and sat down to wait for food and party.

The thunderstorm and loss of baggage was an unexpected delay. Yet though we did not start till 7 A.M. we put in nine marching hours next day. The going was so much over hill and dale, that I find a note in my field-book to say that we only went at the rate of three miles an hour.

We left the road to Gila (80°) on our left, and at once had to climb the steep rocky side of J. Anbekwroso. I went up on all-fours most of the way. It was a sheer 150 feet at least. From the top, as from Migi, the ground sloped gently eastwards, was high to the north, and fell away quite steeply to the south.

Along many of the khors we passed we saw growing the giant ferns out of whose stems, split into narrow lathes, the Fertitau make their couches. The stems from which the fronds sprout are almost square, 2 inches in diameter, and very light and strong; so much so that it was once proposed to make the poles of hospital stretchers of them. I do not think the idea was given a trial. It would have been a success.

In this vicinity Captain Percival (Rifle Brigade) puts the source of the Reikei. This interests me greatly, for I was told that it rose in J. Giyawa. However, the matter is not open to argument as far as I am concerned, for I could not authoritatively venture an opinion on it. The lie of the country appeared to be against Percival's theory. The road appeared to

lie on the Boru side of the watershed ; but I am open to correction.

The long slope of J. Anbekwroso ended in a lot of small sugar-loaf hills, rocky and wooded. They were surrounded by a big bamboo forest, and rubber vines (*Landolphia*) grew everywhere.

Near here Morgan brought me some red berries growing like those on an elder tree. Soon, too, we plucked some of the fruit of the rubber vine, like an orange in colour, and filled with a pepper-tasting pulp round three seeds. The modeikei was another fruit not unlike the lichi of India. It grew, the size of a grape and red in colour, on a bush. While talking of edible plants, I must not forget to mention the sorrel-tasting leaves of the tamarhindi tree or the grey-green creeper that tastes like hawthorn leaves. Both are favourite foods. The khors we passed contained water some feet deep and running hard. In one place my donkey sank to his withers, almost, in a bog. The whole party was present, so with many a "Hup ! ya Nebi Allah—he-e-e-y hup," we got him out. Tangled growths showed us the position of Babais. In one of these was the rotting carcase of a new-killed elephant.

Near J. Moyung, which overhung our destination, Zeinei, the village on Khor Menerogo, we passed some lofty, all-rock hills covered with monkeys, whose forms silhouetted against the evening sky reminded one of Christmas cards. One expected them to catch hold of one another's tails and wave one hand at us.

It was nightfall as we reached a rocky platform just

below the main peak of Moyung, and in the dark we commenced the descent. The track, steep and umbrageous, might have been taken from the Himalayas. I came down seated for quite a hundred feet. My sure-footed donkey and men made no bones about the descent. At the foot of the hill we were some time trying, in the bright moonlight, to pick up the path. Once found, we were in the village at once. Our new guide to Wasa gave me a different name for every feature passed to that I got when on this bit of the road before.

We saw no game at all on this march, except a hartebeest near Gessingeira's, three waterbuck hinds at the Sopo River, and one female bush-buck not many miles from the Biri. It is evident, therefore, that one says good-bye to shooting at the end of April, and may not hope for it till December in this district—though, of course, had one time, the broad tracks they leave in the foot-high grass, telling the greatest tyro the time and direction of their passage, would make following them easy. Of course Sultan Saïd Baldas received me with open arms. Sultan Meriki came over full of chat, but “forward” was the cry. A gigantic bazinger carried me over the Boru, now a swift stream with over three feet of water in it.

We soon began to notice the preparatory throes of Nature before she begat the Mongaiyat hills. We passed numerous rocky eminences on either hand, and frequently had to cross steep, rocky ridges.

CHAPTER XIX

I become village magistrate—Makowa, the god of practical jokes—Sheikh Chabindji is a fond father—The Mongaiyat hills—The tsetse fly operative again—Slaughter of game—The value of beads—Adherence to tribal customs—Sultans mere landless lords—The sheikhs are lazy—Many compliments.

NUMBERS of disputes were brought to me for settlement by the inhabitants whose villages we passed, so I find that, instead of my usual two long marches a day, I record a number of short ones. A rather amusing case shows the belief in charms for combating sterility. A husband returned his wife to her father on the understanding that the latter should make big medicine for her. He did so, with profit to himself and great success, by marrying her to another. The point at issue was, Was he entitled to keep the "ma'al" paid by the first husband? He argued that he had kept his part of the bargain.

The Ragaa, at our crossing-place, was 30 yards broad, with banks 8 feet high. The bed was rocky. Up-stream was a large, deep, picturesque pool. The river ran at the foot of J. Murongo, which is like an inverted bowl 450 feet high.

That evening we were caught in another terrible storm. The grass on the side of the road was now a foot high, so feeling our way in the darkness was easy.

We went on till the storm ceased, and halted on a bare rock, where Morgan (acting as guide and only companion) and I lay down to sleep. Close by a lion roared, and I hoped that, if it came, it would select my donkey, who presently pulled its halter out of my hand. At 3.30 A.M. we had had enough of our hard couch, which the intermittent showers did *not* soften. In the glimpses of bright moon we went forth to look for the remains of the donkey, but to our delight found that the lion had not made a meal of it after all.

Knowing that, if I waited an hour for my baggage that day, I would, more than probably, wait two for it the next, I pushed on. At Sheikh Sabun's village I got some eggs and boiled them, and, with some ground nuts, they formed my breakfast. Alas! I had no salt, and could not use ashes, as did my hosts. With them, be it remarked, there was little Mohamedan flummery—as I must call the local form of that religion. They were called Umbeilei, Mushkombo, Zongono, Gorgoto, Golgoto, Rafai, Kaikaza, Gotgodo, Sabun or Chabindji—no Mahomed this or Ahmed that. In every village we saw a miniature hut, never more than three feet high (at Halfa the one in the Sudanese village was eight feet high). This is the resting-place of the Kreish head-god Angrowo. It is difficult to gather anything about their beliefs from the natives, as the Mahomedan merchants and proselytes so jeer at them. I have a few sketchy notes, which, however, took a long time to make. When anything goes wrong, or the Kreish feels religious or sick, he makes marissa

of the best, and with other dainties puts it into Angrowo's hut. When the god has had time to taste it, and as it were blessed the remains, the Kreish comes and consumes them. No wonder that they often "feel a sinking."

To get a child a woman goes to Makowa, whose wife is the daughter of the priest. Makowa's residence is at J. Ambekaza, at the head of the Biri River. In appearance he is like a man with very white hair, but he is seldom seen. He is fond of practical jokes—will take a rangaia (basket) and put fish, flour, and a burma (earthenware vase) into it. He comes to a house and cries, "Ya sid el beit (O master of the house), give me something to eat." The owner says he has nothing to give. Makowa says, "All right, I will prepare a meal for myself," and having done so, invites the man to join him in it. The latter refuses. Makowa puts the remains of his meal in the rangaia, marches off, and when out of sight produces a Kreish whistle, the length of a forearm, and made of the horn of a waterbuck, and plays on it. The man tries to find the god, who leads him on, but ever eludes him. Ent'loot may be greater than Angrowo—more than that I could not find out. He may be an evil spirit, about whom the people are afraid to talk. Gondjo is the wakil (steward) of Makowa. He sends the birds to clear the latter's land for cultivation. He gives sickness to those who enter his domains near J. Urgoro. Bwado is subservient to Gondjo. The tetel (harte-beest) refused to clear the land for cultivation, so this was reported to Makowa, who ordered that, whenever

seen, he was to be hunted. Bwado lives on the river Mana. When the bird Torogbo (white tail and beak, blue body, its cry "watch-r-r-r, watch-r-r-r") comes to a village the sheikh makes him marissa; if not made, sickness is sent. Angbwa, also called Kabiarga, sends a snake to a man's house. The latter has then to build a house for himself in the forest. B'quara is a god of sorts. A big tree called Kubu grows on the Biri River. It has a priest, and is rain-producing when living sacrifices are made to it.

There are, of course, a thousand and one more beliefs and customs which my successors, much longer in the district than I was, no doubt have made a record of.

My escort and carriers turned up just as I was leaving the village. At Sheikh Chabindji's village the party I had left at J. Migi rejoined. They declared that their marches of sixty miles a day to catch me up were made in order to march into Dem Zubeir with me as they had marched out.

Chabindji, when I saw him first, was seated, very lightly clad, under a big tree that bears a bean-like fruit. The pods contained a seed buried in a flowery-yellow matter, that had a saffron taste. He was almost stone-blind. I promised to send him a pair of spectacles, and, on my return to Wau, did all I could to redeem my promise—at my own expense, of course. I still grow hot with anger when I remember that, dependent as I was on those who would tell me what to buy, they failed to help me. To them, I fear, it was but the case of "some d—d old buck nigger,"

and who cared if he were blind or not. They had not seen him wringing his hands and crying for his sight. One of my escort was his son. When he heard the lad's voice he groped to him, breathless, as the latter rushed forward. The old sheikh then took his son on his lap, and they fondled each other for hours. I see them now, rocking to and fro in the shadow of a tukl (native hut), with the fire between us playing on them.

Chabindji had time to tell me many stories of old times. I wish I had recorded them—the night alarms, the days of hiding in the jungle, the muster-roll after a raid, and the long wait for those dead or carried into slavery.

We were now in the Mongaiyat hills, a truly wondrous sight. There are but few trees among them. They rise, solid bare blocks of smooth granite, to a height of several hundred feet from the level. One particularly fine prospect comes to my mind now. Two bare boulders, a hundred feet high at least, cast in the same mould, formed a Titanic gateway through which the path ran. J. Tarago (Surago or Darego) is the highest peak. It is a holy mountain. The god of Tarago has a drum which it is death for a mortal to beat. A votary will make marissa, bring it to the top of the hill, which is sandy, and depart. On reaching the bottom of the hill he hears the drum being beaten. To go up while this is going on is death. When it is over he returns, finds the marissa finished, and many footprints about. The god gives notice of his hunger by sounding a native horn. As will be seen, the

Kreish religion is one of free drinks for the wily ones.

In the Mongaiyat I suffered, as I hope never again to do, from the tsetse fly. Into one's nostrils, ears, up the back and sleeves of one's coat, down the neck of it—everywhere that an entry could be made, these pests penetrate. Gulliver, shot at by the arrows of the Lilliputians, was not in a worse case than we. The irritation was so great that at times I positively screamed. In the triangle, with its apex at Wau, and its feet on Kafakingi and the Busseiri, I met them everywhere—at all places bad, but in the Mongaiyat worst of all. I believe I am wrong in my denial of “belts” of fly. This much I know, I have met them on lowland and highland, on marsh and dryland, near villages and in the heart of the forest. One march from place to place has been made a penance by them; another, over the same ground, knew them not. When I arrived at Wau the nearest fly was at the Pongo River: when I left, eighteen months later, one caught them in the very station. Domestic animals of all sorts die from their poison. Fortunately, it is of the *Glossina morsitans* I speak, not the dread *palpalis*, the sleeping-sickness-carrying fly.

The Koko River we crossed, and then a high tableland to the Sopo. Both had stony wide beds, and carried down about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water in a swift current. The other side of the Sopo was hilly, and thence to the Biri was over well-known ground.

In the Mongaiyat I lost one of my men. Whether he deserted or was eaten by a lion is still a mystery to

me. As we halted, on the night he disappeared, a lion roared unpleasantly near, but we slept secure in the light of a couple of big fires. It appears that, at about midnight, the man, a quiet fellow and good character, got up, took his rifle and ammunition, and was seen leaving the camp. He never reappeared. Offers of reward failed to gain news of him. I would be more inclined than I am to believe in his desertion had he not left even his boots, which are as a knighthood to a native, behind. A man with a rifle, and above all brass cartridge cases, which their armourers refill quite well, is a welcome recruit to any African Sultan.

I found that Wahbi Eff. had got through a great deal of building, &c., before the rains had started to fall in earnest. As I expected soon to be back again, I left my belongings behind. As I said before, a letter reached me here, telling me that there was no need to hurry. I had done the first 230 miles or so in less than eight days, so determined to take the next 150 miles at an easy pace, so I halted a day at Dem Zubeir. Over almost level country, 25 miles a day demanded no great efforts. I forgot to say that near the Boru we overtook the special messenger I had sent to announce my approach. He passed through Dem Zubeir thirty-six hours before me after all!

