

proposed to form a dam, at the top of the Rembesdalfos, so that the Rembesdal Vand should hold the superfluous water from the Dæmme Vand, when a sudden discharge took place. On mature consideration, however, it was feared that it would be impossible to build a dam of sufficient strength to withstand the sudden rush and weight of water, and, were this artificial dam to give way, the floods in the valley would be even more severe than they have hitherto been. It has now, therefore, been finally decided to construct a tunnel, some 50 yards in length, at such a level that it will carry off the water of the Dæmme Vand before it rises to any great height. The cost will be considerable, as the tunnel will be made through the solid rock at the base of Lure Nut, by the edge of the glacier, and its mouth is to be provided with iron doors, to prevent its becoming blocked with ice and snow before the thaws set in each year. It is to be hoped that, when the work is completed, the desired end will be attained, and the unfortunate inhabitants of Simodalén saved from further disasters.

DR. DONALDSON SMITH'S EXPEDITION IN SOMALILAND.

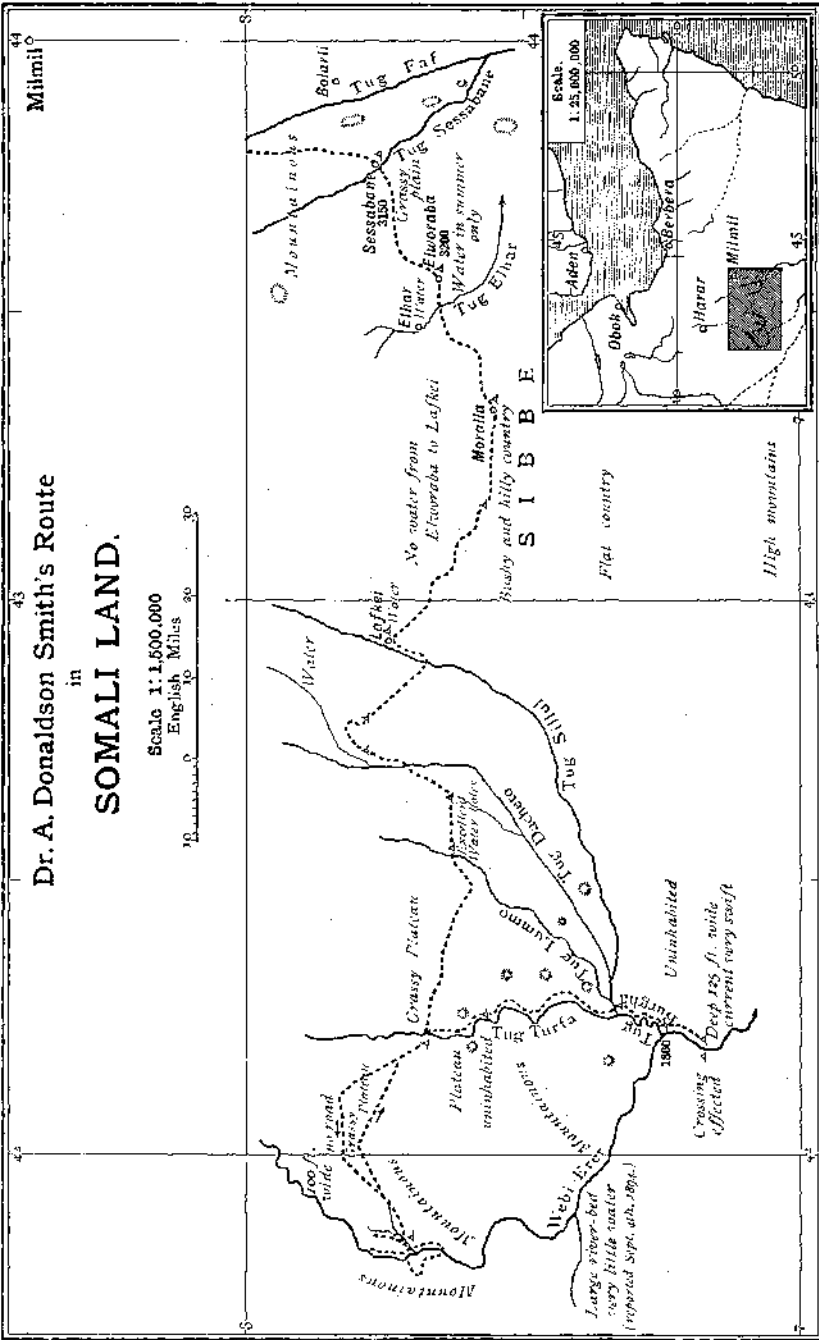
THE following letter has been received at the Society from Dr. Donaldson Smith, who, it will be remembered, started on an expedition across Somaliland to Lake Rudolf, in May last. The letter is dated "Webi Shebeli (or Webi Erer?), lat. $7^{\circ} 11' N.$, long. $42^{\circ} 11' 23'' E.$, September 1-3."

"I have happened on two very wild-looking men, who lead a precarious sort of an existence in this otherwise uninhabited country, collecting gum and shooting game with poisoned arrows. I am offering them heavy bribes to take letters to the coast. They accept, but will not wait long, so I must send you only a very rough and hasty copy of my map. There are many reasons for my not having gone further. I lost many camels the first month, and had to move very slowly with heavy loads; then the trading poor camels for good fresh ones, and buying a lot of additional ones, took some time. I was determined to push as much westwards, after leaving Milmil, as possible, and this brought me almost at once into unexplored country, very rough and bushy. The guides misled me every now and then through ignorance themselves of the country. The men were obliged to do much chopping in places to make a path, notably, from Lafeik to Turfa, and on the march from Turfa to the Erer river.

