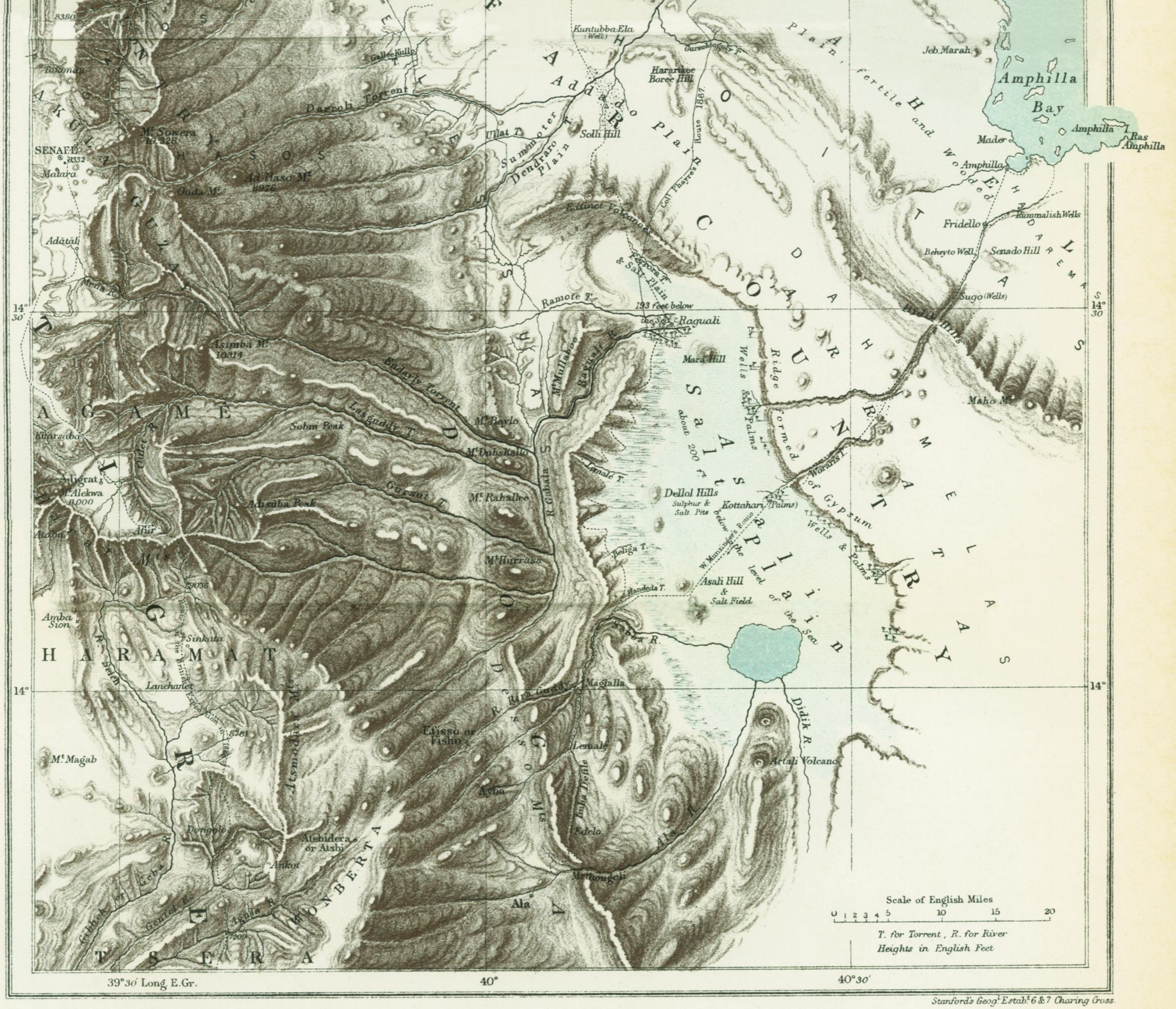
X.—*Narrative of a Journey through the Afar Country.* By W. MUNZINGER, Esq., Hon. Corresponding Member R.G.S.