We were proud of the growth of our station. With our £20 we had built stores and offices of red brick, with a total frontage of about fifty yards. They were certainly the best by far in the province at the time. I would like to say truthfully if I could that there was

competition (?) to be imprisoned, so palatial were our male and female wards. I suppose that, now the headquarters of the station has been moved to the north, "the lion and the lizard keep the halls." I little thought that my inspection of the station and the few words of praise I allowed myself to give the Jehadia were a farewell.

My maps and reports on the district I later recovered from a waste-paper basket in the Wau Office. In the confusion of conducting the Niam-Niam patrols they were flung aside. In the latter I find the price of grain in the district. At Dem Zubeir an ardeb (300 lbs.) cost 7s.; at Kossinga, 9s.; at Kafiakingi, 3s. It was said that in the days of Zubeir Pasha, *i.e.* twenty-five years ago, the country was almost too densely populated, and the lowing of kine was the predominant note along the watershed. In our time not even sheep could live. A symptom of a disease they suffered from was a swelled head, and unlike many that could be better spared who suffer from the same complaint they invariably demised. Clearing roads, on which there was to be no traffic, proved to be an Augean task. The French were reported to have two walled enclosures about five yards square, with walls five feet high, in every station in French Congo. These should be filled at stated intervals with ivory and rubber, for which a regular and uniform price was paid. The gellaba, or native pedlar, always tries to take his capital away in ivory, black or white. Wahbi Eff., whose upbringing entitled him to speak, used to say that the district offered great facilities to

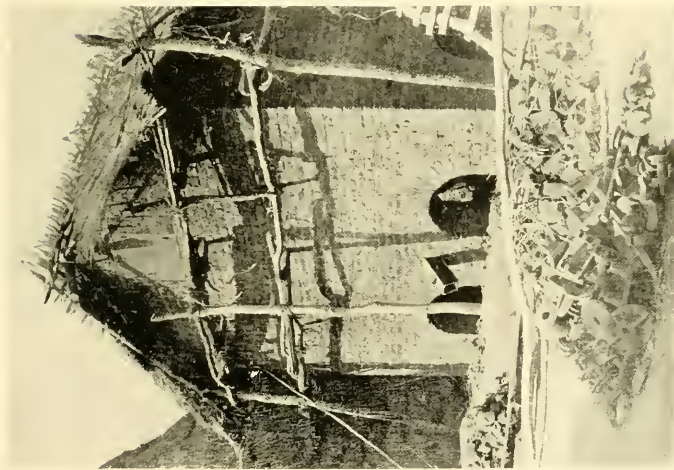
agriculturists. Of course the heavy transport charges would render everything a losing concern. The whole district was covered with forest. It was hopeless to attempt to protect it from the annual fires. As well expect to put out Vesuvius with a cockle shell.

The appointment of two forest rangers to a large province could only be done in order to make a report on the same look workmanlike—the unfortunate reason that builds ferries where they are not used, and makes roads that are not walked on. The slaughter of game is awful. Elephants are surrounded by a ring of fire by some tribes—I blushed a few days ago to see it reported as the feat of some Britishers—and then the demoralised calves and cows are *murdered*.

The Middle Ages were not more rich in feuds than are the Fertitai. Combined action against the Government is inconceivable. Rifles are scarce and ammunition scarcer. Moreover, the “Sid el beit” has a great say. He pays his Sultan for protection, not annihilation.

I have already told what a work of art the Dem Zubeir–Dem Idris road was when I passed along it two months before. The long, straight vistas remained, it is true, but the roots of the trees and bushes cut down, though fire had been applied to them, threw up a mass of fresh branches which completely blocked the way, making deviations from the path essential. In a word, the most luxurious growth to be seen was on the erstwhile cleared road.

The rest-houses on the road were in fine condition, except one in which a pair of buffaloes, as could be seen by their tracks, had settled a difference. In my



THE "PATENT" STORE. THE FIRST RED BRICK
BUILDING IN WAU. GRAIN THROWN IN AT DOOR
ABOVE AND TAKEN OUT BY SPOUT BELOW.



SULTAN KIANGO OF THE GOLOS. THE
FRIEND OF MISS TINNÉ, OF LUPTON,
GESSI, SCHWEINFURTH, ETC.

own district there was the makings of a village at every one. When near the Pongo I met the ex-Sultan Ibrahim Dardug. I had been much against the method of his incarceration, but now saw, with dismay, the effect it would have on the district were he to return to it at this moment. I brought him back with me. It turned out that some one had found him a prisoner at large, and no one, Dardug included, pretended to know why he was kept, so he was released. Subsequently he was given a passage to Kordofan, and doubtless made his way back to his country. He was a very plausible fellow, as all the *entourage* of the Khalifa had to be, and had I not had to combat the obstructions he put in the way of administration I had no quarrel with him. I have no doubt that, if after being reinstated he threw his lot in with us, he would be the most useful, because the cleverest, man in the western district.

On the morning of the fourteenth day I cantered my donkey into Wau. It was strange to talk English again—of course I had done so to Tibsherani Eff. when he was with me. Strange, too, to see some one's face opposite me at meals.

I parted with my fiery beard, which, as was said of another's, was worth an escort of twenty rifles, and settled down to my work.

The news about it was not pleasing. There was a complete deadlock in the carrier question. It was thought that the food supply would not last till the river Jur rose sufficiently to allow a steamer to bring some.

It is not my intention to go into details about the former. Where there are no wants there will always be difficulty in obtaining voluntary labour. So it was at this period in Wau. I introduced several reforms, and am proud to say that this question solved itself while I was in charge and sorry that it became disorganised when I left. It would be very unfair on my part did I not acknowledge the whole-hearted support and absolutely free hand given me by my immediate chief. As all know, the power of command in subordinates is destroyed if it is seen that superiors are not in sympathy, or disagree with the orders given. Of course a very slight knowledge of the customs of the people, which enabled me to converse with and show interest in them which we all felt, was a help. I was always present at the distribution of loads and the payment for work done, and saw to it that weak or sickly men were seen by the doctor. Very often we would have an impromptu race or other competition among them, generally organised by Captain Sweny (Royal Fusiliers), the Vice-Governor.

Sometimes ivory was sent in to us for purchase. A shilling a pound was the average price. Some writers profess to be astonished that a pennyworth of beads buys such value in Central Africa. Is it forgotten that a fifty-pound load of beads, home value 50s., may be carried for months by a man who must be paid and fed? Then comes the return carriage of the article bought. The profit is good, but not so good as might be imagined.

In July the *Jur* made a false rise and fell again.

Our great anxiety was the shortage of food. We would have had to move every one to Meshra er Rek had it not been for the quantity of dura Boulnois' foresight and Wahbi Eff.'s energy had poured in from the western district. The Catholic missionaries were actually starving at one time, till I heard of their plight and sold them some raw grain.

The rains were unaccountably bad. The Niam-Niams laid the blame on our late expedition, and performed many a weird sacrifice to the river gods. One of these was the immersion of a pair of carved wooden images in the river at Sultan Tambera's. At Wau the *soi-disant* Moslems decided, in old-time fashion, to sacrifice a sheep in the middle of the river. There was a slight shower on the appointed day, so the ceremony was put off. When it was performed it was a very poor show. A procession, with a flag made of two bandana handkerchiefs on a long bamboo, was formed of less than fifty men, which salved its conscience by loud cries of "La Allah, ila Allah." The local head sheikh dragged the unwilling victim into mid-stream, cut its throat, and then brought back its carcase to form the *pièce de résistance* of a feast.

At last the river rose sufficiently to justify us in wiring to Khartum that a steamer could safely attempt the passage up. The Governor took a small steamer which had lain at Wau the whole of the dry weather, and, with much difficulty, sailed down in her, and the situation was saved. The garrison had been on reduced rations for some time, and had less than a week's supply in hand when the first steamer reached us.

The months I spent at Wau were full of purely administrative work. I made two short patrols, which I will describe later.

The people about were truly interesting. From an ethnological standpoint the study of the broken tribes west of the twenty-eighth degree of E. longitude should be taken up at once. The old men mumble still the history and folk-lore the younger ones despise. Sultan Limbo, who entertained Miss Tinné among others, and was once a powerful Sultan, now lords it over about two hundred men. His sons are quasi-Moslems. The same can be said of Kiango of the Golos. No one, not even Schweinfurth or Junker, has gone more than skin deep in the study.

The composition, dispersion, and adherence to tribal customs of these broken tribes was what struck me. The inhabitants are now ashamed of their primeval religion. One can believe that the lost tribes of Israel were other such. Unless their lore, handed down verbally for ages, is collected soon, it will be lost, as much has been, in the "fathah." For instance one tribe, the Beio, consisted of nine adults (1906). The Kreish are the true owners of the eastern watershed. To them came at a remote time the Ferogeti. The Banda and Bingos have recently come over from the western side. Closer to Wau we have the Jurs and Dinkas, riverain negroids, kin to one another. Round Wau were to be found the Golos, Barei, N'Dogo, &c., and south, the Belanda, an effeminate-looking people, and the cannibals. I think that these last are kin.

I wrote a rather comprehensive report on the central district before I left. I had, however, to point out that my knowledge had been acquired in Wau itself, so that the reports of officers who had availed themselves of the opportunities, denied me, of patrolling it would be far more valuable. After pointing out that the Sultans were like landless lords, mere holders of titles, a source of anxiety only on account of their poverty, I pointed out that to facilitate taxation, which the "development of empire" invariably brings in its train, it would be well to, say, give to Kiango the Golos (his own people) now under Morgan Kali, and return to the latter the Barei, now under Kiango, and carry this right round; otherwise the levying of taxes through the chiefs would become impossible or unfair. The continued emigration was a great source of worry. It was in full flow when I took over the district, and could not be stopped. All wished to escape carrier work. A village of fifty families of Jurs moved once to their relations, the Dinkas, for this purpose. Carriers were conscripted.

Complaints were rife that no payment had been made for grain supplied or work done in previous years. I can well believe this. The fault was altogether that of the complainants. The sheikhs in my time were too lazy to come in to receive even the capitation grant on carriers due to them. I very often had to send one of the Jehadia to bring a man, who was owed a considerable sum, in to receive it.

The sifting of complaints was difficult. Till Captain

Sweny, after the destruction of the province's offices in 1905, took the records of the province in hand, and by dint of endless hours of work straightened the tangled mass of unanswered, unregistered correspondence and chaotic accounts, and left behind a complete record of what had gone on since the occupation in 1902, we were at sea. To complaints we could oppose neither receipt nor other record. This was all changed. I must add here that the chaos resulted from interregna in the administration of energetic and capable men who had all "squared things" in their time.

CHAPTER XX

Wau—Its future—When Greek meets Greek—Local colour—Giant eland—Administration of justice at Wau—A judgment of Solomon and a cure for suicide—The day's work at Wau—An old cock ostrich—Building operations at Wau—Yambio's war-drum—Impressing the "politicals"—A native elephant-slaying machine—A modern John Baptist—Patrol work—The value of missionary enterprise—Success of my gramophone—My orders.

THE Wau buildings were truly awful. I started making burnt bricks as soon as I could. However picturesque a hut may be, it is a danger and expense if it needs rebuilding every year. Shortly after my arrival I found that the Governor, Major Sutherland, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, had spent one night, when down with fever, in moving his bed from place to place in his hut to dodge the dripping of the roof. Another time I visited a sick native clerk. The beams of the roof of his hut had been eaten through by "sus," and it was kept up by a scaffolding inside. Two umbrellas protected his head and feet, and he stoically remarked that only his middle got wet! No wonder that, to the native officer or clerk, being sent to the Bahr el Ghazal, stupidly held up as a punishment by a few who should have had more sense, seemed a sentence of death.

The road to Meshra er Rek from Wau will be the chief channel of communication later on, when a

proper service of steam lorries is started. Two lorries, defective in construction and not too well run by tyros in the country, came to grief. There were cart roads to Tonj and on to Rumbek. No one more than I sees the advantage of clearing a road when it is to be used. Dongolauis held the peddling trade in their hands. Some were caught buying ivory and slaves for rifles. The Greeks had some stores in the place, but if the ivory they produced to be sent south was the whole result of their trading, it must have been run at a great loss. The improbability would point to other goods and other outlets. One Greek accused his rival of doing a roaring trade in spirits with natives; the other accused this one of sending a caravan of slaves to the north once a month! Liars both—as to degree anyhow. The grain obtained from the experimental farm, rice and wheat, also the cotton, was produced at enormous cost. A practical agriculturist explained to me that the choice of locality was no doubt the cause. No native would have dreamt of placing the farm where it was. The landolphia rubber seedlings, of which we grew a lot, did not stand transplanting. The Jurs extract a considerable amount of iron from alluvial deposits. Their little clay smelting ovens, about three feet high, are met everywhere. The Catholic missionaries, on the road to Tonj, were educating them in the way of profitable extraction and working. Near Wau the game was greatly shot down. The heads secured were tiny. Near the station, however, was a herd of giant eland. When I first came to Wau it was supposed to be a two days' journey

away, and be enormous. As a matter of fact, I located it in a place a couple of hours' walk from Wau, and it consisted of about fifty head. The secret had been well kept. At the time that the herd was supposed to live far off many officers bought heads brought in by Dinkas or Jurs for sale. The carpenter was to make a box for a couple bought for presentation to a club; but unfortunately his house, and with it the horns, got burned. He explained his loss to the officer concerned, who, not listening, missed the fact that the man mourned the loss of his mother-in-law, who had been burned too. "Never mind," said the officer, "it's the work of the Lord (shugal robona); there are plenty more to be had." The man dissolved into tears—the prospect of another mother-in-law doubtless augmented his grief.

