

# THE NILE TRIBUTARIES OF ABYSSINIA,

AND THE

SWORD HUNTERS OF THE HAMRAN ARABS.

BY

SIR SAMUEL W. BAKER, M.A. F.R.G.S.

GOLD MEDALLIST OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY;

GRANDE MEDAILLE D'OR DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DE GÉOGRAPHIE DE PARIS;

AUTHOR OF THE "ALBERT N'YANZA GREAT BASIN OF THE NILE," "EIGHT YEARS'  
WANDERINGS IN CEYLON," "THE RIFLE AND THE HOUND IN CEYLON,"

ETC. ETC.



London:  
MACMILLAN AND CO.  
1867.

*(The Right of Translation is reserved.)*

Digitized by Google

rush of youngsters takes place, and much squabbling for the best places ensues among the boys; this ends in great uproar, when down comes a great male, who cuffs one, pulls another by the hair, bites another on the hind quarters just as he thinks he has escaped, drags back a would-be deserter by his tail, and shakes him thoroughly, and thus he shortly restores order, preventing all further disputes by sitting under the bush and quietly enjoying the berries by himself. These baboons have a great variety of expressions that may perhaps represent their vocabulary: a few of these I begin to understand, such as their notes of alarm, and the cry to attract attention; thus, when I am sitting alone beneath the shade of a tree to watch their habits, they are at first not quite certain what kind of a creature I may be, and they give a peculiar cry to induce me to move and show myself more distinctly.

“*October 20.*—A lion was roaring throughout the night not far from the tent on his way towards the river to drink: at every roar he was answered by the deep angry cry of the baboons, who challenged him immediately from their secure positions on the high rocks and trees. I found the tracks of his large feet upon the bank of the river, but there is no possibility of finding these animals in the day time, as they retire to the high grass upon the table-lands.

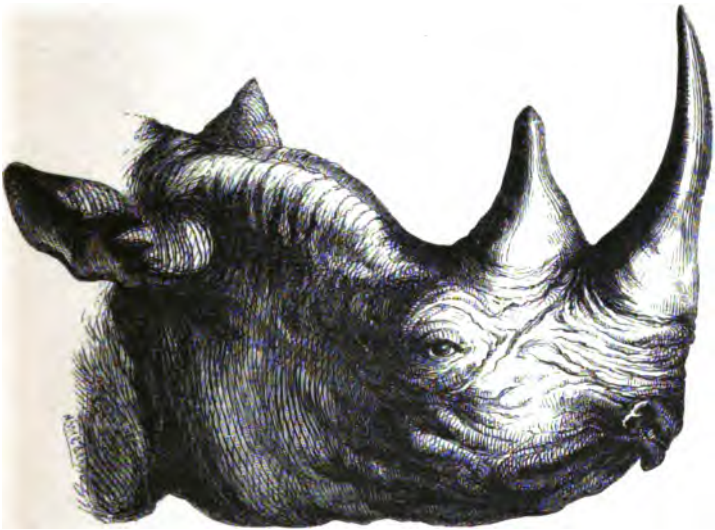
“The banks of the Atbara are now swarming

with small birds that throng the bushes (a species of willow), growing by the water's edge; the weight of a large flock bends down the slender boughs until they touch the water: this is their opportunity for drinking, as their beaks for an instant kiss the stream. These unfortunate little birds get no rest, the large fish and the crocodiles grab at them when they attempt to drink, while the falcons and hawks pursue them at all times and in every direction. Nothing is fat, as nothing can obtain rest, the innumerable birds and beasts of prey give no peace to the weaker kinds; the fattest alderman of the city of London would become a skeleton, if hunted for two hours daily by a hyæna.

“*October 23.*—This evening I took a walk, accompanied by my wife, and Bacheet with a spare gun, to try for a shot at guinea-fowl. We were strolling along the margin of the river, when we heard a great shrieking of women on the opposite side, in the spot from which the people of Sofi fetch their water. About a dozen women had been filling their water-skins, when suddenly they were attacked by a large crocodile, who attempted to seize a woman, but she, springing back, avoided it, and the animal swallowed her girba (water-skin), that, being full of water and of a brown exterior, resembled the body of a woman. The women rushed out of the river, when the crocodile made a second dash at them,

and seized another water-skin that a woman had dropped in her flight. They believe this to be the same monster that took a woman a few months ago. Few creatures are so sly and wary as the crocodile. I watch them continually as they attack the dense flocks of small birds that throng the bushes at the water's edge. These birds are perfectly aware of the danger, and they fly from the attack, if possible. The crocodile then quietly and innocently lies upon the surface, as though it had appeared quite by an accident; it thus attracts the attention of the birds, and it slowly sails away to a considerable distance, exposed to their view. The birds, thus beguiled by the deceiver, believe that the danger is removed, and they again flock to the bush, and once more dip their thirsty beaks into the stream. Thus absorbed in slaking their thirst, they do not observe that their enemy is no longer on the surface. A sudden splash, followed by a huge pair of jaws beneath the bush that engulfs some dozens of victims, is the signal unexpectedly given of the crocodile's return, who has thus slyly dived, and hastened under cover of water to his victims. I have seen the crocodiles repeat this manoeuvre constantly; they deceive by a feigned retreat, and then attack from below.

"In like manner the crocodile perceives, while it is floating on the surface in mid-stream, or from the opposite side of the river, a woman filling her



HEAD OF BLACK RHINOCEROS.

*See page 365.*

girba, or an animal drinking, &c. &c. Sinking immediately, it swims perhaps a hundred yards nearer, and again appearing for an instant upon the surface, it assures itself of the position of its prey by a stealthy look; once more it sinks, and reaches the exact spot above which the person or animal may be. Seeing distinctly through the water, it generally makes its fatal rush from beneath—sometimes seizing with its jaws, and at other times striking the object into the water with its tail, after which it is seized and carried off.

The crocodile does not attempt to swallow a large prey at once, but generally carries it away, and keeps it for a considerable time in its jaws in some deep hole beneath a rock, or the root of a tree, where it eats it at leisure. The tongue of the crocodile is so unlike that of any other creature that it can hardly be called by the same name; no portion throughout the entire length is detached from the flesh of the lower jaw—it is more like a thickened membrane from the gullet to about half way along the length of jaw.