Read, April 26, 1869.

I. DEPARTURE, AND ARRIVAL AT AMPHILLA.

As, ever since my arrival in Africa, I have occupied myself constantly in completing the geography of its Eastern coast, it was with the greatest pleasure I accepted Colonel Merewether's invitation to travel over and study the route which conducts from Amphilla towards the Abyssinian plateau. On the 9th June, 1867, at 4·30 A.M., we embarked on board the *Dalhousie*. I had with me eight men; Simon, a Swiss in my service, an old soldier of the Foreign Legion in Algeria; Syud Ibrahim, formerly a corporal in the Turkish Service, and a fine man of striking aspect; Mahomed Hindi, an Indian, formerly harbour-master of Massowa; four servants from my own house; and lastly, though not the least important, the very small and very black Abdulla Bellal, our guide, or rather dragoman. A few words on the latter. I made his acquaintance three months before, when I was seeking information about the Dankali country. My clerk brought him to me as being a man who had made the journey to the Asubo Galla, in the suite of Osman, Chief of the Dumhoita. The man pleased me by his vivacity. He gave me a description of the route from Amphilla into Abyssinia, which was not very exact, in consequence of his ignorance of geography; but all that he told me of the country was true, and his advice very good. Thus he advised me to procure mules from Massowa; I then had four good animals, but our departure being delayed there remained but one baggage mule, which was embarked with my other animals; the others were either dead or ill; to have bought more then would have been of no use, there being no good animal to be had. These circumstances caused us during the journey great annoyance and fatigue. I left Massowa without having communicated my plans to any one; I thought that the Governor there would have given few facilities to the first part of my journey; being mistrustful and jealous, he would have suspected something in my going, have thrown difficulties in my way, or, worse still, would have sent soldiers with me. No one can judge too severely of this mistrust. The steps which different agents have taken to establish posts in these parts are too recent to be forgotten. I think, therefore, I did well, although the great difficulty which lies in entering the country was thereby thrown upon me alone.