The administration of justice would have astonished a lawyer given to picking legal holes in all judgments. In the records of punishments one found that the punishment for murder unadorned by any explanation ranged from fourteen days' imprisonment to hanging. The wedding of civilisation with native custom produced these extremes. The only prisoner on a long term we had was blind. Otherwise, he would have escaped like all the others. Where a run of a hundred yards could plant a man in a pathless forest, where he could carve a domain for himself in its lonely depths and live free, why should a "lifer" remain in durance?

Once a prisoner broke from his gang and escaped. The policeman in charge defended himself by saying,

"How could I be expected to catch the man tied up as I am in heavy boots, putties, and tight breeches, and he naked save for his leg irons."

Our jurisdiction was so limited that when an important case came on the board we were at a loss to adjudicate, as we could not enforce our decrees. My office work consisted chiefly in settling disputes between husband and wife. For instance, a woman incited her husband to beat her, and created a disturbance in the location by humming the death wail as he was eating his food. "If the cap fits wear it" was her answer to the query for whom she was wailing. She demanded separation from her husband, refused to return to him, and insisted on imprisonment, clinging to the office table, under which I had tucked away my legs, screaming the while. I therefore sent for all the women in the town, and ordered the obstreperous female to carry a pail of water round and round on her head while her friends laughed at her. She preferred going back to her husband. Another lady stated that she would commit suicide rather than make friends with her husband. She dashed into the river, a hundred yards from my office, with a great splash. When she was up to her knees in it—I had forbidden any one to detain her, as the natives, ever lovers of a scene, longed to do so—I shouted, "Look out! a crocodile!" She was out of the water in a flash, and amid the laughter of the spectators went away home.

Cases of immorality were more difficult to deal with. Questions of religion and damages were involved. As

a last resort, a woman, who was leading men into rows, would have her head shaved. As the black woman's hair is very short and used to thread beads on, this was drastic punishment. I can remember inflicting it once only.

I could multiply these examples indefinitely. They, no doubt, border on the grotesque. Such is administration on the outskirts of Empire.

An ordinary day would be divided as follows.

At 5.30 A.M. one would get up by candle light, have one's bath, &c., and "chota hazri." At 6 (dawn) proceed to the parade ground, where one would find the various workmen paraded under the native officer of Jehadia or the Mamur. They would there be told off to the various jobs about the place. Some were in regular employment. The smith would go to his forge to make nails, as a rule, from iron sent in in porous balls about three inches in diameter, by the Jurs. The carpenter would repair to his workshop, and there make cart bodies (we got the wheels sent from Khartum), doors, and so on. The wood cutters would repair to the forest, and generally sit and smoke till they heard some one coming. The sawyers would repair to their stands and make boards out of blocks of native mahogany. The boatbuilders, with their adzes, would build feluccas at the "meshra" (landing place). The gardeners go off to the experimental farm, and there work the sakias or weed the crops. Then we would have the waiting carriers, for, of course, it was useless to have them in the village earning nothing wherewith to pay for their board.

These would go off to build and repair the houses of the place, to cut wood for the fuel of the steamers, and the thousand and one other jobs that cropped up. There was no lack of work, I assure you. The hundred to two hundred men being dispersed, the native officer would go one way, I another, superintending, explaining, urging on. At 8 A.M. came breakfast and a rest. At 9 A.M. all started again. Special jobs seemed to draw one's interest, *e.g.* the brickmaking or the building of red brick. Providence averted an awful accident when we were making a bridge over a khor near the town. We determined to make a good trestle, as previous ones of native pattern had invariably been washed away. The frames were made bound together by telegraph wire, and further strengthened by home-made dogs. In order to drive some of the latter in on the under side we had to turn the frame, twenty feet high, built of huge mahogany logs, over. Some idiot lost his purchase on the feet of the frame, and the whole thing came down with a bump. There were quite seventy men in and about the frame. How no one was crushed, how they all managed to avoid the cross-pieces, is a miracle.

This would busy one till about 11 A.M. Then would come office work. It was continuous, but not arduous. At 1 P.M. or half-past one we would go to lunch. More often than not Sweny would not appear till past three. At about the latter hour one might do a last turn round the place, and at 4.30 P.M. be on the tennis ground, where tea had been

prepared, and play till it got dark at about six. Then, clad in mosquito boots, which reach well up the thigh, and a sweater or overcoat, one would sit in the open outside the mess hut on a small platform, built to discourage the more objectionable insects and snakes, and there talk. The development of this and other provinces, big game, weather prospects, and a thousand other subjects, not forgetting the inevitable criticism of absent friends, filled up the time to dinner. Some of us had to spend those hours studying for promotion examinations. It was at times hard to fix one's attention on the ingredients of an emergency ration as one heard the gramophone bellowing forth the "Laughing Friar," or one wished to hear the latest phase of the situation with the Belgians, which was then acute. Ten o'clock generally saw one to bed. "Liver," the excuse for being boorish and disagreeable to one's companions, was unknown in most Sudan messes.

Bed in this province generally meant sleep, for the nights were cool. I always had a covering of some sort under my mosquito curtain.

From the mess one often heard the lions roaring on the opposite bank. A few yards from where I was walking one day one of them tore the face off a cow right to the bone. We usually had an average of ninety oxen (for draught and pack), twenty-five cows (hospital), and twenty-two calves. The casualties among them were heartbreaking, the tsetse fly and hard work being responsible.

We had great stores of trade goods, that were in the immediate charge of the Mamur. The white

ant caused immense losses. Landed on a bale of cotton, he would drive through it like a hot poker might. To this was added the loss incidental to leaking roofs.

An asset of the province was a big cock ostrich. His feathers supplied the Jehadia with their badge—a bunch of them in their tarbush. When first I knew him he lorded it over a harem of five. These died, I think; anyhow, on my return from Dem Zubeir, I found the cock a widower, in a pen not two yards square. If given a bigger one he jumped over the seven foot high palisade, and gave chase to any one he saw. I heard that if one managed to hit him on the neck with a pole or a well-aimed block of wood it took the fight out of him. I had no ambition to try.

I had to make a trip to Khartum for an examination, but I lost no time in getting back to Wau. I had left it at the close of the rains, so had to march from Meshra on my return. This fitted in well with my work. The first half of the road ran over rather low ground, broken here and there with insignificant swamps. The western half ran over hard, rocky, and well wooded country.

On our journey north we had been considerably delayed by sudd blocks. It took the mail steamer, on which we were, and a heavy gunboat, which started two hours behind us, forty-nine hours to get past one barrier in the Bahr el Ghazal, working all we knew, and provided, as we were, with a large party of professional sudd-cutters from the mouth of the Bahr el Arab, whom we were taking on leave.

On our return journey some excitement was caused by the sandal catching fire, which resulted in some nasty burns, and almost the loss, by drowning, of some women, who preferred the chance of crocodiles to the certainty of burns, and jumped into the river.

We went at an easy pace from Meshra. A bridge on the road, built by Captain Leigh, D.S.O. (K.O.S.B.), bore on its surface a warranty from a herd of elephants which had passed over it. The wells were all about eighteen feet deep, but water was indifferent and scarce.

Back in Wau work begins in earnest. The "loose stone" walls of Fort Desaix fall, and slowly those of a brick Fort Wau arise. I still expected to go back to "Utopia unlimited," as my western district was called, so administered both districts. In the meantime, during the flood of the river, Yambio's war drum, seized by the patrols in the Niam-Niam country, had been sent to Khartum, where it now lies in the Gordon College. It is about 3 feet 6 inches in height and breadth, and 9 feet from end to end. It is carved, in the rough semblance of a buffalo, out of one log. Down the centre of the back runs a 1-inch wide slit, through which the inside had been hollowed. It is a marvellous production of native skill. It took twenty men to carry it along the 200 miles of forest path to Wau. Cannibals are ages ahead of their neighbours. Their wood and ivory carving, iron, basket, and feather work, not to forget the bark cloth (beaten with an ivory hammer, the property of Sultans), are beautiful. In intelligence, too, they excel.

The "politicals" at Wau consisted of the baby son of Sultan Rikta (A'zendie), sent by him as a hostage. Little N'bur'mba was about eight years old, a jolly little man. He had, as following, an aged servitor and a frisky nurse. We had also two cannibal sheikhs of importance, Bazimbi and Bokoti.

By way of impressing them, I sent these two to Khartum. The former's son, not to be left behind, stowed himself away in the steamer they were on. On their return they swaggered more than if they had discovered the North Pole. I have no doubt that when these two intelligent chiefs are allowed to return to their people they will be a great factor of peace. Imagine the workings of a mind to whom a riding animal is unknown, a gun one of less than an inch in bore, a straw hut a palace, and the British race four or five officers, being allowed to travel on a steamer in unknown comfort and speed for days, passing post after post, to arrive in Khartum to see the cavalry exercising, the, to him, monster buildings, to hear cannons roaring salutes, and to lose count of the white faces that pass him. Will a man with this experience go back to his people, jeer at our make-shifts at Wau, sacrifice a chicken, and say, "there are but five white men to lead the men whose fathers have been our slaves for generations."

Little by little we got into touch with more distant natives. Some of the Dinkas under Sultan Rob on the river Kir arrived one day. They wore a belt of hide, cut like a closed letter V. It was about three inches wide at the ankles, and when about half-way up the

thigh it broadened till it reached the outside of the hips. Generally it was worn as a tail, but when in presence of white men it was brought to the front. It was a mark of honour, not decency, for nowhere is it more true that, to the chaste all things are so, than among *wholly* naked savages.

One Dinka case I had to decide was this. In an elephant killed by one of them was found the spear-head lost by another some months before. Whose was the ivory? I do not think the Cawnpore tent club would have given it to the second man, otherwise the tusks of many a scarred pig would change hands.

Incidentally, in this case, I heard that a roaring illicit ivory trade was done in the north of my district, but as my new chief's ideas on the subject were diametrically opposed to those of his predecessor, I was not obliged to take any notice of the information. The question of rights to an elephant-slaying machine taught me a native method of hunting. A mahogany log, 1 by 1 by 5 feet, had fixed to the centre a murderous-looking blade. The log was hoisted and tied to a branch overhanging an elephant path. As the herd passed, the sportsman, lying alongside his log, cut the thongs that supported it, and trusted to its piercing the spine of one of the elephants.

Just about this time a prisoner was sent me from Kafiakingi. He pretended to be a John the Baptist, and collected a quantity of ivory, female slaves, &c., from the people about. He was given up by a Greek, from whom he demanded, with threats, a portion of his goods. In appearance he was rather like an

Egyptian, and had long black hair. He described, in the north-west, an interview of the Governor-General with the Sultan as follows: "I and the Sultan were drinking coffee when the Sirdar, dressed in a red coat, came in, his forehead touching the floor. At my advice the Sultan did not slay him, but allowed him to approach. After pouring out the praises of the Sultan, the Sirdar asked my help to obtain from the Sultan permission for the British to remain in the Sudan. As they do no great harm, I signified my assent, and the Sultan allowed them to do so till the day, which is close, should come." He had in his possession a seal with the name of Hassan Pasha on it. We thought it wise to deport him to Suakim. His journey back would take some time.

Time and again my hopes of doing a patrol had been dashed to the ground. At last the news of a great battle near the Pongo River sent me out with an escort of 20 Jehadia and 10 of the 12th Sudanese. The latter did not like being hurried. When we reached our midday halt they were under the mistaken idea that we would not leave till next morning. Nevertheless they soon conformed to the Jehadia pace, but, as I was doing some work *en route*, we did not go more than twenty to twenty-four miles a day.