“*October 24.*—Having burnt off a large surface of high grass, I discovered a quantity of gourds and wild cucumbers—the latter are bright crimson, covered with long fleshy prickles, with black horny tips; these are eaten by the baboons, but not by the Arabs. The gourds are only serviceable for cups and ladles, manufactured from their shells.

“I find a good pair of Highland shooting shoes of

great value ; the soles were exceedingly thick, and they have resisted, until now, the intensely hard and coarse-grained sandstone which grinds through all leather. My soles are at length worn out, and I have repaired them with the tanned hide of giraffe. Much of the sandstone is white, and soft and friable ; but this appears to have been decomposed by time and exposure, as the generality is hard, and would make excellent grindstones.

“ *October 25.*—Three elephant-hunters arrived to-day with horses for sale. I purchased three—a bay and two greys. They are all of Abyssinian breed, and are handsome animals, although none exceed fourteen hands and a half. The prices were high for this part of the world, where dollars are scarce ; but to me, they appeared to be absurdly cheap. The bay horse was a regular strong-built cob ; for him I paid nineteen dollars—about 4*l.* including a native saddle and bridle ; for the greys, I paid fifteen and thirteen dollars, saddles and bridles also included. The bay I named Tétel (hartebeest), the greys Aggahr\* and Gazelle. Tétel was a trained hunter, as was Aggahr likewise. Gazelle was quite inexperienced, but remarkably handsome. None of these horses had ever been shod, but their hoofs were beautifully shaped, and as hard as ivory. The saddles had no stuffing on the seats, but were simple wooden frames, with high backs and pommels, the various pieces being

\* Aggahr is the designation of a hunter with the sword.

sewn together with raw hide, and the front and back covered with crocodile skin. The stirrups were simple iron rings, sufficiently large to admit the great toe of the rider, according to Arab fashion in these parts. The bits were dreadfully severe; but perhaps not unnecessarily, as the sword allows only one bridle-hand to a pulling horse. Each horse was furnished with a leather nose-bag, and a long leathern thong as a picket strap. All these horses and saddlery I had purchased for forty-seven dollars, or 9*l.* 10*s.* Fortunately, both my wife and I were well provided with the best English saddles, bridles, &c. or the 'big toe' stirrup would have been an awkward necessity.

"October 26.—We left our camp this morning for a few days' *reconnaissance* of the country, accompanied by Florian, prior to commencing our regular expedition. Nine miles S.E. of Ehétilla we passed through a village called Wat el Néгур, after which we continued along a great tract of table-land, on the eastern side of the Atbara valley, bounded by a mimosa forest about four miles on the east. Very large quantities of dhurra (*Sorghum vulgare*) are grown upon this fertile soil; it is now higher than a man's head when mounted upon a camel. Far as the eye can reach, the great table-lands extend on either side the broad valley of the Atbara. The cotton that was planted many years ago by the inhabitants who have vanished, still flourishes, although choked with grass six or seven feet high. At 4 P.M. we



reached a large village, Sherif el Ibrahim, twenty-eight miles S.E. from Sofi by the route upon the east bank of the Atbara, which cuts off a bend in the river. A species of dhurra, as sweet as the sugar-cane, grows here in abundance, being regularly sown and cultivated; it is called ankoleep. This is generally chewed in the mouth as a cane; but it is also peeled by the women, and, when dried, it is boiled with milk to give it sweetness. A grain called dōchän, a species of millet, is likewise cultivated to a considerable extent; when ripe, it somewhat resembles the head of the bulrush. The whole of this country would grow cotton and sugar to perfection.

“*October 28.*—Having slept at the village, we went to the river, and Florian shot a hippopotamus. The natives, having skinned it, rushed at the carcass with knives and axes, and fought over it like a pack of wolves; neither did they leave the spot until they had severed each bone, and walked off with every morsel, of this immense beast.

“*October 31.*—Having passed a couple of days at Sherif el Ibrahim, we started for the Settite. When about half way, we arrived at a curious plateau of granite rock, with a pool of water in the centre. Formerly a large village occupied this position, named Gërrärät; but it was destroyed in a raid by the Egyptians, as being one of Mek Nimmur's strongholds. The rock is a flat surface of about five acres, covered with large detached fragments of granite; near this are several pools of water, which form the

source of the rivulet, the Till, that bounds our camp at Ehétilla. A large homera-tree (*Adansonia digitata*) grows among the blocks of granite by the pool; in the shade of its enormous boughs we breakfasted, and again started at 4 P.M. reaching the Settite river at 7.30, at a spot named Geera. In the dark we had some difficulty in finding our way down the rugged slopes of the valley to the river. We had not taken beds, as these incumbrances were unnecessary when in light marching order. We therefore made separate bivouacs, Florian and his people about a hundred yards distant, while a rug laid upon the ground was sufficient for my wife. I made myself comfortable in a similar manner. Lions were roaring all night.

“On the following morning we took a long stroll along the wild and rugged valley of the Settite, that was precisely similar to that of the Atbara. The river, although low, was a noble stream, and the water was at this season beautifully clear as it ran over a bed of clean pebbles. The pass between the cliffs of Geera was exceedingly lovely. At that point the river did not exceed 200 yards in width, and it flowed through abrupt cliffs of beautiful rose-coloured limestone; so fine and pure was the surface of the stone, that in places it resembled artificially-smoothed marble; in other places, the cliffs, equally abrupt, were of milk-white limestone of similar quality. This was the first spot in which I had found limestone since I had left Lower Egypt. The name ‘Geera,’ in Arabic,

signifies lime. Formerly this was an important village belonging to Mek Nimmur, but it had been destroyed by the Egyptians, and the renowned Mek Nimmur was obliged to fall back to the strongholds of the mountains.