I took as few things as possible, some flour, biscuits, rice,



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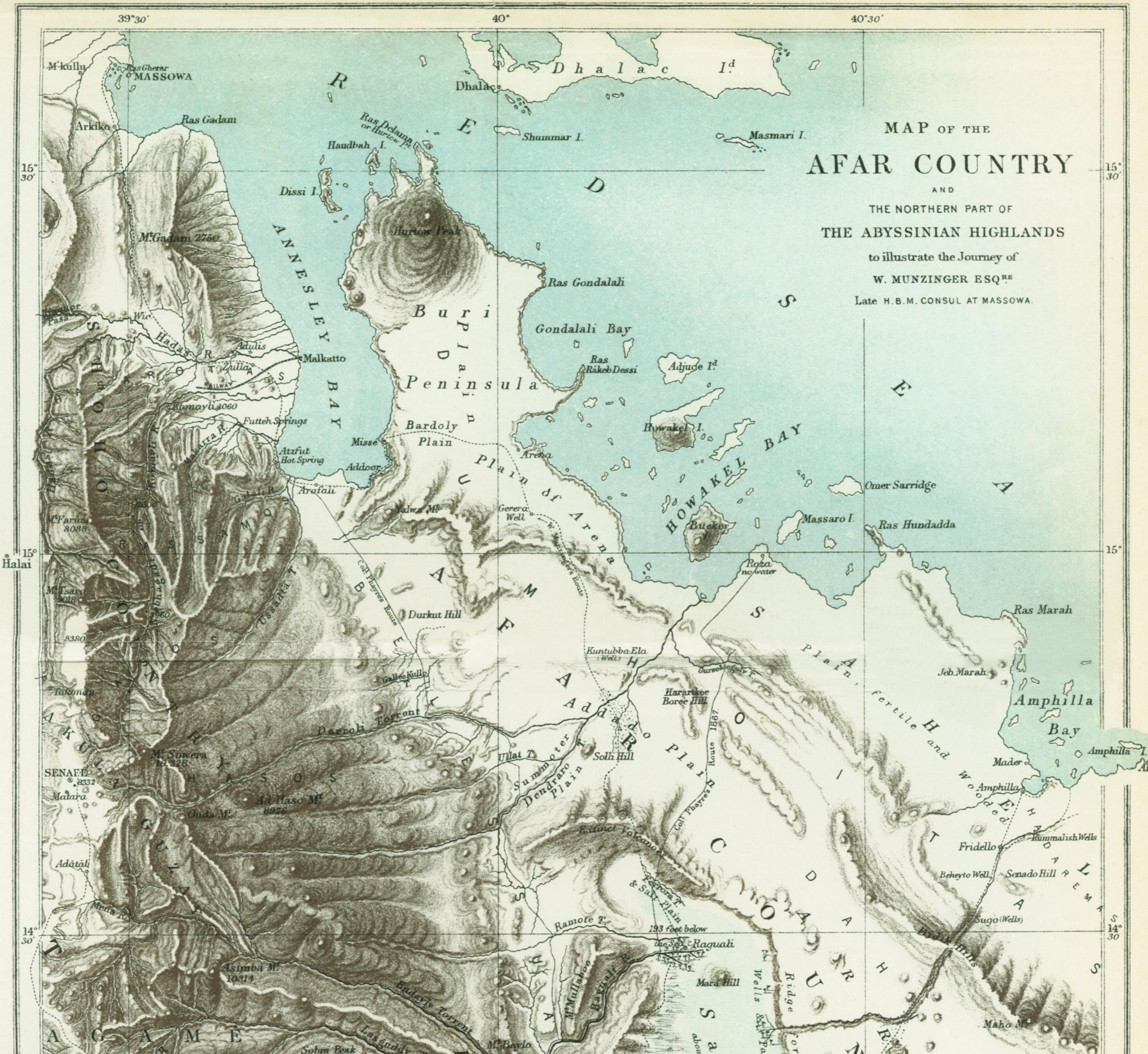
MAP OF THE
AFAR COUNTRY
AND
THE NORTHERN PART OF
THE ABYSSINIAN HIGHLANDS
to illustrate the Journey of
W. MUNZINGER ESQ^RE
Late H.B.M. CONSUL AT MASSOWA.
RED SEA
MASSOWA
Arkiko
Ras Gadam
Dhalac I.d
Dhalac
Shummar I.
Masmari I.
Handbah I.
Dissi I.
Hurtow Peak
ANNESLEY BAY
Buri Peninsula
Ras Gondalali
Gondalali Bay
Adjuce I.d
Howakel I.
HOWAKEL BAY
Omer Sarridge
Massaro I.
Ras Hundadda
Ras Marah
Jeb. Marah
Amphilla Bay
Amphilla I.
Ras Amphilla
Amphilla
Mader
Malkatto
Adulis
Zulla
Futteh Springs
Atzfut Hot Spring
Addoor
Arafali
Misse
Bardoly Plain
Plain of Arena
Arena
Gerera Well
Durkut Hill
Col. Phayre's Route
Kuntubba Ela (Well)
Addado Plain
Solh Hill
Hararkoe Boree Hill
Darroli Torrent
Dendraro Plain
Ulat T.
Summoter T.
Extinct Volcanoes
Ramote T.
Raguali
Mara Hill
Fridello
Rummalish Wells
Beheyto Well
Senado Hill
Sugo (Wells)
Maho M.t
SENAFE
Matara
Adatal
M.t Sowera
Ad Haso M.t
Oda M.t
Asimba M.t 10314
Sobm Peak
M.t Gadam 2750
Halai
Roza no water
M.t Mullaboo

coffee, a few bottles of brandy, and the most necessary medicines. I received on loan from the Aden Residency six muskets and ammunition, and a revolver; every man therefore was armed. Two of my servants learned to shoot *en route*, and as I only allowed them to fire in lonely places, they had the character of being first-rate shots. My instruments were two watches, a thermometer, a good compass, a very good Pastorelli's aneroid barometer, given me by Colonel Merewether, and a hypsometer, which did not go far, as will be seen in the sequel. I enter into all these particulars, as they will prove interesting to travellers.