The country we passed through was unknown to us, though not its people. Sultan Morgan Kali used regularly to be "told off" for laziness. Old Sultan Kiango would get an occasional bottle of whisky to cheer him up. At his village was a Catholic mission.

There is no gainsaying the value of missionary enterprise, directed as it is now by all creeds. The country being divided into districts, there is no squabbling. The channels the work follows is to teach the children trades, such as carpentering at Wau, iron working at Tonj, &c., the teacher telling them religious stories and singing hymns. It is now recognised as impossible to really convert the fetish-impregnated adult. It is hoped that the children of those now under instruction may be Christians. How keen all the padres were. Most have joined the great majority. Blackwater fever may not be played with. Their conditions of life, which often included short commons and want of medicine, played havoc with them.

Whenever Sultan Kiango fell out with them, as he would at their continued refusals to supply him with drink, he would send in some complaint. One was that they stopped his people dancing. On inquiry the Sultan told me that he had invented this charge as being a likely one. I have beside me the quaintly worded explanations of the Superior. The Sultan invited me into his harem to drink coffee, and incidentally to entertain his wives with my gramophone. The "Laughing Friar" and bird imitations were great favourites with all natives; for whenever any Sultan or sheikh came to Wau we would turn it on for him. A superb record of Madame Patti was called the "screaming mad woman whom her husband is beating," and a very deep bass song had also a descriptive name. Strange to say they never allowed their curiosity to show. One of the missionaries had a glass

eye. I asked him to take it out in the presence of a batch of raw natives just arrived as carriers from the south. They looked on imperturbed. In answer to my query they said that it was a wonderful thing to do, but made no further comment at the time.

On arrival at my destination, Sheikh Kangei's (Jur) village, I found that the terrible battle had been a drunken brawl. My gramophone in this village collected quite an audience, mostly children, who called the turns, and criticised quite freely, and in a friendly spirit.

Of course I had no intention of returning by my route out. My orders, however, are worth repeating. If I came to any village, except a Dinka one, I was to make myself at home, and get food and carriers, on payment, of course. If I came to a Dinka one I was to send in and ask the headman's permission to halt. If he refused it I was to go on even if there was no water for miles. These were Province standing orders, a copy of which I now have. This was the "Dinka Question," the Government were not prepared to "take them on," and feared to precipitate disturbance. As I marched almost invariably a good hour in advance of my party, I saw myself carrying these orders out. As the man who handed them to me said, "Standing orders are valid only if they suit the circumstances." Everywhere I was well received.

The country was rather high. We saw no hills. Khor Getti was crossed by a foot-bridge over a lovely pool near Damuri (Sultan Kiango's), and again nearer its mouth at a place where a slight flow of water four

feet wide and a couple of inches deep alone distinguished it from a dozen other khors passed.

On my return the river Jur rose on account of some sharp showers that fell. We wanted the authorities at Khartum to try to send a very shallow draught stern-wheeler to us, but it was not done. This was due to the fact that the natives in the vicinity of Godelpus island dam the channel, cut by Fell, in order to catch fish in the pools so made. It is the rush of water in the rains that clears away these obstructions.

CHAPTER XXI

My "magic" receives a set back—Telegraph poles in the forest—Count Teleki—Captain Percival—A pretty picture—Bok—His pride humbled—The country to the north-west—Insolence of the Dinkas—Teleki's audience—Mayar accompanies me to Wau—I get my leave—I return to Cairo and hear of my appointment—Acting-Governor of Halfa Province—My work at Halfa—Various cases for trial—Minor interests.

MY efforts to astonish the natives were sometimes brought to naught. On one occasion an old man arrived, defendant in some case. I got the medical officer to perform an operation to remove a growth the size of a football on his knee. Perhaps owing to the man's age, the skin refused to heal before he was allowed to leave the hospital. His dirty habits rendered his retention undesirable. Blood-poisoning set in, and he died.

One day an important Dinka leader sent in to ask that the sub-mamur, also a Dinka (then an officer), would come to him. Rehan Eff. Abdulla brought back a queer tale. The old man wished him to attend his obsequies, and listen to his last words. He had outlived his usefulness, and was to be buried alive! A great feast was held, a grave dug, and the old man lowered into it. As the earth was shovelled on he harangued his tribe. Among other things he told them that the path of wisdom lay in submitting to the Government.

I wish I had the notes on the customs, &c., of the Dinkas, which I got from this officer. He never failed to interlard his conversation with expressions of disgust at the stupidity and bestiality of his people—a true convert to Islam.

Talking of graves, I feel sure the French Government would raise a monument in Wau over the graves of four of the Marchand expedition, which lie a few yards from the old Fort Desaix, and so perpetuate the memory of intrepid pioneers, if reminded.

On my return from Khartum I had been struck by the awful state of the road from Meshra, so had at once seen to having it cleared and rest-houses built. I was obliged then to go as far as Gadein's to inspect it. There I was to meet the Mamur of Meshra.

I followed the telegraph line to see whether the grass about the poles had been cleared. This is done to save them from forest fires. A length of rail is sunk in the ground, and round it earth, the shape and size of an ant-hill, is thrown. This is to prevent the elephants from knocking them down. To the rail, which sticks up a couple of feet from the earth, is fastened the pole. If the latter was not held up by the iron from touching ground the white ants would soon demolish it.

At Ayom's I saw that a large caravan had already arrived. Its leader was a very stout man, and his equipment suggested something more than a Greek or Syrian merchant. Before my own people arrived I got a courteous invitation to breakfast. I at once concluded that this was one of the Belgians with

whom the Sudan Government were on such bad terms that they were blockading the Lado enclave. In the exchange of names that followed our handshake he told me that he was Count Teleki. I did not catch the name. Even had I done so, I would not then have realised that I stood in the presence of one of the foremost of explorers—the discoverer of Lakes Rudolph and Stephanie. To my inquiries he told me that his advent should have been heralded by letters from the Sirdar and Slatin. He had come on a shooting trip, his chief quarry being one of the giant eland. He did not shoot one, unfortunately for him. It was very game of him to come so far. He was over sixty, and the promise of his younger days, as seen in the pictures of von Huhnel's book, had been fulfilled—he was enormously stout. From the local sheikh I gathered that his best plan would be to go north-west at once to the village where the eland were. He did so, but in the meantime Captain Massey (Royal Irish) had got there and shot a couple, not knowing that the Count was coming. I am sorry to say that in his disappointment the latter allowed himself to make some very unsportsmanlike, unfounded and untrue accusations.

I also met Captain Percival (Rifle Brigade) here. He took over charge of the western district. It is astonishing how very like his map and mine are, considering that both were the outcome of prismatic compass sketches. With Percival was my able lieutenant Wahbi Eff., who when on leave had been specially promoted sagh. As he and I had agreed before he went away, he brought a great lot of fruit

trees back with him. Some of these he left at Wau. These came as companions to the orange trees I had brought. I hope those who now enjoy the fruit remember the planters thereof. Other fruit trees did not exist, till their advent, in the Bahr el Ghazal.

At one pool along the road I saw as pretty a picture as could be seen. The pool was covered with water-lilies. A little naked maiden was filling her "burma," standing over her knees in the water. Against the black satin of the skin of her thigh a well-blown white flower was boldly outlined. I mentally called the picture "Innocence."

There was any amount of game along the road, but the Dinka inhabitants had moved their villages away from it. Near Gadein's were the villages of a Dinka called Bok. This man used to boast that he never bent the knee to a white man. His attitude to the Government was well known, and was a subject of sneers against it. As I was not allowed to go to his own village, I determined to discomfit him. At the rest-house near the village a number of Dinkas arrived to talk to me. After a while I asked why Bok was not there. I was told that he never spoke to white men. "I see," said I; "the rumour that he is a eunuch must be true" (Dinkas go about naked). When my interpreter translated the remark the audience became hysterical. Before I left next day Bok sent a message to say he particularly wished to see me. I was unable to wait, but heard the outraged feelings of the gentleman brought him much in evidence when next a British officer passed by.

From Gadein's I went north-west. I wished to see the Dinka headmen. I, of course, had an escort of fifteen men for show, but as I was no great believer in the Dinka question, I foresaw little difficulty with them.

For Dinkas, the people were wonderfully polite. Nearly every village had some complaint of non-payment to explain their refusal to clear the road, &c.

The country was not much different to that east of Gadein's. We passed one or two marshy bits. It was not long before we reached Mayar's country. It is of interest to note that it is almost impossible to call the Dinka headmen sheikhs. Among them there is no hereditary rank as far as I could make out. A man rises noted for his strength of character and arm, and leads a following that swells or diminishes according to circumstances.

We have a great deal to learn about this highly interesting people. Real republicans, they stand aloof from us. They have all to gain by doing so. They are strong enough to defend themselves from their neighbours, and submitting to us would merely mean paying taxes. The subject of "the white man's burden" is often threshed out on the confines of empire. We create wants if we can, and supply them—is this an advantage to the native?—and ensure peace in our jurisdiction. On the other hand, the resources of the country are developed for our benefit principally.

Mayar's people were undoubtedly bumptious. At his first village I had a row. As usual, I arrived, with a guide and orderly only, miles ahead of my party, and sent for the headman. In any but a Dinka village he



TRAVELLING DINKAS.



WATER LILIES ON THE WAU-MESHRA ROAD.

would have come to greet me. On my asking him to arrange for water for my party he told me to go to—well, there was no mistaking his meaning. I argued a bit with him, and then he said he was bored and was going. “Not so fast, my friend,” said I; “since you ignore the ordinary rites of hospitality you can obey orders.” A couple of my party strolled in at this juncture, so the Dinka said he would send his women with water, but I insisted on his bringing me water with his own hand. When next morning I paid him he was quite jolly and friendly, and guided us on to the right road. At Mayar’s own village a message came from the headman to apologise for not being there to meet me. What a change in attitude! When the Sirdar had come to Wau this headman treated the invitation to meet him with contumely. A small patrol of one hundred men was held up outside his village by the news that Mayar, surrounded by his braves, awaited it; and by the orders given the officer in command, which were that, if fighting took place, he would be held responsible for causing it. Why the patrol was sent passes comprehension, if no risk—a faint one, too—of fighting was to be run.

I rationed my force, which I left to follow me, and, accompanied by a Dinka who spoke a little Arabic, I went to a pool named Gudluk about four miles away. I hoped to shoot an eland, but there were none there. I shot a roan with a head of 25 to 30 inches, but it being smaller than those I had, I did not take it with me. I was amused next day to find in Teleki’s camp the head of a similar antelope. It was about 16 inches

long—so short that I took it to be that of a small tiang.

On my march next morning I heard a series of shots—first one, being followed shortly by another, then after a long pause two more. This was Teleki shooting. I saw him coming into camp. First walked a Dinka guide, then a Khartum black (in spotless white !), his headman ; then four men of his party, one of whom carried the above-mentioned trophy ; then Teleki, mounted on a mule and followed by a crowd. I thought the Count lucky to get anything when he stalked (*sic*) with such a following.

Mayar came to me at once. He promised to follow me on the following day to Wau. I well knew what “to-morrow” meant, so persuaded him to accompany me. The offer of my donkey to ride was too great an honour to miss. He was most anxious to visit us now, he said, as he saw British officers walk through the land not only doing harm to no one but even paying for all that was given.

I do not flatter myself that my persuasions clinched the matter. The old man was already won over. Teleki had been very generous with presents. Moreover, a man who succeeded as he did in doing so much exploration without ever coming to blows with natives—not even the Turkana—must have a heaven-born faculty for dealing with natives. Teleki was very wroth with Stanley. The latter asked him how many carriers he executed in the course of his travels. On being answered “None,” he replied, “Tell that to the public but not to Stanley.”

A very amusing experience is to listen to the views of explorers on their predecessors in the same field. We often heard them. Nothing is too bad. That they have irritated the natives and abused their hospitality, and so made the path of their successors most difficult, is the least of the crimes they charge them with.

South of a line drawn from Gadein's to the bend of the Jur, forty miles above Wau, is high and rocky. North of it the country runs to swamp. Thirty miles from Wau we passed a hill 500 feet high, and thence we went over rather high country till we reached the Jur at Wau.

Not long after this patrol I left the province. My turn for leave had come, and other work awaited me on my return.

The weather in the province was never excessively hot. In the last week of January a little rain fell round Wau. In April the river Jur generally had a false rise, and again in May. In the middle of June it rose in earnest, and remained navigable till October.

The title "Sultan" is a misleading one. Among the Dinkas it was given by outsiders to a few very important headmen with whom they had come in contact. Such was Atiok Chiok and Rob, but Mayar, Doal, and Dow Marail were among the names I heard as being equally important. In the western district one has seen that, although unimportant, the idea of hereditary sovereignty was maintained. But in the central district it was ludicrous to name the lord of two hundred men a Sultan.