“I started off a man to recall Mahomet and my entire camp from Ehétilla to Wat el Néгур, as that village was only seven hours' march from Geera; the three points, Sherif el Ibrahim, Geera, and Wat el Néгур formed almost an equilateral triangle. We reached the latter village on the following day, and found that Mahomet and a string of camels from Sofi had already arrived. The country was now thickly populated on the west bank of the Atbara, as the Arabs and their flocks had returned after the disappearance of the serroot fly. Mahomet had had an accident, having fallen from his camel and broken no bones, but he had smashed the stock of my single-barrel rifle; this was in two pieces; I mended it, and it became stronger than ever. The wood had broken short off in the neck of the stock, I therefore bored a hole about three inches deep up the centre of either piece, so that it was hollowed like a marrow bone; in one of them I inserted a piece of an iron ramrod, red-hot, I then drew the other piece over the iron in a similar manner, and gently tapped the shoulder-plate until I had driven the broken joint firmly together. I then took off from a couple of old boxes two strong brass hasps; these I let neatly into the wood on each side of the broken stock,

and secured them by screws, filing off all projections, so that they fitted exactly. I finished the work by stretching a piece of well-soaked crocodile's skin over the joint, which, when drawn tight, I sewed strongly together. When this dried it became as hard as horn, and very much stronger; the extreme contraction held the work together like a vice, and my rifle was perfectly restored. A traveller in wild countries should always preserve sundry treasures that will become invaluable, such as strips of crocodile skin, the hide of the iguana, &c. which should be kept in the tool-box for cases of need. The tool-box should not exceed two feet six inches in length and one foot in depth, but it should contain the very best implements that can be made, with an extra supply of gimlets, awls, centre-bits, and borers of every description, also tools for boring iron; at least two dozen files of different sorts should be included."

Wat el Négur was governed by a most excellent and polite sheik of the Jalyn tribe. Sheik Achmet Wat el Négur was his name and title; being of the same race as Mek Nimmur, he dared to occupy the east bank of the Atbara. Sheik Achmet was a wise man, he was a friend of the Egyptian authorities, to whom he paid tribute as though it were his greatest pleasure; he also paid tribute to Mek Nimmur, with whom he was upon the best of terms; therefore, in the constant fights that took place upon the borders, the cattle and people of Sheik Achmet

were respected by the contending parties, while those of all others were sufferers. This was exactly the spot for my head-quarters, as, like Sheik Achmet, I wished to be on good terms with everybody, and through him I should be able to obtain an introduction to Mek Nimmur, whom I particularly wished to visit, as I had heard that there never was such a brigand. Accordingly, I pitched the tents and formed a camp upon the bank of the river, about two hundred yards below the village of Wat el Néгур, and in a short time Sheik Achmet and I became the greatest friends.

There is nothing more delightful when travelling in a strange country, a thousand miles away from the track of the wildest tourist, than to come upon the footprint of a countryman; not the actual mark of his sole upon the sand, which the dust quickly obscures, but to find imprinted deeply upon the minds and recollections of the people, the good character of a former traveller, that insures you a favourable introduction. Many years before I visited Wat el Néгур, Mr. Mansfield Parkyns, who has certainly written the best book on Abyssinia that I have ever read, passed through this country, having visited Mek Nimmur, the father of the present Mek. He was, I believe, the only European that had ever been in Mek Nimmur's territory, neither had his footsteps been followed until my arrival. Mr. Parkyns had left behind him what the Arabs call a "sweet name;" and as I happened to have his

book, "Life in Abyssinia," with me, I showed it to the sheik as his production, and explained the illustrations, &c.; at the same time I told him that Mr. Parkyns had described his visit to Mek Nimmur, of whom he had spoken very highly, and that I wished to have an opportunity of telling the great chief in person how much his good reception had been appreciated. The good Sheik Achmet immediately promised to present me to Mek Nimmur, and wished particularly to know whether I intended to write a book like Mr. Parkyns upon my return. Should I do so, he requested me to mention *his* name. I promised at once to do this trifling favour; thus I have the greatest pleasure in certifying that Sheik Achmet Wat el Négur is one of the best and most agreeable fellows that I have ever met in Africa; he does not keep an hotel, or I would strongly recommend it to all travellers, but his welcome is given gratis, with the warmest hospitality.

The country for several miles upon the table-land above Wat el Négur was highly cultivated, and several thousand acres were planted with dhurra, that was at this season in full grain, and nearly ripe. Much sesamé was grown for the manufacture of oil; cotton was also cultivated, and the neighbourhood was a fair example of the wonderful capabilities of the entire country that was allowed to lie in idleness. There was little rest for the inhabitants at this time, as the nights were spent in watching their extensive

set off with the sheik himself to carry out the experiment. In the afternoon, we heard a terrible howling and crying, and a crowd of men and women returned to the village, some of whom paid us a visit; they had found the body. The log had guided them about two miles distant, and had remained stationary in a backwater near where I had shot the bull hippopotamus; in this still pool, close to the bank, they almost immediately discovered the girl floating slightly beneath the surface. No crocodile had injured the body, but the fish had destroyed a portion of the face; it was already so far advanced in decomposition, that it was necessary to bury it upon the margin of the river, at the spot where it was discovered. The people came to thank me for having originated the idea, and the very agreeable sheik spent the evening with us with a number of his people; this was his greatest delight, and we had become thoroughly accustomed to his daily visits. At such times we sat upon an angarep, while he sat upon a mat stretched upon the ground, with a number of his men, who formed a half-circle around us; he then invariably requested that we would tell him stories about England. Of these he never tired, and with the assistance of Mahomet we established a regular entertainment; the great amusement of the Arabs being the mistakes that they readily perceived were made by Mahomet as interpreter. We knew sufficient Arabic to check and to explain his errors.

The death of the girl gave rise to a conversation upon drowning: this turned upon the subject of the girl herself, and ended in a discussion upon the value of women; the question originating in a lament on the part of the sheik that a nice young girl had been drowned instead of a useless old woman. The sheik laid down the law with great force, "that a woman was of no use when she ceased to be young, unless she was a good strong person who could grind corn, and carry water from the river;" in this assertion he was seconded, and supported unanimously, by the crowd of Arabs present.