The anchor being raised we started at 5·30 A.M., and I passed a most agreeable day with my host, Captain O'Brien Carew, and Mr. Dawes, who did their best to make me think of the amenities of life in civilized Europe.

Contrary winds prevented us from arriving until after nightfall at the port of Amphilla. I at once sent the dragoman, Abdulla, to announce my arrival to the chief of the village, with a request that he would procure me two camels to take me to him.

On the morning of the 10th June I bade adieu to my amiable host. Mr. Dawes landed with me. We disembarked at the end of the bay, at the side of a cluster of rocks, where the boats could touch the shore; there we found the Amphilla people awaiting us with the dragoman. I talked to them a little, and explained briefly my project. Mr. Dawes recommended me to the chiefs as a traveller; we shook hands, and bade adieu to European life for some time. At 8 A.M. I found myself alone, and I could not conceal that, notwithstanding the years I have passed amongst natives, I always feel anew the pang of separating from my European friends. The *Dalhousie* did not leave till noon, when I saw her towards the south travelling at full speed. Good-bye to her!

II. Stay at Amphilla.

The place where we disembarked was an arid coast, without trees or shrubs; we therefore profited, with thankfulness, by the shade afforded by the overhanging rocks. We were obliged to pass the day here, as they had no camels ready for us. A little way to the south were some wells. We saw plenty of sheep. The water was sweet, but in the summer, we were told, it became very salt. Towards the evening they brought us two camels—fine animals—which had probably never been mounted, they were so untractable. To our great astonishment there were no saddles. In their place we made cushions of skins

and sails, which after a while succeeded, and by following the coast we arrived at the village of Amphilla.

Amphilla has only about 20 houses. One-half are square wooden houses, like those at Massowa; the rest are tents, covered with matting. The village is built on an elevation 50 feet above the level of the sea. A Turkish flag-staff was planted in front of the Chief's house. The sea-shore is fringed with a forest of mangroves; the ground round the village is covered with herbs. The inhabitants of Amphilla are Hadaremas; they are not therefore quite at home. The tribe of Dumhoita have the upper hand as far as Ayth; the Chief of the village, Beddaha, holds the chiefdom in his mother's right, which makes him tolerated by the former. She was the celebrated Alia, daughter of the Dumhoita Chief Nakoda. She is the so-called Princess of Amphilla. It appears that when young she was very beautiful, and when her beauty faded it was replaced by her virtues, great wisdom and a generous hospitality. It is for this reason that in the eyes of travellers she was always the Princess of the country; her fame reached to Massowa. Ibrahim Pasha, an old fool, who dreamed eternally of conquests, invited her to visit him. I was at Massowa in 1854 when she arrived; they paid her great honours, and she returned in a Turkish gunboat, with instructions to guard the port of Amphilla against the infidels. The Pasha naturally reported her coming to Constantinople, from which place they sent her rich presents. She has been dead now two years. Her son is sixty-five years of age, but he carries his age well. Her daughter Hindia is married to a man named Abdulla, Under-Chief, who is eighty years old. A large goître he had on the nape of his neck astonished us; it was a perfect example of cretinism in this country.

Both Chiefs are very quiet and polite. They remember Mr. Salt quite well. Abdulla tells me that he was then a grown man. We slept in the open air; it was nice and cool, and a heavy dew falling. As I soon found that the people of Amphilla had no influence in the interior, and that even in their own village they depended a great deal on the Dumhoitas, I sent my dragoman to Fridello to the Chief Ali, one of the principal Chiefs of the Dumhoitas, to tell him I wished to consult with him. I begged him to send me some beasts of burden. I learned that illness prevented his paying me the first visit. Abdulla started during the night. I lent him one of my mules, as he said he was afraid of snakes. I did not believe him in this excuse, but lent him the mule, as I did not wish to disgust the man on first starting out. I found out afterwards the snakes were not imaginary ones. On the 11th June Beddaha brought me a goat, which was the limit of his hospitality. During the

morning Abdulla returned with a young man, a native of Zulla, called Mahomed, son of Ali, son-in-law of Ali the Chief. He had only been married to the daughter of the latter two months, but I think he will soon get accustomed to his new country. The young man appeared discreet, and translated in the Tigré language with astonishing facility. He brought two messages; one for me, one for Beddaha. The Chief, Ali, told me I was most welcome, and that he sent me two asses to go to him, when I could explain what I wanted. The message addressed to the Chief of Amphilla was very different, and requires explanation.