In the south, the cannibal Sultans were said to be of real importance. I doubt, however, that they were more so than the Ferogei Sultan, Musa Hamed. We have a parallel, however, in Europe, in the sovereign princes of Germany.

I took a passage on the recently-laid railway to Suakin, and there got on board the s.s. *Dakhlieh*. My orderly, Saleh Allah Gabu, a Golo, accompanied me. To him all was wonderful, especially when once we lost sight of land. Some years before I had brought my Camel Corps orderly, Khaleel Abu Nur, to Cairo, and left him there while I was on leave. He had got quite *blasé* when I returned. He met me at Alexandria, and told me that the sea was really salt, "at least close to land."

I returned to Cairo in the last days of July, and there heard that I was to take up the duties of Land Settlement Officer in Halfa Province. However, on my arrival there I found that I had been appointed Acting Governor of the province. I took over my duties at a highly interesting period. Naturally, in the "frontier" province one felt a little of the excitement that shook native Egypt during the Denshaui and Akaba incidents, aggravated by the fact that cholera had broken out there.

The province looked back on years of administration, so there was not much to do. No longer did one employ hundreds of workmen, build houses, and have to improvise necessities. Even the natives drank mineral waters !

The governor's "palace" was our mess, and situated

close to the wadi (some miles further south), from which the official name of the town was taken. The manur, a capable native cavalry officer, Hafiz Eff. Kadri, was police magistrate, and saw to everything local. So my work seldom took me from my quarters till 9 A.M. Then I got into the governor's felucca, and half floated, half sailed down-stream to my office. Coming back was a more difficult operation. Sometimes we had to be towed from the bank: the inhabitants would volunteer cheerfully for this, hot though the weather was. As one sat in the boat under a big umbrella one appreciated their labour.

The Nile, however, began to rise. Then there would be miniature storms on its thousand yards broad surface. The small whirlwinds (devils) that came down at that season were rather exciting. Interesting, too, it was to see the natives floating down-stream riding inflated water-skins.

My time was devoted chiefly to reading the records of the oldest province in the Sudan. Odd cases came before me—for instance, hasheesh- or opium-smuggling ones. I remember one opium-smoker had to be forcibly removed from the office, as he refused to be parted from the drugs, that had been confiscated. He presented a terrible picture of distress. Important cases in which Europeans were concerned were generally left to be dealt with by judges from Khartum. In one or two, legal reasons prevented an adjudication. Begged by plaintiffs and defendants to put an end to litigation, I held the scales of justice myself in the rough-and-ready

fashion of the south. My decisions were accepted is all that I remember of the cases, and no appeal being made, the piles of correspondence on them were at last put away.

Uniformly successful I was not. In one case I forgot to prove that the goods, about which the case was, had been stolen—it was so obvious to me that they had been. An appeal against the decision had to be upheld. In connection with this case I had quite a bad quarter of an hour. I had sentenced the accused to imprisonment. Next morning I was riding down to the office on a donkey when I was surrounded by more than a hundred women, screaming and screeching and demanding the release of their relative. I never thought a man could have so many female relatives.

Generally we numbered three in mess, but sometimes only one. I used to walk to the hills east of the town. They were covered with wheelmarks left there by the "New Army" when learning its trade in the nineties. It is astonishing how long marks in the sand last. The tracks of Gordon near the Murat wells, when he deviated slightly from the road on his last journey south, are said to be still to be seen. The hills were covered with praying-places. A man carefully clears a space six by two feet, and surrounds it with stones. It is etiquette to avoid defiling it, so the pious one is saved the trouble of clearing a fresh place each day.

J. Shaitan ("the devil's mountain"), about 600 feet high, was a great magnet. It lies about four miles east of the river. I climbed it several times.

Not far from Halfa, on the other bank, is the rock of Abusir overhanging the second cataract. That indefatigable traveller, Lady Louisa Magennis, missed, in her short visit here, seeing the name of her grandfather, Lord Belmore, who scratched it there in the early days of the nineteenth century. The rock is covered with names, mostly put there by guides ; among the latter that of His late Majesty, King Edward VII.

Among minor interests were the school, very ably conducted, the hospitals, the walks and talks in the markets, and so on. Further north was the native village. The plate or round piece of looking-glass inserted over the door of each house kept away the evil eye.

In a couple of forts lived some Dervish emirs, political prisoners. Most of them were veritable patriarchs ; and many were the attempts made by British officers, but frustrated by Slatin, to repatriate them.

Halfa could with justice be called a prison. Within ten yards of the river the real desert begins, and extends for hundreds of miles. One or two European tramps have come to grief owing to their ignorance or disregard of this fact.

As the crops ripened the locusts appeared. Every day wires, requesting relief from taxation, arrived. A good test of the genuineness or otherwise of the statement of damage done was to offer a loan of grain at a low price to the *soi-disant* sufferers. It is difficult to estimate damage in these parts. The land is made

into shallow troughs nine by five feet. Seventy-five per cent. of a man's tillage is given in charity—a widow has a couple of troughs, a holy man another, and so on. The owner, however, pays taxes on the whole.

Partly in connection with this a great case arose, in which the sister of the principal sheikh of the province was concerned. She cruelly maltreated a female servant, but pleaded that she was a veiled woman when ordered to appear before a magistrate. After dragging in all the legal luminaries of the Sudan, she was made to come to Halfa. A bundle of clothes was led into my office and sentenced to a fine. The principle was what mattered—to impress the people that there was one law for rich and poor alike. I met her again at her home, when she paid me a visit. Her mouse-like voice had improved in strength, and there was no pretence of veiling.

As a break in the routine I accompanied the Director of Surveys on an inspection to the north—a few miles only. As we went along we passed a native Punch and Judy show. The showman was unfortunately away. It may have been a miracle play. We met fishermen in plenty. They use an "otter" as a rule by night. Some of their fish turned the scale at 30 lbs. Further south huge fish are caught. At Taufikia I heard of two which weighed 300 and 500 lbs. respectively.

Quail-shooting is very good about here. I did none, however. Here, too, the hyenas were very bold. They steal babies from villages and eat the vegetables—mostly pumpkins—of the inhabitants.

CHAPTER XXII

I relinquish my post to the "real turtle"—And go patrolling—Nile country—The bitter cold—The desert—"Terabil"—Bir el Nakhla—The oasis of Taklis—Good going—Bir el Sheb—A grim joke—Tudway Bey—Terfaui—The ruins at Selima—Sports—An Arab fable.

HAVING handed over the duties of Governor to the "real turtle," I at once seized the opportunity of seeing a bit of the country. He wished me to inspect the desert west of Halfa, and visit the police post at the Selima oasis.

To me the prospect of a patrol was enhanced by the opportunity it presented of seeing country hitherto unexplored and the chance of opening up communications, long closed, to the Kufra oasis. Rolphs indicated routes both to Selima and Wadai from that place, the seat of the Senussi. Should the latter prove a real bogie-man, this route to his stronghold is not without value. I feel convinced that one could march from Tripoli *via* the Kebabo oasis on the Lybian desert to Halfa without much trouble. In doing so one would prick the Senussi bubble.

At the beginning of November I left Halfa.¹ A few miles brought us beyond the sandy ridge with which all travellers on this part of the Nile are familiar.

¹ My party consisted of three Arab (Kababish) police, two camel men, my servant, and kitchen boy.

For an average of ten miles west of the Nile banks the country is hilly and rocky. Then one enters a vast tableland reaching westward into the depths of the great Sahara. An open network of rocky undulations, the meshes of which consist of sandy plains some hundred miles across, is thrown over it.

About thirty miles from the river on the road to Sheb oasis is an isolated group of sugar-loaf hills known as El Neheidat ("the breasts"). I might here mention that Arabs are very fond of naming natural features after some fancied resemblance to a portion of an animal's body. As this resemblance strikes them at every hundred miles, it leads to endless repetition. Near El Neheidat, standing alone on the level sand, is a rock about twenty feet high. From a distance of even fifty yards it has a striking resemblance to a colossal statue of Anubis, though, on near inspection, it shows no marks of the stone-cutter's art.

No one who has not done desert travelling at this time of year (November–December) can realise the bitter cold of night and day. A biting wind tears over the desert. Fortunately the ground is usually hard enough to walk on, and as the water is very brackish almost everywhere one does not need to drink much, so that it is not such an ill wind after all. The brackishness does not make one very thirsty.

Near J. Fantass my main party lost the road. While waiting for them I climbed the mountain, which is not very steep, about 500 feet high, and consists in parts of layers of soft small stones, about a foot

wide, alternately dark green and chrome yellow. Here and there a white chalky substance breaks out, and the topmost peak consists of this white stuff crowned with a few huge boulders, round which are scattered a number of large, very hard, yellowish stones. On one spur of the mountain I found four square and well-built pillars of loose stones about four feet high and two square. They appeared the work of a mason, perhaps of a prospector. They certainly are not sign-posts, as the old road ran north of the mountain, hence the reason of my party going astray.

On my return to my camel I found a man of the lost party had come in. We joined forces under the mountain at nightfall.

From this spot to Bir el Nakhla the going was indifferent. We had, immediately on starting, to cross a high sand-drift, into which the camels sank almost to their hocks. Then a stone-strewn undulating plain, on which were the tracks of a party who had passed here some years before (Mr. Currie's, the Director of Education), was crossed. The next variation was a watercourse in a valley 1200 yards wide. In the bed, which we followed, were rocks of every possible hue, rich purple predominating. We then came to a large plain, and in the distance, from the top of a hill, we saw the first of the "terabil," which are a feature of this desert. Near the hill was a bright green sort of broom, which is so bitter that not even a starving camel will eat it.

A few miles further on we came to some isolated sand-drifts. These piles of fine sand, as much as 500

feet high and more, stand in solitary state like monster pyramids. Often the plain which harbours them is thickly strewn with large stones, which make walking a penance. A spoon cut by a cheese knife across its centre is the nearest description of their shape; the steep crescent being furthest from the wind, the long slope to it. Often they are close together, the spur of one buried in the slope of the other, forming a tedious barrier. When scattered they are generally about a mile apart. They must be continually on the move, for the sun shining on the moving sand used to form a halo round them.

From the terabil, which we soon reached, I located the blockhouse at the oasis. My guide had gone a bit too far to the south.

Terabil (singular, Tarbul) is the name given to a collection of conical hummocks of sand from five to fifty feet high, the sides of which have a slope of about fifty degrees, and one of which is covered with brushwood—Selim (*acacia, ehrenbergi*), if there is water in the vicinity, and Kitr (*sterculia cinera*, or *acacia mellifera*) in other cases. Sometimes there are as many as thirty hummocks in one bunch, and in every tenth bunch or so water is to be found very near the surface. We made our way towards the blockhouse over a level bit of sand, which carried the footprints made by innumerable camels long ago.

Bir el Nakhla (the well of the palm trees) consists of a narrow valley between two small rises. On one of these was some halfa grass and one palm tree, then red with locusts, who swarmed on it. My men made



GROUP OF TERABIL IN DESERT BETWEEN THE SHEB AND TERFAUI OASES.

a great meal for themselves by catching and cooking them. Ticks and big black beetles made the stay hideous for me. While dodging one of them I broke the diaphragm of my theodolite. Having no spare one I replaced the hairs by some from my arm, and got quite good results in places where the latitude was known, and so I suppose elsewhere too.

Two small square stone blockhouses tell of the Dervish days.

The water is found in the depression between the rises I mentioned. Glistening sand, with here and there a patch of clay-like substance—a common feature in the desert—fills it. An inch below the surface the sand is damp, and a well, easily scooped out to a depth of four feet, will fill in a night. I planted a number of date stones, so that in ten or twenty years the name of the oasis will not appear to have been given it in sarcasm. Moreover, on my return to Halfa I sent out a special patrol with a quantity of lebbuk seeds and saplings, with orders to plant them at once at every oasis we visited. It is possible that, if reafforestation of the desert were started, little by little much might be recovered.

Eight miles or so from this oasis lies that of Taklis, so-called from the quantity of that sort of grass growing on several acres of low (five feet high) sand-dunes. To reach the latter place we mounted a rocky plateau. Forty feet below us, to the east, one could see the depression in which the oases lie. My guides were enraptured with the quality of the ground when we descended to the level of Taklis, and the ease with

which it could be watered. I followed the track of a solitary gazelle, but did not come up to it. In the distance were several small clumps of brushwood.