Now it was always a common practice among the Arab women, when they called upon my wife, to request her to show her hands; they would then feel the soft palms, and exclaim in astonishment, "Ah! she has never ground corn!" that being the duty of a wife unless she is rich enough to possess slaves. Sheik Achmet requested me to give him some account of our domestic arrangements in England; I did this as briefly as possible, explaining how ladies received our devoted attentions, extolling their beauty and virtue, and in fact giving him an idea that England was paradise, and that the ladies were angels. I described the variety of colours; that instead of all being dark, some were exceedingly fair; that others had red hair; that we had many bright black eyes, and some irresistible dark blue; and at the close of my descriptions, I believe the



sheik and his party felt disposed to emigrate immediately to the chilly shores of Great Britain; they asked, "How far off is your country?" "Well," said the sheik, with a sigh, "that must be a *very* charming country; how could you possibly come away from all your beautiful wives? True, you have brought one with you: she is, of course, the youngest and most lovely; perhaps those you have left at home are the *old ones!*" I was obliged to explain, that we are contented with one wife, and that, even were people disposed to marry two, or more, they would be punished with imprisonment. This announcement was received with a general expression of indignation; the sheik and his party, who a few minutes ago were disposed to emigrate, and settle upon our shores, would now at the most have ventured upon a return ticket. After some murmurs of disapprobation, there was a decided expression of disbelief in my last statement. "Why," said the sheik, "the fact is simply *impossible!* How can a man be contented with one wife? It is ridiculous, absurd! What is he to do when she becomes old? When she is young, if very lovely, perhaps, he might be satisfied with her, but even the young must some day grow old, and the beauty must fade. The man does not fade like the woman; therefore as he remains the same for many years, but she changes in a few years, Nature has arranged that the man shall have young wives to replace the old; does not the Prophet allow it? Had not our forefathers many

wives? and shall we have but one? Look at yourself. Your wife is young, and" (here the sheik indulged in compliments), "but in ten years she will not be the same as now; will you not then let her have a nice house all to herself, when she grows old, while you take a fresh young wife?"

I was obliged to explain to the sheik that, first, our ladies never looked old; secondly, they improved with age; and thirdly, that we were supposed to love our wives with greater ardour as they advanced in years. This was received with an ominous shake of the head, coupled with the exclamation, "Mashallah!" repeated by the whole party. This was the moment for a few remarks on polygamy: I continued, "You men are selfish; you expect from the woman that which you will not give in return, 'constancy and love;' if your wife demanded a multiplicity of husbands, would it not be impossible to love her? how can she love you if you insist upon other wives?" "Ah!" he replied, "our women are different to yours, they would not love anybody; look at your wife, she has travelled with you far away from her own country, and her heart is stronger than a man's; she is afraid of nothing, because you are with her; but our women prefer to be far away from their husbands, and are only happy when they have nothing whatever to do. You don't understand our women, they are ignorant creatures, and when their youth is past are good for nothing but to work. You have explained your customs;



**RHINOCEROS DISPERSING THE PARTY.**     *See page 387.*

your women are adored by the men, and you are satisfied with one wife, either young or old ; now I will explain our customs. I have four wives ; as one has become old, I have replaced her with a young one ; here they all are ” (he now marked four strokes upon the sand with his stick). “ This one carries water ; that grinds the corn ; this makes the bread ; the last does not do much, as she is the youngest, and my favourite ; and if they neglect their work, they get a taste of this ! ” (shaking a long and tolerably thick stick.) “ Now, that’s the difference between our establishments ; yours is well adapted for your country, and ours is the best plan for our own.”

I would not contradict the sheik ; the English great-coat was not the garment for the scorching Soudan, and English ideas were equally unsuited to the climate and requirements of the people. The girls were utterly ignorant, and the Arabs had never heard of a woman who could read and write ; they were generally pretty when young, but they rapidly grew old after childbirth. Numbers of young girls and women were accustomed to bathe perfectly naked in the river just before our tent ; I employed them to catch small fish for baits ; and for hours they would amuse themselves in this way, screaming with excitement and fun, and chasing the small fry with their long cloths in lieu of nets ; their figures were generally well shaped, but both men and women fell off in the development of the legs,

Very few had well-shaped calves, but remarkably thin and cleanly formed ankles, with very delicately shaped feet. The men were constantly bathing in the clear waters of the Atbara, and were perfectly naked, although close to the women; we soon became accustomed to this daily scene, as we do at Brighton and other English bathing-towns.

Our life at Wat el Néгур was anything but disagreeable; we had acquired great fame in several ways: the game that I shot I divided among the people; they also took an interest in the fishing, as they generally had a large share of all that I caught; my wife was very kind to all the children, and to the women, who came from great distances to see her; and my character as a physician having been spread far and wide, we became very celebrated people. Of course I was besieged daily by the maimed, the halt, and the blind, and the poor people, with much gratitude, would insist upon bringing fowls and milk in return for our attention to their wants. These I would never accept, but on many occasions, upon my refusal, the women would untie the legs of a bundle of chickens, and allow them to escape in our camp, rather than be compelled to return with their offering. Even the fakeers (priests) were our great friends, although we were Christians, and in my broken Arabic, with the assistance of Mahomet, I used to touch upon theological subjects. At first they expressed surprise that such clever people as the English should worship idols made of

wood, or other substances, by the hands of man. I explained to them their error, as we were Protestants in England, who had protested against the practice of bowing down before the figure of Christ, or any other form ; that we simply worshipped God through Christ, believing Him to be both Saviour and Mediator. I recalled to their recollection that Mahomet and they themselves believed in Christ, as the greatest of all the prophets, therefore in reality there was not so very wide a gulf between their creed and our own ; both acknowledging the same God ; both believing in Christ, although differing in the degree of that belief. I allowed that Mahomet was a most wonderful man, and that, if a cause is to be valued by its effect, he was as much entitled to the name of prophet as Moses, the first law-giver. Our arguments never became overheated, as these simple yet stedfast Arabs, who held the faith of their forefathers untarnished and uncorrupted by schisms, spoke more with reverence to the great spirit of religion, than with the acrimony of debate. "My brothers," I would reply, "we are all God's creatures, believing in the one great Spirit who created us and all things, who made this atom of dust that we call our world, a tiny star amongst the hosts of heaven ; and we, differing in colours and in races, are striving through our short but weary pilgrimage to the same high point ; to the same mountain-top, where we trust to meet when the journey shall be accomplished. That mountain

is steep, the country is desert; is there but one path, or are there many? Your path and mine are different, but with God's help they will lead us to the top. Shall we quarrel over the well upon the thirsty way? or shall we drink together, and be thankful for the cool waters, and strive to reach the end? Drink from my water-skin when upon the desert we thirst together, scorched by the same sun, exhausted by the same simoom, cooled by the same night, until we sleep at the journey's end, and together thank God, Christian and Mahometan, that we have reached our home."