A short while before my arrival the *Victoria* anchored at Amphilla; the village chief went on board, where he found Colonel Merewether, who made him a present to encourage him in his hospitality. Beddaha, to avoid being obliged to give up a portion of the present, concealed the fact of his having received it; but in this country, where nothing can remain a secret, a report was spread that the Chief of Amphilla had received a certain sum to show the country to strangers. Naturally, on my arrival, I was supposed to have done the same. The Chief, Ali, was angry that Beddaha, himself almost a subject, should receive money for protecting travellers, and in his first anger he proposed killing my two mules, to show how powerless my host was, when, just in time, my dragoman arrived, who quieted him; but he ordered the Chief of Amphilla to be told: "You have received money to conduct strangers into the interior; now if you can fulfil your engagement, do so." Beddaha declared he had received nothing. Notwithstanding my saying I knew nothing of the transaction, the messenger invited him to take an oath as to his innocence; and when Beddaha would not swear, he gave, to finish the discussion, two dollars for Ali, and declared it rested with the Dumhoita to give me a passport. It was settled, therefore, that I should go to Fridello that evening. The same morning three men came from Mader, drawn here by the news of my arrival. The people of this village are Afar, like the others, but they rejoice in a certain civilisation, which has the effect of making them more cunning. They have boats, in which they go to Arabia and Massowa, they dress in coloured silks, and they monopolise commerce with the interior; it is not therefore astonishing that they do all in their power to close the country against strangers. Before coming to see me, they went to the Chief, and said, "You are acting very unwisely in allowing a Frandji (an European) to enter. Ask the Consul first if he has a letter of recommendation from the Pasha of Massowa; if he has not, and you allow him to pass, without doubt you will be severely punished." These menaces, of course, had their effect. Beddaha came and told

me, and appeared inclined to prevent my progress. I treated his fears with ridicule. As Consul I told him I had a right to go where I chose; he could refuse me a passport, but no one could stop me, because I was inviolable. "Further," I said, "my journey can do you no harm. I am not come to alienate the country from the Sultan; on the contrary, I am a friend of the Turkish Government, and those who placed me at Massowa are its greatest allies." This succeeded in convincing the Chief of the country; but it must not be supposed that the negotiation was as short as it appears in writing. From morning till night I was obliged again and again to bring forward the same opposition in a different form. At last the men from Mader found themselves beaten, but on leaving they promised to send a boat express to Ahmed Mahomed, who would soon cause me to retrace my steps. This gentleman is a Somali merchant established at Bucker, who by his riches has great influence in this country. Not to leave any fear in the minds of my friends, I told them that Ahmed Mahomed would regret it very much if he placed himself in the way of a Consul; but in case he should, I should not omit to uphold my friends and humble my enemies.

I was very sorry to be obliged to leave here my hypsometer, all the spirits of wine having upset. Our mules arrived at 4 P.M. About 5·30 we left the village, accompanied by the benedictions of Abdulla.

We crossed a dead plain, wanting in trees, covered with herbs which come up imperceptibly. The soil is very light; the sand is interrupted here and there by fragments of coral. After two hours' march we left on our right an isolated hill, descending in a torrent with a forest of sayal acacia (babul), in which are hidden the houses of Fridello. On the way (part of our march was made at night) we encountered numbers of herds of sheep, and sometimes saw an isolated shepherd's hut.