The going from Taklis was splendid—hard level sand. Here and there a small conical kopje, thirty feet high, broke the monotony of the plain. About half-way to Sheb we saw the tracks of a few gazelle leading to a long palm-covered rise to the south. Here and there were the skeletons of camels. We came to a long sharp rise, and crossing it, saw in the distance a group of terabil. “El Hamdillillah, we’re there,” quoth the guide. “Walahi, you’re a wonderful man,” said the other policeman with me. “Give praise to God, it is his mercy that led us,” smirked the former. It was well he had not assumed the credit, as it turned out that this was not Sheb. Another and higher ridge faced us; bones of camels lined the way. On climbing it we saw the blockhouse of Sheb away in the distance. On either side of us were sandstone hills, sixty feet high, and in front a descent, to the level, of 100 to 150 feet, to get down which we had to dismount. We rode on about two miles and then struck the innumerable tracks of the Arbaïn road, forming a perceptible line across country, and followed them for the last mile to the well. The latter is hollowed in a soft white rock, and the water, though plentiful and clear, is brackish. Sheb shows traces of the long residence of the Camel Corps under Tudway Bey (Colonel Tudway, C.B., D.S.O.). Old boots and clothing, not to forget a fragment of a flowered waistcoat of chaste (*sic*) design beloved of the native orderly, are to be found round the blockhouse.

This, situated on a hill, fifty feet high, overhanging the well, bears on its woodwork the bullet scars made by a determined attack of Dervishes on seven men of the Camel Corps.

Bir el Sheb (the well of alum), unlike Nakhla, does not belie its name. Eight hundred yards south-west of the well lie acres and acres of alum. It covers the surface like newly-laid metalling. An inch below the surface it is white, floury, and damp. We collected some, as rubbed on with an onion, it is invaluable as a cure for a camel's sore feet.

I tried to stalk a gazelle and did, but it got away before I could shoot. The sand was heavy and the day hot. Clumps of dom palm were dotted everywhere on small steep ridges. The fruit, of the nature of a nutmeg, but large as an orange, was not bad. The gazelle are rendered very wild, firstly by the caravans who surround and kill them with spears, and secondly, by the police patrols who, in the summer, run them down on foot.

Sheb is the scene of one of the grim jokes perpetrated in the desert. Not many months before my visit, when tourists, 120 miles away, were scratching their names on the rock of Abusir, a patrol of three (Garrarish-riverain Arabs) police lost themselves, killed a camel for the water it had stored in its stomach, and then found their way to the wells. This is the story as tracked by the Kababish police, who justly described the Garrarish as utter fools in the desert. It is evident that by the wells they found a caravan, and that now two camels more and three riverain Arabs toil for some

Bedouin owner in the northerly oasis, while their relations petition the Government for blood-money. At Sheb I rearranged my party. With two police as guides, my servant, and food and rations for four days, I started for Terfaui. Prior to my visit this oasis was supposed to be identical with Safsaf, fifty miles north-west of Sheb, whereas it is thirty more in the same direction.

Crossing a col of one of the hills that lie round the well we found ourselves in a plain, five miles in diameter, surrounded by hills. One road lay towards five black hills that were very conspicuous. The camels, trotting over this plain, turned up a bright red sand. I got some. It had some grains of chrome colour in it, and was damp. Near the hills I saw pieces of sandstone covered with small stalactites of the same stone, painted in hues of brilliant colours.

After leaving the plain the going for about seven miles was over rocky ground, but soon it changed to a dull brown smoothness, which resembled nothing so much as a surly sea—the long undulations, the swell, and the heaps of pebbles, the summits of the waves. Twenty-five miles from Sheb we crested a rise, and before us saw spread a panorama of level yellow sand—no rolling ground, no stones. Only, in the far distance, floating in mirage, three widely-separated terabil. We made for the centre one. In the cup, formed by three hummocks, we found a well dug to the depth of 18 inches by the forefeet of the gazelle, whose tracks were numerous. The water was very brackish. The sun was well up when

we reached Safsaf. This oasis has no trees to mark it. A certain Hope-Johnstone is supposed to have cut down those that were there, as they were infested with snakes. One of the men had planted a dom that was doing well. I planted dates, and hope that my patrols will later have planted a lot on it. The oasis was a long low ridge, covered with safsaf grass. It is the same grass that grows on the banks of the Nile, and gets green during the rise of the river, when the wells above fill, and fades as the Nile falls. The ridge is about seven miles long. The north end of it runs into an immense salt field. Great rocks of salt stick brown and ugly above the surface there. Half-way from Safsaf to Terfaui lie some terabil, and also a narrow sand-drift. The dead level changes here, becoming more undulating and pebbly as Terfaui is approached. Near here it was that Tudway Bey captured a Dervish caravan. In all my wanderings his is the only name which I have met in popular ballads. Those of officers still serving do not count. The young policeman who was crooning it to his camel could only tell me that Tudway had been a bey of the "Hagana" (Camel Corps), and used to give his men things, "magana" (free of cost), &c. Even in Halfa, the names of the Sirdars Wood, Grenfell, and Kitchener are unknown, while that of Wodehouse is a household one. Terfaui has been an oasis of importance. It consists of twelve groups of terabil, with others in the distance, to the north-west. It shows almost as many signs of camping-places as Sheb. In one of these I picked up some slag that looked like

flow structure in lava. It was no doubt brought out by fires. There is both sweet and brackish water here, and a number of still young bastard palms (*i.e.* those grown from date-stones, not from shoots). There is not the slightest doubt that oases exist west, and especially north-west of Terfaui. The map shows a line of them descending south-east from Tripoli. Moreover, the Arabs have a belief that 160 miles from Terfaui exists a real country (Kufra ?) overflowing with milk and honey. I had neither time nor food to venture further, though I longed to do so. Some one will yet prick the Senussi bubble. If Rolphs was, as he describes, attacked by thieves, it was by Senussi that restitution was made him.

I had now to return to Safsaf. For the first score of miles after leaving the latter oasis we travelled over the same sandy level as before, reaching it on our outward journey. Near the oasis I shot a bird which my men declared was an aquatic one. It was about the size of a duck. Round the well at Safsaf there had been, it is true, a few sorts of small birds. At a tarbul, which we passed, I tried to shoot some gazelle, but they made off at a terrible rate for another in the dim distance, which is said to contain water. When we left the sandy level we entered very rocky undulating country, which lasted much beyond Debbes. It appears, however, that slightly to the west is a loop in the road which avoids them to a great extent. As it was, to the right and left were low ledges of rock and small conical hills. To the east we sighted J. Ahmar, a tall, dark-red, square-topped mountain,

on the Arbaïn road. To the west were a few terabil. After crossing a couple of stiff rises we came to the oasis of Debbes. The water there is almost sweet. Taklis grass surrounds a few selim and kitr bushes, and a clump of bastard palms.

A little less than half-way to Selima is a small hill called Sh. Umbigil, after a holy man from the west, who died and is buried there. It is a great halting-place for caravans. Thence to Selima the going was perfect—underfoot a sandy level, to the west a long line of sugar-loaf hills, and to the east a few large ones. After walking for three hours we mounted. Our camels' journey was almost over. So we began to race. We finished the last two hours of our forty mile morning march at a pace which touched ten miles an hour. I rode a camel, which next day carried all before it in the sports I held. Do what I would I could not get the pace out of it that the Arabs did out of inferior beasts.

Below the ridge which surrounds the oasis I found the officer in charge of the police post and the remainder of the police waiting me. The former brought me over the high, instead of the low, col of J. Selima ; 200 feet below me lay, in one corner of a bowl of colourless rocks, a patch of faded green 500 by 200 yards—the palm trees of Selima ! A piercing wind tears into the place, causing a perpetual mild sandstorm. In winter the water freezes. The one redeeming feature of the place—that which made Selima of such importance—is the quantity of clear sweet water.

Selima has been described as a "most beautiful spot." It is not. Yet, bursting suddenly as it does on the traveller, it is a more grateful sight, after the oceans of sand, than are the terabil of other watering-places which one sees floating in mirage fifteen miles and more before reaching them, and which never come up to expectation. Selima has ruins and a history. The latter is that a Roman (or Greek) Amazon reigned supreme here, and held the key of the Arbaïn road. The former are supposed to be those of an early Christian convent. They are built on a small hill, and are about 6 by 10 yards in size, containing small low rooms. The stones wherewith the edifice is built are well squared, and covered with hieroglyphics, as is the rock on which it stands, such as might be made by a child. Stones about have scratched on them names in old-fashioned Arabic. Perhaps an illiterate sentry of the fabled queen amused himself in making the former while the better educated Mahomed Suliman Mahomed (one of the names) found time to hand his name down to posterity. One sees him reincarnated assiduously at work on the stays of a sentry box.

Near this ruin I found a long line of tiny chambers built at the side of an overhanging rock. Out of the sand I got a red earthenware bowl, and in a zeer (Nile water jar) got some date stones that crumbled to dust in my hand. Not being an archæologist I feared to destroy the traces of early civilisation, so ceased my researches.

Not far from here were the Selima salt fields. They

are worked in a desultory fashion by the Arabs. The salt is good. Wide seams of white crystals run through coarse brown rock a few feet from the surface. There is also here a large fossilised forest, but so much wood in that state lies about this desert that it is barely worth mention.

I had my sports on a level bit of sand next day. Riding, wrestling, running, &c., and after two nights' halt started westwards again.

My first reason for going in that direction—it was unknown desert—was that I hoped to cut across the tracks of smugglers of arms, if such existed, as they were supposed to do. My second to investigate the truth of a fable. The fable was this. A Kababish lost a camel in this desert, and followed and found it. It was in an oasis, in the centre of which was a lake, and round which were trees, gazelle of many sorts, and deserted houses (see Rolph's descriptions of Kufra, &c.). Charmed with the place, and determined to occupy it with his family, the Arab collected a number of palm branches and started homewards, dropping a branch at intervals to mark the way back. He slept at night, and woke to find all the branches he had dropped piled at his head, and not a footprint about to betray who had done so.

CHAPTER XXIII

Sandy plains—The entomologists' opportunity and a picture for an artist—
Traces of an oryx—God-laid and man-laid stones—Beautiful pebbles
—A salt-well and niggardly Nature—A long-deferred bath—Legia and
its beautiful colour—A prehistoric ruin—We are past the nightmare
country—My guide is an ancient smuggler—A good dinner at last—
Rats on the menu—My bed a hole in the sand—The end of my
journeyings.

I TOOK thirteen police with me. I was going into the beat of the Bedaiat (Black Arabs), who spend their leisure raiding. We took water for four days, and camel food for ten. I determined to go due west for a hundred miles, and then, trusting to luck, to the hope that my men would recognise the country, and to the bearing of the oasis of Legia, taken from 1 D.W.O., No. 1856, 1 : 4,000,000 map, to make over that oasis for Delgo on the Nile.

The recent (1907) disaster in that desert, in which two score of the Camel Corps and an officer were lost, has convinced me how fortunate I was in my guides. The details of that disaster are too dreadful. Suffice it to say that the shrivelled corpses of the officer and a man were found with their teeth deeply imbedded in the sapless stems of a desert shrub.

To get out of the depression, about four miles in diameter, which forms the oasis, we had to cross a ridge somewhat similar to that by which we had

entered it from the north. The ground was rather broken, and over sandy clay. Once out of it the country, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with small conical kopjes of sandstone, some up to 100 feet, but most from 30 to 50 feet high. Their colour was dark red. They lay in a ridge from N.W. to S.E. In this sort of country, which seemed to fall steadily, we went for thirty miles. Occasionally magnificent views were obtained. Distance clothed these hills and valleys with trees, and the mirage watered them.

When forty miles from Selima we entered a large level plain, like that near Safsaf, save for the absence of terabil. To the south-east the hills looked like a range of mountains. Near here we found an old marhaka (stone on which grain is ground by hand). It was of natural concrete, of which there is a lot about. There was a track running 245° , so we went along it.

Sixty miles from Selima we struck the Debbes-Legia road, long disused, and some miles further on the Terfaui-Legia one, so covered with camel skeletons and droppings that it must have been a great highway—no doubt in Dervish times—though no recent tracks were on it.

Near the latter road was a great barrier of barchans (sand-drifts) running from S.W. to N.W. as far as one could see. The sand was fairly firm, and winding through it took us an hour. Beyond it was a sandy depression, and not far from the latter a great plain, covered with boulders three feet high or so. Behind

these we crouched during our midday halt to shelter ourselves from the truly awful blasts. The stone on this plain, a hard black rock, and yellow stones of flint-like hardness, was absolutely other than that further east, where it was sandstone or conglomerate.