The good fakeers rejoiced in such simple explanations, and they came to the conclusion that we were "all the same with a little difference," thus we were the best of friends with all the people. If not exactly a cure of their Mahometan souls, they acknowledged that I held the key to their bowels, which were entirely dependent upon my will, when the crowd of applicants daily thronged my medicine chest, and I dispensed jalap, calomel, opium, and tartar emetic. Upon one occasion a woman brought me a child of about fifteen months old, with a broken thigh; she had fallen asleep upon her camel, and had allowed the child to fall from her arms. I set the thigh, and secured it with gum bandages, as the mimosas afforded the requisite material. About twenty yards of old linen in bandages three inches broad, soaked in thick gum-water, will form the best of splints

when it becomes dry and hard, which in that climate it will do in about an hour. There was one complaint that I was obliged to leave entirely in the hands of the Arabs,—this was called “frendeet;” it was almost the certain effect of drinking the water that in the rainy season is accumulated in pools upon the surface of the rich table-lands, especially between the Atbara and Katariff; the latter is a market-town about sixty miles from Wat el Négur, on the west bank of the river. Frendeet commences with a swelling of one of the limbs, generally accompanied with intense pain; this is caused by a worm of several feet in length, but no thicker than pack-thread. The Arab cure is to plaster the limb with cow-dung, which is their common application for almost all complaints. They then proceed to make what they term “doors,” through which the worm will be able to escape; but, should it not be able to find one exit, they make a great number, by the pleasant and simple operation of pricking the skin in many places with a red-hot lance. In about a week after these means of escape are provided, one of the wounds will inflame, and assume the character of a small boil, from which the head of the worm will issue. This is then seized, and fastened either to a small reed or piece of wood, which is daily and most gently wound round, until, in the course of about a week, the entire worm will be extracted, unless broken during the operation, in which case severe inflammation will ensue.



It was the 22d November, and the time was approaching when the grass throughout the entire country would be sufficiently dry to be fired; we accordingly prepared for our expedition, and it was necessary to go to Katariff to engage men, and to procure a slave in the place of old Masara, whose owner would not trust her in the wild countries we were about to visit. We therefore mounted our horses, and in two days we reached Katariff, rather less than sixty miles distant. The journey was exceedingly uninteresting, as the route lay across the monotonous flats of rich table-land, without a single object to attract the attention, except the long line of villages which at intervals of about six miles lined the way. During the dry weather (the present season) there was not a drop of water in this country, except in wells far apart. Thus the cattle within twenty miles of the Atbara were driven every alternate day, that great distance to the river, as the wells would not supply the large herds of the Arabs; although the animals could support life by drinking every alternate day, the cows were dry upon the day of fasting; this proved a certain amount of suffering.

Upon arrival at Katariff we were hospitably received by a Greek merchant, Michel Georgis, a nephew of the good old man from whom we had received much attention while at Cassala. The town was a miserable place, composed simply of the usual straw huts of the Arabs; the market, or "Soog,"

was bi-weekly. Katariff was also known by the name of "Soog Abou Sinn."

I extract an entry from my journal.—"The bazaar held here is most original. Long rows of thatched open sheds, about six feet high, form a street; in these sheds, the dealers squat with their various wares exposed on the ground before them. In one, are Manchester goods, the calicoes are printed in England, with the name of the Greek merchant to whom they are consigned; in another, is a curious collection of small wares, as though samples of larger quantities, but in reality they are the dealer's whole stock of sundries, which he deals out to numerous purchasers in minute lots, for paras and half piastres, ginger, cloves, chills, cardamoms, pepper, turmeric, orris root, saffron, sandal-wood, musk, a species of moss that smells like patchouli, antimony for colouring the eyes and lips, henna, glass beads, cowrie shells, steels for striking fire, &c. &c. Other stalls contain sword-blades, files, razors, and other hardware, all of German manufacture, and of the most rubbishing kind. Mingled with these, in the same stall, are looking-glasses, three inches square, framed in coloured paper; slippers, sandals, &c. Other sheds contain camel ropes and bells, saddlery of all descriptions that are in general use, shoes, &c.; but the most numerous stalls are those devoted to red pepper, beads, and perfumery."

Beyond the main street of straw booths are vendors of miscellaneous goods, squatting under temporary

fan-shaped straw screens, which are rented at the rate of five paras per day (about a farthing) ; beneath these may be seen vendors of butter and other grease, contained in a large jar by their side, while upon a stone before them are arranged balls of fat, which are sold at five paras a lump. Each morsel is about the size of a cricket ball : this is supposed to be the smallest quantity required for one dressing of the hair. Other screens are occupied by dealers in ropes, mats, leathern bags, girbas or water-skins, gum sacks, beans, waker, salt, sugar, coffee, &c. &c. Itinerant smiths are at work, making knife-blades, repairing spears, &c. with small boys working the bellows, formed of simple leather bags that open and close by the pressure of two sticks. The object that draws a crowd around him is a professional story-teller, wonderfully witty, no doubt, as being mounted upon a camel from which he addresses his audience, he provokes roars of merriment ; his small eyes, overhanging brow, large mouth, with thin and tightly compressed lips and deeply dimpled cheeks, combined with an unlimited amount of brass, completed a picture of professional shrewdness.