III. FRIDELLO.

On our arrival they conducted us towards a "das," a hut made of branches in the form of a cone. In front of the das there was an enclosure of thorns, where they had prepared a fire. Chief Asa Ali, son of Asa Nakoda, presented himself a few minutes after. He appeared about sixty years of age: his face expressed intelligence, but above all cupidity. Amidst the long salutations, they naturally demanded to what they owed the honour of my visit. I answered, that "in Europe more is thought of having visited a strange country than of having killed one hundred men. Being compelled by duty to remain some time at Massowa, I took advantage of every holiday to refresh

myself by wandering in the desert." Asa Ali understood this, and said: "I also felt the same when I visited the country as far as Rohaita, but, unlike you, my name was known everywhere, and I was sure of receiving everywhere a warm welcome." After this conversation he allowed us to go, and sent us some milk for dinner. On the 12th June he sent us more milk and three sheep. Soon after he came to see us to commence negotiations, which lasted without intermission till the 15th June, the day of our departure. During these four days it is difficult to forget that we never had the house to ourselves. Our presence attracted all the idlers from far and near. Some came to take part in the deliberations, others out of curiosity. Instead of making us pay, they ought to have paid us poor creatures, for doing "exhibition of whites" for them.

Asa Ali (Asa means "red," although our friend is very black, but it is an epithet of nobility) began bargaining alone, and it was only after having settled the business that he called the others into council; it was then only form, because they shared very little in it.

This negotiation might never have been finished with these interruptions, and people continually coming in, amongst a people where politeness is unknown—in a country where two men cannot speak together for a quarter of an hour without being surrounded, the listeners being brought together by curiosity or jealousy. The negotiation, therefore, required an amount of patience which my reader will hardly possess; but, that he may know these people, I cannot spare inflicting on him the principal features of this palaver. I first of all told Asa Ali my purpose, and demanded of him the safe conduct of myself and companions as far as the Salt Market. He threw every obstacle in my way, but at last he promised to help me to the best of his ability. He told me of conversations held by Europeans with him, when they proposed, some time back, that he should give them the island in front of Amphilla; "but my son," he said, "who was charged with this business, died, and it remained unfinished. To-day I am again ready to re-commence the negotiation." The old Chief probably thought that my journey had more important ends than it really possessed. I replied to him, that I was not then authorised to enter into any affair of the sort, but that on my return I would lay any proposition he liked to make before my superiors. After this interview Asa Ali called together all the principal members of the Dumhoita aristocracy who were near, the most powerful among whom is Mahomed, son of Osman, but he was at Buri, so that there were only two branches of the Dumhoita represented—that of Ali

Refferto, by my host, and that of Gâs, by Asa Mahomed. One word about Asa Mahomed. He is grandson of Ali Gabeyto, who received Mr. Salt in 1809, and accompanied Mr. Coffin to Agamé. Mr. Salt's description will do very well for the grandson. He is a man of about thirty years, tall, with a manner tolerably prepossessing; he has a good deal of energy both for good and evil. He has spent most of his life in the desert. I think he was for a long time a brigand. He knows every mountain and by-way in the country. He is also impertinent, vain, false, and a storyteller. But he could be useful, if it were his interest to be so. He is known and respected by all. He is altogether the ideal of Ulysses, in the costume of Afar. While he was our guide, we had plenty of opportunity of appreciating his different qualities. Besides Asa Mahomed our host was assisted in council by the Chief of the Dahimela, through whose territory we had to pass. His name was Ali Kefer, who was quite unknown either for good or bad. The Grand Chief of this tribe lives not far from Fridello; the Dumhoitas think themselves quite strong enough to allow him to remain close beside them. Ali Kefer was simply allowed in council, being strong enough to protect us face to face with his tribe, but too feeble to be admitted into the distribution. Then we had a long conversation, in which the Chiefs repeated Asa Ali's arguments, with variations *ad libitum*. To give some idea of the manner of talking in this country, I will repeat, word for word, a piece of our conversation; but I must say that every phrase, which is as short as possible, is followed by a pause, which is filled up by the auditor with the exclamation "Ehe!" In talking with us, the conversation was translated phrase by phrase. When the loquacity and the slow pronunciation of these people, and the length of time it takes to translate, are taken into consideration, it can easily be imagined that the smallest amount of business takes an hour. Asa Ali speaks:—

"*D.* I wish to speak.

"*A.* I hear.