"I am satisfied with my journey so far. All the poor camels have been got rid of, and to-day we have 110 splendid animals in the best condition. From Turfa I had hoped to continue west and across the Erer river, but it is impossible either to donkeys or camels. In some places the mountains rise so precipitously from the water's edge that a man cannot climb down. The stream is from 1 to 3 feet deep and

Dr. A. Donaldson Smith's Route
in
SOMALI LAND.

Scale 1:1,500,000
English Miles



Water & Donaldson

B.T.D.

100 feet wide, and the current about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour. I made a trip of seven days to and from camp at Turfa, and explored the Erer for about 30 miles. If you will notice on the little map I send, I make the Erer very much further west than is commonly supposed; it makes a great curve running south-west, south, and then south-east. I have done much work in trying to map the course of the river-beds Sillul, Dacheto, Lummo, and Turfa, and getting correct names, and I believe I have succeeded. One common fault in Somaliland is to confound some one spot on a tug with the tug itself. We spent two days trying to cross the river $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles above the present position, but the current was too swift for ropes or raft. We then tried lower down, and after two days' hard work we are at last across, not without the loss of one of my poor boys; the current carried him away, and he was drowned. The current is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour here, and from the volume of water, I have no doubt that a large stream empties itself into the Erer between the point at which I met the Erer on my side trip from Turfa and here. This stream is evidently as large as the Erer, but no larger. Whether it may be called the Webi Shebeli or not is a question, but certain it is that the Erer contributes towards making half of the large river that is called Shebeli at Irne.

"The country for many miles along these rivers is uninhabited, on account of the feuds between the Gallas and the Ogadams. Game is abundant. While marching across an opening in the bushes, a rhinoceros suddenly sprang up and charged down upon us. I had begun to hold the rhino in contempt, so I merely stepped aside a couple of yards to get a side shot, thinking that he would continue in a straight line. He turned as quickly as a cat on me, however, and I could not dodge him. I just had time to raise my eight-bore and fire at his head, when he was 4 feet from me. He dropped on his knees, but in an instant was at me again, this time with his head lowered. I dropped him, and there was little kicking. He lay dead only two feet from me, and I became a wiser man. Mr. Gillett had good sport with a lion a few days ago. Gillett has had excellent sport all along with antelopes, zebras, rhino, etc.

"This country is full of interest. There is the greatest variety of flora and fauna, and what with mapping and collecting I have my hands full. E. Dodson, taxidermist, is a valuable assistant. I already have a large collection. Fossil shells and coral are to be found all over the hills. It is very often cloudy, and there are occasional showers. This is the hottest place I have been in since I left Berbera—average for twenty-four hours, 88° . On the highest plateau lands to the east, my observations often show a mean temperature of 71° to 75° . We are all three in excellent condition. I have seen one or two flies that I believe to be the dreaded camel-fly of the Webi Shebeli, but they are very rare. I am at present most anxious to find a guide. There is not

a trace of any man ever having been here. I am obliged, therefore, to send men in all directions to find the best place for camels to march, and to try to find water to the west. I shall endeavour to solve the question of the Webi Shebeli and the Erer by going myself up the river, on which we are camped. The confluence of the two streams must be necessarily close to us. My men are doing splendidly. We shall probably spend a longer time in Africa than I at first anticipated. We have had no mishaps so far, except the drowning of the camel boy and the capture of a mule by a crocodile.

“September 2.—My reconnoitring parties have just captured two Gallas. They are still a little frightened, but they unite in describing a river only about 20 miles above our camps which joins the Erer, and which comes from the north-west. I shall soon see this river, and follow along it if possible. Our two captives also tell us of many villages near us, where camels, donkeys, and sheep can be bought. They point out that the Gallas, who are called after Sbeik Nussein, lie to our south-west. The Gallas will hardly credit their senses when they find we have crossed the river at this time of year, when it is so full, and at this difficult point.

“September 3.—A party of eight of my men I sent out the night before last have just returned, with the news that they found a large river-bed coming into the Erer, 25 miles above our camp. There was scarcely any water in it, and in places it was altogether dry. The news is reliable, as the men knew I should see for myself in a day or two; the only thing to doubt is the exact position, as the Somalis are bad judges of distances. Now I feel certain, however, that this is the Erer I am on, and that no stream of importance empties itself into it before it changes its name into Webi Shebeli at Irne. The large volume of water before our camp may be accounted for by rains to the north-east.”

THE PEARY AUXILIARY EXPEDITION, 1894.

THE following letter has been received by the President from Mr. Henry G. Bryant, in charge of the Peary Auxiliary Expedition, sent out under the auspices of the Geographical Club of Philadelphia:—

“Almost a month has passed since the good ship *Falcon* landed the members of the Peary Auxiliary Expedition and the returning members of Lieutenant Peary's party here in Philadelphia. Knowing of your interest in Arctic questions, I hoped ere this to have sent you a letter supplementing, in a measure, the information sent to the newspapers by cable from St. John's. An accumulation of work and engagements of various kinds have thus far interfered with the performance of this pleasant duty.

“In this year of Arctic disappointments, I look back with some