Camels, cattle, and donkeys are also exposed for sale. The average price for a baggage camel is twelve dollars ; a hygeen, from thirty to sixty dollars ; a fat ox, from six to ten dollars (the dollar at four shillings).

Katariff is on the direct merchants' route from Cassala to Khartoum. The charge for transport is

accordingly low; a camel loaded with six cantars (600 lbs.) from this spot to Cassala, can be hired for one dollar, and from thence to Souakim, on the Red Sea, for five dollars; thus all produce is delivered from Katariff to the shipping port, at a charge of four shillings per hundred pounds. Cotton might be grown to any extent on this magnificent soil, and would pay the planter a large profit, were regular steam communication established at a reasonable rate between Souakim and Suez.

There is a fine grey limestone in the neighbourhood of Katariff. The collection of people is exceedingly interesting upon a market day, as Arabs of all tribes, Tokrooris, and some few Abyssinians, concentrate from distant points. Many of the Arab women would be exceedingly pretty were their beauty not destroyed by their custom of gashing the cheeks in three wounds upon either side; this is inflicted during infancy. Scars are considered ornamental, and some of the women are much disfigured by such marks upon their arms and backs; even the men, without exception, are scarified upon their cheeks. The inhabitants of Kordofan and Darfur, who are generally prized as slaves, are invariably marked, not only with simple scars, but by cicatrices raised high above the natural surface by means of salt rubbed into the wounds; these unsightly deformities are considered to be great personal attractions. The Arab women are full of absurd superstitions; should a woman be in an interesting condition, she will

creep under the body of a strong camel, believing that the act of passing between the fore and hind legs will endue her child with the strength of the animal. Young infants are scored with a razor longitudinally down the back and abdomen, to improve their constitutions.

I engaged six strong Tokrooris—natives of Darfur—who agreed to accompany me for five months. These people are a tribe of Mahometan negroes, of whom I shall speak more hereafter; they are generally very powerful and courageous, and I preferred a few men of this race to a party entirely composed of Arabs. Our great difficulty was to procure a slave woman to grind the corn and to make the bread for the people.

No proprietor would let his slave on hire to go upon such a journey, and it was impossible to start without one; the only resource was to purchase the freedom of some woman, and to engage her as a servant for the trip. Even this was difficult, as slaves were scarce and in great demand: however, at last I heard of a man who had a Galla slave who was clever at making bread, as it had been her duty to make cakes for sale in the bazaar upon market days. After some delays I succeeded in obtaining an interview with both the master and slave at the same time; the former was an Arab, hard at dealing, but, as I did not wish to drive a bargain, I agreed to the price, thirty-five dollars, 7*l*. The name of the woman was Barraké; she was about twenty-two

years of age, brown in complexion, fat, and strong; rather tall, and altogether she was a fine powerful-looking woman, but decidedly not pretty; her hair was elaborately dressed in hundreds of long narrow curls, so thickly smeared with castor oil that the grease had covered her naked shoulders; in addition to this, as she had been recently under the hands of the hairdresser, there was an amount of fat and other nastiness upon her head that gave her the appearance of being nearly grey.

I now counted out thirty-five dollars, which I placed in two piles upon the table, and through the medium of Mahomet I explained to her that she was no longer a slave, as that sum had purchased her freedom; at the same time, as it was a large amount that I had paid, I expected she would remain with us as a servant until our journey should be over, at which time she should receive a certain sum in money, as wages at the usual rate. Mahomet did not agree with this style of address to a slave, therefore he slightly altered it in the translation, which I at once detected. The woman looked frightened and uneasy at the conclusion; I immediately asked Mahomet what he had told her. "Same like master tell to me!" replied the indignant Mahomet. "Then have the kindness to repeat to me in English what you said to her," I replied. "I tell that slave woman same like master's word; I tell her master one very good master, she Barraké one very bad woman; all that good dollars master

pay, too much money for such a bad woman. Now she's master's slave; she belong to master like a dog; if she not make plenty good bread, work hard all day, early morning, late in night, master take a big stick, break her head."

This was the substance of a translation of my address tinged with Mahomet's colouring, as being more adapted for the ears of a slave! My wife was present, and being much annoyed, we both assured the woman that Mahomet was wrong, and I insisted upon his explaining to her literally that "no Englishman could hold a slave; that the money I had paid rendered her entirely free; that she would not even be compelled to remain with us, but she could do as she thought proper; that both her mistress and I should be exceedingly kind to her, and we would subsequently find her a good situation in Cairo; in the mean time she would receive good clothes and wages." This, Mahomet, much against his will, was obliged to translate literally. The effect was magical; the woman, who had looked frightened and unhappy, suddenly beamed with smiles, and without any warning she ran towards me, and in an instant I found myself embraced in her loving arms; she pressed me to her bosom, and smothered me with castor oily kisses, while her greasy ringlets hung upon my face and neck. How long this entertainment would have lasted I cannot tell, but I was obliged to cry "Caffa! Caffa!" (enough! enough!) as it looked improper, and the perfumery was too rich; fortunately

my wife was present, but she did not appear to enjoy it more than I did; my snow-white blouse was soiled and greasy, and for the rest of the day I was a disagreeable compound of smells, castor oil, tallow, musk, sandal-wood, burnt shells, and Barraké.

Mahomet and Barraké herself, I believe, were the only people who really enjoyed this little event. "Ha!" Mahomet exclaimed, "this is your own fault! You insisted upon speaking kindly, and telling her that she is not a slave, now she thinks that she is one of your *wives!*" This was the real fact; the unfortunate Barraké had deceived herself; never having been free, she could not understand the use of freedom unless she was to be a wife. She had understood my little address as a proposal, and of course she was disappointed; but, as an action for breach of promise cannot be pressed in the Sou-dan, poor Barraké, although free, had not the happy rights of a free-born Englishwoman, who can heal her broken heart with a pecuniary plaster, and console herself with damages for the loss of a lover.

We were ready to start, having our party of servants complete, six Tokrooris—Moosa, Abdoolahi, Abderachman, Hassan, Adow, and Hadji Ali, with Mahomet, Wat Gamma, Bacheet, Mahomet *secundus* (a groom), and Barraké; total, eleven men and the cook.