"*D.* God conducted you here.—I never knew you before.—How did you come?—How can I send you back?—But what about your journey?—The sun is hot.—Water is scarce.—The road is long.—And full of thieves.—My brothers are dissatisfied.—Why show the country?—They say your heart is with the strangers.—They have given you plenty of money.—And you have sold them the country.—They say this.—But you know it is false.—And now.—How many people have come like you?—And have offered me money to go into the interior.—But I have not let them.—And now.—I will refuse you nothing.—But do

better.—And come back in winter.—When there will be no sun or heat.—And then?—We will inform our brothers of Doga.—That they shall receive you well.—I have said."

This example gives but an incomplete idea of their primitive eloquence. Of course the end of all this is to render the passage as expensive as possible. The price once fixed, all objections fall as if by magic. After the affair was virtually settled, the Dumhoitas upset all again by their impudence, in saying that they would only conduct me as far as the Salt Lake. I told them I had not come all that distance to see a desert, and begged them to reflect on all the advantages they were renouncing. The night passed in council, and during the morning of the 13th June the matter was finally settled. Asa Mahomed was appointed guide and principal, and in animated terms promised to take me everywhere.

Some explanation may be here offered of the difficulties which meet the traveller on entering the Eastern Coast of Africa. They are partly owing to the wild nature of the coast, which forces the inhabitants to lead a wild, untamed life. But this is not sufficient reason. The country, though in reality exceedingly poor, is rich in their imagination. The belief in the existence of precious stones is general, and is connected with their faith in the supernatural, which produces things foreign to the nature of their country. There is also an historic reason. The empire of Abyssinia formerly extended as far as the coast, which was guarded against foreigners by a vigilant police. It required the Emperor's permission to enter, and it was almost impossible to get out again. After the Jesuits, in the fear that the Portuguese would take vengeance, the mistrust of strangers became, if possible, stronger, and the Chiefs had orders to watch them.

It is true that these orders were more often than not disobeyed; but the consequence is, that up to the present the Chiefs on the coast think they have the right to place every difficulty they can in the traveller's way, and to impose a toll. It is thus that the Naibs of Arkiko extracted, as late as 1840, enormous sums from travellers who wished to enter the interior. Again, we must consider that our conduct makes them fancy they are rendering us a great service by allowing us to enter. No one comes from so far off for nothing. Scientific ends are not understood by these savages. They think we should never encounter all these dangers without some strong motive, such as treasure to be found, &c., so that we cannot be astonished when they make us pay heavily. It must not be forgotten that the natives understand perfectly that it is better no one should know their country —that this is the only safeguard to their independence. To

show their country to a stranger is, therefore, a national crime, although the native who gains anything by it forgets his patriotism very soon.

When the principal negotiation was finished, we attempted to procure camels; but as they treated us in this also with intense cupidity, asking absurd sums for the most feeble animals, we contented ourselves with donkeys, getting four very fine ones for a moderate price.

It is difficult to imagine what intense longing we felt to get into the open country, expecting every hour that some new Chief would come and annul all that the others had done for us, or that our present hosts would repent. As our advent had made a great sensation, an immense number of people came, each with the hope of receiving something from us. What troubled us most was the conduct of our future guide, Asa Mahomed. Every moment he had some fresh idea or new dodge to annoy us with. We had hardly bought our donkeys when he came to us in a very bad humour, with a camel he had kept in reserve, belonging to one of his friends, which he intended us to buy. On hearing we had already made our purchases, his rage knew no bounds. In the most insolent language he told us it was impossible to proceed without camels; and when I told him he should have informed me of this before, he threatened he would not act as guide to people who would not listen to reason. I said to him, "As our guide, your future duty is to take care of our interests, not those of your friends." Asa Mahomed was not sufficiently abusive to deny this, but was sharp enough to answer me laughingly, "In money matters I shall always take the part of my compatriots, but in any danger I shall be entirely yours." This explanation was certainly not consoling, but we brought all our patience to bear and let him talk. Once in the interior, I said to myself we will no longer be at the mercy of these people; now one word of impatience would spoil the whole affair.