Beyond this plain was another of dead level sand. Here we found many skeletons of birds, and a bit of kitr, about the size of a lead pencil, too large to have been carried there by the wind. I was told that often great flights of birds from the west alight at Selima, and in their anxiety to drink often drown each other in the wells. I should have mentioned before that, except east of Sheb, insect life is rife on the desert. Solitary or pairs of locusts pursue a drunken flight for a few yards when disturbed. Moths and beetles of various kinds are found. What an opportunity for an entomologist. Let him but gather a few specimens, and he will hand his name down to posterity tacked on to some beetle or bug. Some of the crawling things are particularly hideous and repulsive-looking. I loathe insects.

At nightfall we saw some sand-drifts to the north, but at daybreak these were out of sight. Nothing but a dead level of sand was around us, not even a ripple on it broke the mirror-like surface on which we travelled. As the sun rose higher, however, undulations and small pebbles appeared, and presently in the west we sighted in the far distance another belt of sand-drifts. Alas, we had to turn back. The coldness of the weather had enabled us to husband our water, but we were now in for two days more than we had

set out for. Just before turning back we came on a human skeleton. On being touched the bones crumbled to dust. The teeth in the jawbone had been filed down by the action of the sand. Did these bones belong to one of the race who inhabited this region, when grass and game abounded, or did they tell the drama of some escaped slave finding his liberty at last after his headlong flight to the setting sun from the caravan on the "Darb-el-Arbaïn"? What a picture for an artist—the bronzed skin, the yellow featureless sand, and the pitiless blue sky.

At the furthest point reached I made a small pyramid of stones. These were small, distorted, yellow, and flint-like.

What lies beyond those sand-drifts to the west? The great central lake of fable? The heavy dews that fell the two nights we spent in the vicinity led me to believe that it did; but Captain Lyons, F.R.S., disabused me of this idea, writing that even rain is not unknown in this desert, and pointing out that everything is against the formation of a water deposit here.

A few miles from our halting-place were a couple of widely separated ridges of black rock. From a distance the mirage made them look like clumps of trees, so I went to them. The one we passed was about 50 yards long and 12 feet high, the eyrie of two falcons (abu sugheir of the Arabs), veritable lords of all they surveyed.

About twenty miles from our most westerly halting-place we crossed a line of sand-drifts, between which were a few small tufts of scorched grass (this is found

in all the drifts I passed), and as far again south-east was another, but mightier, barrier of sand, at the foot of which one found stone that resembled granite. I climbed one of the drifts, and from the top of it looked out to the east on a dirty brown plain on which, a couple of miles away, stood a solitary tundub (*capparis aphylla*) tree. The latter was a real god-send, as it gave us a little firewood.

I must not omit to mention one feature of desert travelling, the observation of the principle of "Do unto others as you would be done by." A makhazan (store of grain or water for return journey) may be left anywhere. The owner is certain that no regular denizen of the desert, save perhaps a stray gazelle, will touch it. Hence we took only the dry branches of this landmark.

Under the tree we found the droppings of an oryx. They were years old. In the years that the rain falls in the desert it becomes covered in places with luscious grass—I passed a spot where this happened not many miles west of Delgo—and game migrates from the south.

Near the tree were numerous tracks leading east. The way was marked in the usual simple desert fashion. Providence laid the stones, the oblong ones, flat. When one sees an occasional one set endways, one recognises the hand of man. We followed these signs till we struck the Arbaïn road. The tracks westwards misled us somewhat, as we were led to believe that the bearing I was following was incorrect. So we changed it to a more northerly one.



BARCHANS (SAND WAVES) IN DESERT WEST OF THE SELIMA OASIS.

Words can scarcely describe the awful journey, especially in the dark, from this tree to Ein Aga, I might say to within sixty miles of Delgo. Riding was almost out of the question, walking over the ground thickly strewn with flat stones some eight inches in diameter almost as bad. A striking feature was the solitary sand-drift. Numbers of them, a mile or so apart, covered the plain. In among the stones were beautiful pebbles and polished pieces of petrified wood. One trunk over twenty feet long was passed. We also passed many patches of brilliant purple pebbles. Nature, as if to draw attention to her handiwork, placed one or two pieces of chrome-coloured ones among the purple. The more beautiful the pebbles, the uglier brown is the desert.

We had now struck the Darb el Arbain ("Road of Forty Days"). Centuries of caravans have worn more or less possible tracks deep among the stones. We passed a tundub tree into which, as seen by its position, a dying camel, gaining that much strength in its agony of thirst, had dragged itself. In the distance we saw J. Ein el Legia ("Spring of Legia"), a small, dark-coloured, flat-topped hill, which would pass unnoticed and certainly unnamed elsewhere, but here holds the position of the one-eyed man in the country of the blind. Coming out of the unknown, we hailed it with delight, and the possibility of missing the oasis and having to make a dash to the Nile for water, that had haunted us, vanished.

As we approached Ein Aga I saw my escort surreptitiously loosening and loading their rifles. This

oasis is used by the Bedaiat during their raids. While in the vicinity the keenness for sentry duty the police displayed told of years of raids and counter-raids.

This oasis, like Selima, is approached by a drop of two hundred feet to its level. There is, however, one marked difference. Selima is surrounded by a ridge which one climbs before descent into the depression is begun. Here, on the contrary, though the country passed was like the trough and crest of an angry sea, one drops straight over the edge of a stony plateau into it. To the east the plateau on which we had travelled comes to an end in a long escarpment. In all the similar depressions we passed were large, precipitous hills, perhaps three hundred feet high, and the sides themselves looked like a range of them.

A little green spot, a cluster of palms eight feet high growing out of one root, marks the position of the well, which is situated a mile from the gully we descended. The water is slightly saline about a foot from the surface in deep wells a couple of yards wide at the top. About the well were a few clumps of halfa grass, but the sprouting date-stones were kept down by the gazelle, whom the scares made of the bones of defunct camels failed to keep off. There had been a police post here. It was removed, as the "state of constant readiness" was too trying on the men to keep up. Some who had been on it told me that the ground would yield anything. Still Nature has been most niggardly in her favours. The few square yards of halfa grass I mentioned are all she has to show for countless years of occupation.

Here we found a sad reminder of the perils Natron traders undergo. Eight men with forty-five camels, convinced by the fact that a weighing machine, to regulate the collection of taxes, had been set up at Selima, ventured to Bir Natron alone instead of forming part of a great caravan. They were set on at night by the Bedaiat. Their camels and one of their members disappeared, and the remainder arrived footsore to exhaustion at Selima to tell the tale, which my men had deducted already from the footprints of seven men and no camels we found at Ein Aga.

Ein Aga was the first sheltered spot I reached since leaving Halfa. I would much have preferred to put off my bath indefinitely, not having washed for six days, but the presence of water shamed me into it.

As some grazing for the camels was promised some miles further on at Legia (incorrectly called Legia Amran, which place is near the Nile), we went to it. We passed several depressions like that of Ein Aga before reaching the one it is in. There, and in a less extent at Ein Aga, one sees a peculiar formation of clay. At first a more or less level stretch of hard red clay is seen, then a wilderness of hummocks at Ein Aga, uniform and wide apart—at Legia more crowded—with their high ends toward the north and looking like rough models of walruses. They are, as a rule, 6 feet high and 10 feet long. At Legia is also seen a part where it seems as if a boiling caldron of clay had suddenly solidified.

In all parts of the desert one finds beautifully

polished pebbles, but Legia is the richest of them all in them. Nature is her own lapidary, polishing all that will polish with the fine sand that almost continually is blowing along.

There are a few selim trees near Legia, and round the wells, like those at Ein Aga, some halfa grass. Of animal life there is a fair number of gazelle.

There is also a hill of peculiar interest. It shows unmistakable signs of having been quarried, viz. the holes made by boring. The whole hill has been cut round—the work of years—and huge piles near it seem to show that washing was done near it. The stone, which turns brittle, is of the colour of ground hæmatite used by the ancient Egyptians in their paintings. It has veins of yellow and white in places.

We had found the recent tracks of only three Bedaiat at the wells, so I sent all but four of my party back to Selima from here. I took the others with me in the hope of capturing the intruders.

We left Legia by the road to Shemsi, the only practical way out of the depression to the east, passing the quarried mountain on our left. My compass, as before, the guide, led us straight for Delgo. Once we left the Shemsi road we found ourselves in very rocky undulating country. To the north was an endless escarpment which marks the plateau on which runs the Arbain road. In the distance to the south-east were two mountains by which runs the road we had left. We crossed a few steep-sided broad depressions. We did most of the journey on foot as the rocky stone-strewn surface demanded. We halted near a valley,

the crest of which was marked by a number of tundubai, near which was a quantity of haïb, the favourite and best food of a camel. This bush is a grey-green in colour. There were also many patches of dried grass (in one place it was quite green). I feel sure that the numerous tracks we saw had been made by game.

When we went on we had to cross a level pebbly plain, and made for two mountains due east, which formed a giant gateway. Here we crossed the tracks of the Bedaiat. They do not favour the recognised roads when raiding.

The gateway resolved itself into a large table-topped mountain with another, more irregular in shape, beside it. These, like all hills of importance in these parts, were in a depression, the steep sides of which were about 150 feet deep or more.

From here on for miles we crossed one depression after another with sides from 50 to 200 feet deep and about two miles across. They seemed a vast natural system of reservoirs where irrigation may yet find its way.

About seventy miles from Legia we passed a prehistoric ruin. They are very rare. There is one south of Legia with the cantle of the doorway still perfect. The one I saw was an ellipse of upright stones 7 by 5 yards. I did not grub in the sand that filled it, as I remembered how faint are the traces left by primitive people, and how incalculable the damage wrought by amateurs.

The nightmare country was now behind us. Here and there we passed large squares of huge granite (?)

boulders through which we threaded our way. A few hundred yards to the north was the rocky plain that would have been our lot had we struck a little more north. To the south the sandy level lost itself in the horizon, broken in one place by a yellowish hill. In front was a long low ridge with a fairly high hill some miles to the south of it. Where we crossed the ridge was a small hill composed entirely of white quartz—the pieces of which, when detached, showed red or green below ground. Here we met some ordinary house-flies.

When we at last sighted J. Tundub on the Nile our shouts of delight were somewhat parched, as, having miscalculated our distance, we were out of both food and water. However, forty miles or so is not much of a journey. Our camels caught the infection and bowled along. In a few hours the mountain, which had loomed blue and distant as Rip Van Winkle's earlier in the day, took shape. J. Ali Bursi was another landmark. My guide was one of the police who in dervish times smuggled European goods to the south by tracks thus far into the desert. We soon had entered the hills that run along the river, having passed a pair of sand-dunes *en route*. Before doing so we passed the fresh tracks of a wild sheep. At sundown we caught sight of the palm-trees of Delgo from the top of a hill. A level plain covered with scattered thorn-bushes was crossed, and we reached the river some hours later.

Thirsty as we were my Arabs, desert ones, would not go down to the river to get water, frankly admit-

ting that they were afraid of it. To tell the truth, the swiftly running stream looked forbidding enough in the darkness.

After some delay I was ferried across. At Delgo I met a Bahr el Ghazal lieutenant of mine, Ramzi Eff., and in his company, having parted with my escort, went on to Kosha. I will not delay in describing that journey. The road is a well-worn one and as accessible as Halfa itself. It is true that the stories of sheikhs of the doings in Dervish times interested me much. So indeed did it to know that my visitors, now gaily clad, had only just swum across the more than half-mile-wide river to see me. An amusing complaint was one against an English tourist whose name resembled that of Jackson Pasha, the governor of Dongola, whose title he, or his servants for him, assumed. He was reported to have demanded, revolver in hand, to be supplied with food and forage at one village. His subsequent explanation that he happened to have his revolver in his hand when he came to argue with the recalcitrant sheikh was weak.

At Kosha I was given a dinner—my first decent one for days—by the officials engaged in that magnificent work—the survey of the Nile from mouth to source. Their hours of work, from before sunrise to sunset, would astonish most people.

I left Kosha for Selima accompanied by some Gararish police. Although they had been over the road scores of times they lost their way, and I had to trust as much to my compass as to them.

Ten miles from the river a sand-storm commenced. When riding only one's hands suffered, but when walking pieces of stone, the size of a lentil, beat against one's face. I tried to eat some cold meat by making a tent of a blanket, but sand was the chief ingredient of the dish.

At J. Makhzan, a small group of low hills, we halted for the night. The storm had ceased. I was much amused by the confidence shown by the rats. As I ate my dinner two of them, of a pinky colour, jumped on my arm and sat there. I hasten to add that on the march my beverage is tea.