When half way to Wat el Néгур, we found the whole country in alarm, Mek Nimmur having suddenly made a foray. He had crossed the Atbara,



herd of twelve of these animals shoulder-deep in the river, which they were in the act of crossing to the opposite side, to secure themselves in an almost impenetrable jungle of thorny nabbuk. The aggageers advised that we should return to the ford that we had already crossed, and, by repassing the river, we should most probably meet the elephants, as they would not leave the thick jungle until the night. Having implicit confidence in their knowledge of the country, I followed their directions, and we shortly recrossed the ford, and arrived upon a dry portion of the river's bed, banked by a dense thicket of nabbuk.

Jali now took the management of affairs. We all dismounted, and sent the horses to a considerable distance lest they should by some noise disturb the elephants. We shortly heard a cracking in the jungle on our right, and Jali assured us, that, as he had expected, the elephants were slowly advancing along the jungle on the bank of the river, and, they would pass exactly before us. We waited patiently in the bed of the river, and the cracking in the jungle sounded closer as the herd evidently approached. The strip of thick thorny covert that fringed the margin was in no place wider than half a mile—beyond that, the country was open and park-like, but at this season it was covered with parched grass from eight to ten feet high; the elephants would, therefore, most probably remain in the jungle until driven out.

In about a quarter of an hour, we heard by the noise in the jungle, about a hundred yards from the river, that the elephants were directly opposite to us. I accordingly instructed Jali to creep quietly by himself into the bush and to bring me information of their position: to this he at once agreed.

In three or four minutes he returned; he declared it impossible to use the sword, as the jungle was so dense that it would check the blow, but that I could use the rifle, as the elephants were close to us—he had seen three standing together, between us and the main body of the herd. I told Jali to lead me direct to the spot, and, followed by Florian and the *aggageers*, with my gun-bearers, I kept within a foot of my dependable little guide, who crept gently into the jungle; this was intensely thick, and quite impenetrable, except in such places where elephants and other heavy animals had trodden numerous alleys. Along one of these narrow passages we stealthily advanced, until Jali stepped quietly on one side, and pointed with his finger: I immediately observed two elephants looming through the thick bushes about eight paces from me. One offered a temple shot, which I quickly took with a Reilly No. 10, and floored it on the spot. The smoke hung so thickly, that I could not see sufficiently distinctly to fire my second barrel before the remaining elephant had turned; but Florian, with a three-ounce steel-tipped bullet, by a curious shot at the hind quarters, injured the hip joint to such an extent that we could more

than equal the elephant in speed. In a few moments we found ourselves in a small open glade in the middle of the jungle, close to the stern of the elephant we were following. I had taken a fresh rifle, with both barrels loaded, and hardly had I made the exchange, when the elephant turned suddenly, and charged. Determined to try fairly the forehead shot, I kept my ground, and fired a Reilly No. 10, quick-silver and lead bullet, exactly in the centre, when certainly within four yards. The only effect was to make her stagger backwards, when, in another moment, with her immense ears thrown forward, she again rushed on. This was touch-and-go; but I fired my remaining barrel a little lower than the first shot. Checked in her rush, she backed towards the dense jungle, throwing her trunk about and trumpeting with rage. Snatching the Ceylon No. 10 from one of my trusty Tokrooris (Hassan), I ran straight at her, took a most deliberate aim at the forehead, and once more fired. The only effect was a decisive charge; but before I fired my last barrel, Jali rushed in, and, with one blow of his sharp sword, severed the back sinew. She was utterly helpless in the same instant. Bravo Jali! I had fired three beautifully correct shots with No. 10 bullets, and seven drachms of powder in each charge; these were so nearly together that they occupied a space in her forehead of about three inches, and all had failed to kill! There could no longer be any doubt that the forehead shot at an African elephant could not be

relied upon, although so fatal to the Indian species : this increased the danger tenfold, as in Ceylon I had generally made certain of an elephant by steadily waiting until it was close upon me.

I now reloaded my rifles, and the aggageers quitted the jungle to remount their horses, as they expected the herd had broken cover on the other side of the jungle ; in which case they intended to give chase, and, if possible, to turn them back into the covert, and drive them towards the guns. We accordingly took our stand in the small open glade, and I lent Florian one of my double rifles, as he was only provided with one single-barrelled elephant gun. I did not wish to destroy the prestige of the rifles, by hinting to the aggageers that it would be rather awkward for us to receive the charge of the infuriated herd, as the foreheads were invulnerable ; but inwardly I rather hoped that they would not come so direct upon our position as the aggageers wished.

About a quarter of an hour passed in suspense, when we suddenly heard a chorus of wild cries of excitement on the other side of the jungle, raised by the aggageers who had headed the herd, and were driving them back towards us. In a few minutes a tremendous crashing in the jungle, accompanied by the occasional shrill scream of a savage elephant, and the continued shouts of the mounted aggageers, assured us that they were bearing down exactly upon our direction ; they were apparently followed even

through the dense jungle by the wild and reckless Arabs. I called my men close together, and told them to stand fast, and hand me the guns quickly; and we eagerly awaited the onset that rushed towards us like a storm. On they came, tearing everything before them. For a moment the jungle quivered and crashed; a second later, and, headed by an immense elephant, the herd thundered down upon us. The great leader came direct at me, and was received with right and left in the forehead from a Reilly No. 10 as fast as I could pull the triggers. The shock made it reel backwards for an instant, and fortunately turned it, and the herd likewise. My second rifle was beautifully handed, and I made a quick right and left at the temples of two fine elephants, dropping them both stone-dead. At this moment the "Baby" was pushed into my hand by Hadji Ali just in time to take the shoulder of the last of the herd, who had already charged headlong after his comrades, and was disappearing in the jungle. Bang! went the "Baby;" round I spun like a weathercock, with the blood pouring from my nose, as the recoil had driven the sharp top of the hammer deep into the bridge. My "Baby" not only screamed, but kicked viciously. However, I knew that the elephant must be bagged, as the half-pound shell had been aimed directly behind the shoulder.