In a day and a half I was at Selima, and the same afternoon saw me off to Halfa *via* the hitherto unmapped direct route. After leaving the oasis, by the lower col of J. Selima this time, we careered along the same plain we had traversed before. The large hill of many points at the north end of the rocky ridge known as the Bab es Salama, on the Kosha-Selima road, soon became conspicuous.

At our sixty-fifth mile we entered somewhat hilly country—before reaching it the country had been of long swelling undulations—which continued till we reached J. Mukdud (the pierced one) about 40 miles from the Nile. A visit to this hill would make a short goal and repay a tourist anxious to know what the real desert is like. It is about 100 yards long and 70 feet high. It is surrounded by much larger hills, which to the north form a continuous chain eastward. At its northern extremity it has a passage about 15 feet high by 10 wide—"a man on his camel could ride

through." This "eye" can be seen for miles from the west.

I here left all my party save one man. Six miles beyond J. Abd el Kheir, about 20 miles from the river, we entered the hilly bordure of the Nile. We had left the path, known to my companion, with the intention of striking Halfa instead of a point south of Abu Sir. The going in the dark became so abominable that we had to halt, though only a few miles from the river. Our dinner consisted of two dates and the expectation of food next day. I dug a hole for myself in the sand, so was not very cold. When we started next morning after sunrise we expected to see the Nile over every crest we mounted. We could see a vast panorama of hills rising in a gentle slope some distance off. Soon we located the little blockhouse above the Shaigia village opposite the governor's house whence I had started. We now, after several handshakes of mutual congratulation, were making for the ferry at racing speed. There a friend of mine, the old sheikh, lord of two families, came to meet me, bringing with him a delicious bunch of grapes as a present. Hastily a boat was commandeered for my use and the sail spread, and thirty-four days after leaving it (during which I had halted nine), I sat down in the mess again.

My journeyings end here. Should the description of them prove of no interest to others, the time spent in writing them has not been wasted, for I have lived every moment of them again. The steamer tugging at the sudd-block; the antelope switching off the fly;

the lordly walk of the elephant; the whisper of the trees in the forest; the hopes and fears in pursuit of game and water; the mirage with the terabil swimming in it; the mighty sand-drifts; the stones; the sand; the sun, moon, and stars; the silence; aye my companions and comrades, black and white—everything.

by
LIEUT. D. COMYN (BLACK WATCH)
1906
Scale 1:3,000,000 or 1 inch = 47.35 Stat. Miles
10 0 10 20 30 40 50
Route — Railways — Wells



CHAPTER XXIV

The camel, its faults and virtues—Its capabilities—Care must be lavished on it—A pet in some tribes—How it should be ridden—Do not crowd your camels.

I WOULD be ungrateful indeed if I did not put in a word about the camel. The Arabs say that its mincing gait and the supercilious carriage of its head is due to the fact that it knows the hundredth attribute of God (the beads of the Moslems' rosary, on which they are told, number ninety-nine).

There seems to be a lot of question, not as to the power of that animal to do long and continuous marches, but as to the amount of harm done him by the same.

A year in the Camel Corps not only converted me into a believer and lover, but induced me always to observe his capabilities, the result on him of hard work and the way he was treated. My conviction now is that neither a very long march nor a series of them need harm a camel in the very least, if on them he is cared for, and after things are over given a few days of thorough rest and CARE. Should he sicken or die the fault is not far to seek.

On my last march the average distance was about forty miles a day (the average was raised by some marches of sixty miles). I kept my eye on those that

had accompanied me for some months after. The care lavished on them by their Kababish owners was rewarded at once. My supervision, as well as the example of the Kababish, ensured care being given them by the Garrarish or other owners of the hired ones.

The care with which the Kababish on the march cleaned the grain before giving it to their camels, and with which they were watered, and grazing, when available, was selected, was noteworthy.

To the camel-owning tribes the camel is a pet as much as is a horse to a groom; only a man wholly ignorant or inexperienced or playing for effect would deny this. To see one playing with his master to get a date from him or even to be fondled shows him to be lovable as a horse. I know that a writer of a work that had a great vogue played on the ignorance of his readers by comparing the snarling of a camel when he tried to pat its head to the ingratitude of the Sudan. He ought to have known better. Who, having used his eyes, could not point out the mistakes made by us in the care and use of the camel. It is surprising when, in spite of the Nineveh carvings of six thousand years ago, showing us how a camel should be ridden, we find ourselves till lately riding it like a horse. Not the least mistake is the crowding of this very restless sleeper at night in about as comfortable a position as one to be found in a third-class compartment on the evening of a Bank Holiday. Experience shows that, as a rule, the camel looked after by a man not its owner does not last out unless under constant supervision—supervision that lasts from morning to night,

and comprises every phase of the animal's life. Consider the Arab's own song (Kababish dialect) :

جمالي لي ليه تبهرم ديله
 جمال الرسالي ما عليه بميله

"My very own camel, what ails you that you wag your tail?
 You, camel, sent under my charge, you are nothing to me."

It would also not be out of place to enumerate the species of big game a sportsman would find in those parts of the Sudan over which my duties brought me, or about which I collected at the time first-hand information.

	Record Head.	Head worth Keeping.
<i>Halfa Province.</i>		
1. Ariel	11 in.	7 in.
2. Isabella gazelle	11 in.	7 in.
3. Dorcas "	13½ in.	9 in.
4. Ibex, Nubian (Beden)	54 in.	35 in.
5. Cony	...	...
6. Wild ass	...	...
7. Wild sheep (Barbary), rare	35 in.	16 in.
8. Klipspringer	58 in.	3 in.
9. Dikdik	...	1 in.
10. Cheetah	...	...
11. Leopard, nose to tail (tips), before skinning	7 ft. 11 in.	...
12. Hyena	...	...
13. Wild dog (?), rare	...	...
<i>Dongola Province.</i>		
The above and		
14. Addax	39½ f.c.	30 in.
15. Oryx (leucoryx)	45½ in.	39 in.
<i>Suakin Province.</i>		
1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15.		
16. Lion, nose to tail (tips), before skinning	10 ft. 7½ in.	...
17. Kudu	58 in.	49 in.

	Record Head.	Head worth Keeping.
<i>Kordofan Province.</i>		
1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17.		
18. Elephants (decent tusks, 60 lbs. each)	...	...
19. Rhinoceros (white)	62 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	17 in.
20. " (black)	55 in.	13 in.
21. Buffalo, tip to tip	45 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	24 in.
22. Giraffe	...	...
23. Roan antelope	38 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.	25 in.
24. Hartebeest (Jackson)	29 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	21 in.
25. Tiang	28 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.	20 in.
26. " (Niediek)	22 in.	19 in.
27. "	...	19 in.
28. Ril (Addra gazelle)	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	11 in.
29. White-eared cob	26 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	20 in.
30. Mrs. Gray Kob (rare)	32 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	...
31. Waterbuck (defassa)	36 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	25 in.
32. "	...	24 in.
33. Reed-buck	18 in.	12 in.
34. Oribi	...	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
35. Bush-buck	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ f.c.	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
36. Gazelle (red-fronted)	14 in.	8 in.
37. "	...	...
38. Wart-hog	27 o.c.	13 in.
39. Harnessed antelope	...	...
40. Eland (?), in straight	...	33 in.
41. Ostrich	...	...
<i>Upper Nile Province.</i>		
1, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21,		
22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33,		
34, 35, 38, 41.		
42. Hippopotamus	64 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	9 in.
43. Hartebeest (tora) (?)	...	...
44. Cobus leucotes	...	...
<i>Bahr el Ghazal Province.</i>		
9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,		
24, 25, 29, 30 (?), 31, 32, 33, 34, 35,		
38, 40, 41, 42.		
45. Vaughan's cob (larger than white-eared)	...	20
46. Sitatunga	35 $\frac{5}{8}$ f.c.	15 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

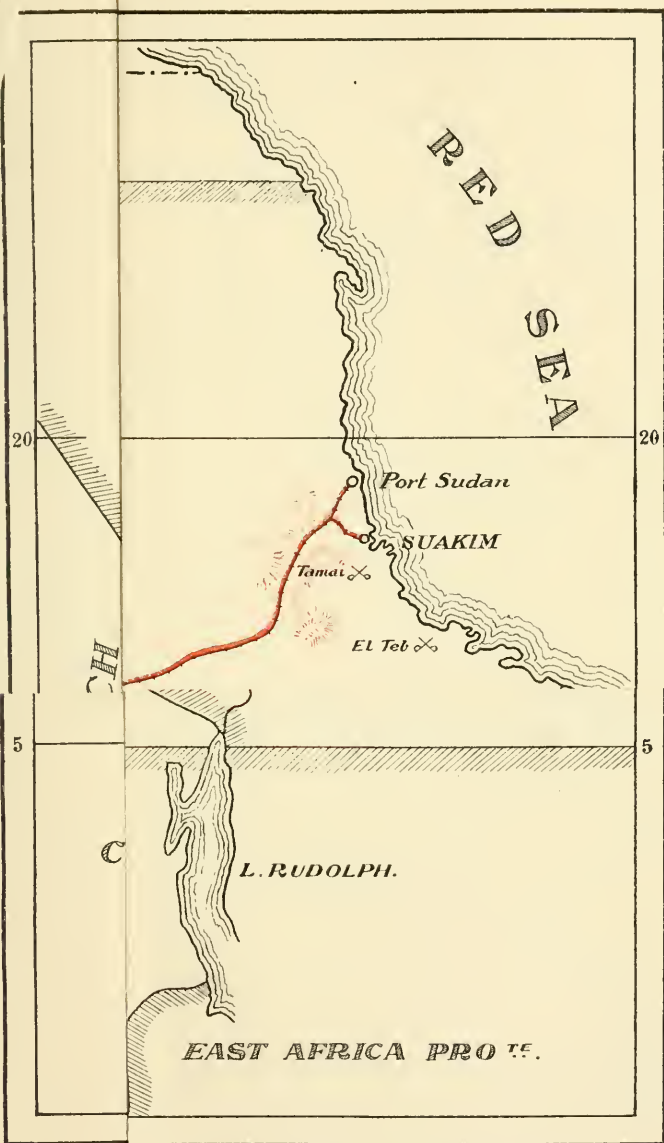
(The above does not lay any claim to accuracy.)

The following data for a shooting trip may serve as a rough guide to an intending traveller, besides showing the best seasons for travelling. The cost should not exceed £50 a month for one person, and half as much again for two, including payment of licences. It is not likely that it could be reduced to less than £30 for one and £50 for two persons. In short, a year's sport in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan could be obtained for about £500, and over forty different "heads" secured :—

Date.	Route.	Special Inducement.
Sept. 15 .	Leave Halfa by train. To Nabardi Mines (J. Rafit) .	Wild sheep.
Oct. 15 .	" Merowe (Dongola) by train .	Addax and oryx.
Nov. 1 .	" J. el Ein by camel .	Oryx.
" 15 .	" Kaja Soderi " .	Kudu.
Dec. 15 .	" Foga " .	Lion.
Jan. 1 .	" Turda " .	Numerous kinds.
Feb. 1 .	" Bahr el Arab by donkeys .	Elephant, eland (?).
Mar. 1 .	" S. of Dem Jubeir " .	Eland.
April 1 .	" Wau " .	Situtunga, Mrs. Gray Kob.
	" Mouth of Bahr el Arab } by steamer . . . }	
	" Khartum by steamer.	
May 1 .	" Suakin by rail . . .	Ibex.

I will conclude by reiterating my firm conviction that, as nowadays there is no dearth of candidates for service in the wild parts of the Empire, those applying for it should not only be armed with the recommendations of those who are in a position to form an opinion as to their suitability, but should also have passed some low standard in the language of the people among whom they are to serve ; have acquired

a slight knowledge of the geography, conditions, and customs of the country to which they are going ; and be able to show that they have acquired at least the rudiments of some useful subject—anthropology, zoology, entomology, astronomical survey, &c. As the interest in books of travel increases when read in the country which they describe, every mess in those countries should be supplied with a suitable set of works relating to the country it is in.



[illegible]

A horizontal scale bar labeled "SCALE" with markings from 0 to 150 miles. The markings are at intervals of 25 miles: 0, 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150. The unit "Miles" is written at the right end.

**FRENCH
SAHARA**

DARFUR

FRENCH
CONGO

CONGO FREE STATE

RED
SEA

ITALIAN
ERYTHREA

ABYSSINIA

EAST AFRICA PRO^{TE}

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