In a few minutes the *aggageers* arrived; they were bleeding from countless scratches, as, although naked, with the exception of short drawers, they had forced

their way on horseback through the thorny path cleft by the herd in rushing through the jungle. Abou Do had blood upon his sword. They had found the elephants commencing a retreat to the interior of the country, and they had arrived just in time to turn them. Following them at full speed, Abou Do had succeeded in overtaking and slashing the sinew of an elephant just as it was entering the jungle. Thus the aggageers had secured one, in addition to Florian's elephant that had been slashed by Jali. We now hunted for the "Baby's" elephant, which was almost immediately discovered lying dead within a hundred and fifty yards of the place where it had received the shot. The shell had entered close to the shoulder, and it was extraordinary that an animal should have been able to travel so great a distance with a wound through the lungs by a shell that had exploded within the body.

We had done pretty well. I had been fortunate in bagging four from this herd, in addition to the single bull in the morning; total, five. Florian had killed one, and the aggageers one; total, seven elephants. One had escaped that I had wounded in the shoulder, and two that had been wounded by Florian.

The aggageers were delighted, and they determined to search for the wounded elephants on the following day, as the evening was advancing, and we were about five miles from camp. Having my measuring-tape in a game-bag that was always car-

ried by Abdoolahi, I measured accurately one of the elephants that had fallen with the legs stretched out, so that the height to the shoulder could be exactly taken :—From foot to shoulder in a direct line, nine feet one inch ; circumference of foot, four feet eight inches. The elephant lying by her side was still larger, but the legs being doubled up, I could not measure her ; these were females.

We now left the jungle, and found our horses waiting for us in the bed of the river by the waterside, and we rode towards our camp well satisfied with the day's work. Upon entering an open plain of low withered grass we perceived a boar, who upon our approach showed no signs of fear, but insolently erected his tail and scrutinised our party. Florian dismounted and fired a shot, which passed through his flank, and sent the boar flying off at full speed. Abou Do and I gave chase on horseback, and after a run of a few hundred yards we overtook the boar, which turned resolutely to bay.

In a short time the whole party arrived, and, as Florian had wounded the animal, his servant Richarn considered that he should give the *coup de grace* ; but upon his advancing with his drawn knife, the boar charged desperately, and inflicted a serious wound across the palm of his hand, which was completely divided to the bone by a gash with the sharp tusk. Abou Do immediately rode to the rescue, and with a blow of his sword divided the

spine behind the shoulder, and nearly cut the boar in half. By this accident Richarn was disabled for some days.

Upon our arrival at the camp, there were great rejoicings among our people at the result of the day's sport. Old Moosa, the half fortune-teller, half priest, of the Tokrooris, had in our absence employed himself in foretelling the number of elephants we should kill. His method of conjuring was rather perplexing, and, although a mystery beyond my understanding, it might be simple to an English spiritualist or spirit-rapper; he had nevertheless satisfied both himself and others, therefore the party had been anxiously waiting our return to hear the result. Of course, old Moosa was wrong, and of course he had a loophole for escape, and thereby preserved his reputation. The aggageers expected to find our wounded elephants on the following morning, if dead, by the flights of vultures. That night the lions again serenaded us with constant roaring, as they had still some bones to gnaw of the buffalo's remains.

At daybreak the next morning, the aggageers in high glee mounted their horses, and with a long retinue of camels, and men provided with axes and knives, together with large gum sacks to contain the flesh, they quitted the camp to cut up the numerous elephants. As I had no taste for this disgusting work, I took two of my Tokrooris, Hadji Ali and Hassan, and, accompanied by old Abou Do,



the father of the sheik, with his harpoon, we started along the margin of the river in quest of hippopotami.

The harpoon for hippopotamus and crocodile hunting, is a piece of soft steel about eleven inches long, with a narrow blade or point of about three-quarters of an inch in width, and a single but powerful barb. To this short and apparently insignificant weapon a strong rope is secured, about twenty feet in length, at the extremity of which is a buoy or float, as large as a child's head, formed of an extremely light wood called ambatch (*Anemone mirabilis*), that is about half the specific gravity of cork. The extreme end of the short harpoon is fixed in the point of a bamboo about ten feet long, around which the rope is twisted, while the buoy end is carried in the left hand.

The old Abou Do being resolved upon work, had divested himself of his tope or toga before starting, according to the general custom of the aggageers, who usually wear a simple piece of leather wound round the loins when hunting, but, I believe in respect for our party, they had provided themselves with a garment resembling bathing drawers, such as are worn in France, Germany, and other civilized countries; but the old Abou Do, like the English, had resisted any such innovation, and he accordingly appeared with nothing on but his harpoon; and a more superb old Neptune I never beheld. He carried this weapon in his hand, as the trident with which the old sea-god ruled the monsters of the deep; and

as the tall Arab patriarch of threescore years and ten, with his long grey locks flowing over his brawny shoulders, stepped as lightly as a goat from rock to rock along the rough margin of the river, I followed him in admiration.

The country was very beautiful; we were within twenty miles of lofty mountains, while at a distance of about thirty-five or forty miles were the high peaks of the Abyssinian Alps. The entire land was richly wooded, although open, and adapted for hunting upon horseback. Through this wild and lovely country the river Settite flowed in an ever-changing course. At times the bed was several hundred yards wide, with the stream, contracted at this season, flowing gently over rounded pebbles; the water was as clear as glass; in other places huge masses of rock impeded the flow of water, and caused dangerous rapids; then, as the river passed through a range of hills, perpendicular cliffs of sandstone and of basalt walled it within a narrow channel, through which it rushed with great impetuosity; issuing from these straits it calmed its fury in a deep and broad pool, from which it again commenced a gentle course over sands and pebbles. At that season the river would have been perfection for salmon, being a series of rapids, shallows, deep and rocky gorges, and quiet silent pools of unknown depth; in the latter places of security the hippopotami retreated after their nocturnal rambles upon *terra firma*. The banks of this beautiful river were generally thickly clothed with