I became at last so accustomed to these people that I was able to repay them in their own coin, by giving them as long harangues as they gave me. As we had settled to leave on the 15th, Asa Ali, who was doing his best then to expedite our departure, said that I should take the oath of friendship. I could hardly refuse. Witnesses are required. Mine was Syud Ibrahim, his son-in-law Mahomed. The formula, accompanied by a malediction in case of treachery, is pronounced by the witnesses. We swore everlasting friendship. Asa Ali took an oath to receive well any one who came to him from me. After he had finished, it was the turn of our witnesses to swear to guard the secret. That evening we talked a good deal of the political situation of the country. Ali begged me to do my

best to make Amphilla a commercial port. I told him I had thought of it, but I did not know how far I could help him to realise his wish. He also prayed me to return to his country later, and promised to show me the whole of it.

As we shall so soon leave our host, it is but justice to say, that, notwithstanding his cupidity, he is a firm friend, frank and courageous. It is a pity his sons do not resemble him more. The eldest, Nakhoda, a young man, very amiable and kind-hearted; but he cannot make himself respected by his people, who think good-humour and kindness are weaknesses. He is too good to them, and no swaggerer. He is not covetous or ambitious, and is small and delicate. These qualities are not held in very high esteem here. The youngest, whose name I have forgotten, is a self-sufficient and wicked boy. One day he had been helping us to catch my mule, which had got loose, and it took us an hour to secure it. Soon after, the young man entered my tent, looking very serious, called the dragoman, and in two different ways explained what an immense service he had rendered me, at the cost of what trouble and devotedness, and trusted we should give him at least two suits as a reward. I intended to have given him a little tobacco, but his impertinence incensed me so much that I told him he had only done his duty. "It appears," he answered, "as if you did not know who I am." "On the contrary," I said; "it is just because I do know who you are, son of my host, that I consider your demands misplaced, and I deny your right." When we left, his father sent him with us; he remained most sullen, and I was glad when, on the Salt Plain, he decided to return.

On the morning of the 15th June I descended the torrent to look at the wells of Kummalish. The water here is good and abundant; the depth is from 10 to 14 feet. After my return we packed our things, and started for the interior at 3 P.M.

IV.—The Journey to the Salt Plain.

We advanced on the plain, and directed our steps towards the hill "Senado." There is little grass, plenty of pretty mimosas, and here and there an isolated hut. The ground is sandy, with a few coral-rocks. Often the hollow sound under our feet suggested caverns, and made our guide rave about unknown treasure. In the evening we left the hill to our left, and entered a valley surrounded by mountains. We slept in the bed of the torrent, where there is very good water 6 feet deep: the place is called *Sugo*.

The country from this to the Salt Plain belongs to the Dahimela. The owners of the wells at Sugo paid me a visit next

day, and presented me three sheep. Sugo is surrounded by clayey hills. I saw many stones with the imprint of plants on them. I am sorry to say I lost the specimens. There is very little game in this valley, a few gazelles and wild asses. During our journey I saw none of them, but, from the description given me, it is the same animal as the wild ass of Taka (Soudan), of a grey colour, with black stripes, with a head like a horse. We saw plenty of pretty asses, whose parents were wild.

Having found a man here who agreed to take charge of letters as far as Mader, from whence there are often boats going to Massowa, I announced our whereabouts to Colonel Merewether; but this letter never having arrived, I suspect a political stroke on the part of the Mader people. We only left Sugo at 5 P.M. We again followed the torrent for a little while, which led us towards a chain of hills which we had to pass. The torrent is hemmed in by rocks; the ascent is rapid, but not very steep. The eminence here, Didik, forms the separation between the sea and the Salt Plain, ending towards the south in a large and high mountain, it is prolonged to the north a long way, preserving its hilly character.

We saw very few habitations, but there are several dispersed about. Before entering the defile, Asa Mahomed told us that the Dahimela were angry that we passed without their permission, and they were waiting for us at the top. He said, "Prepare for battle; we shall be in front, and when we meet any one don't interfere before seeing blood run." It was, therefore, with anxiety that we mounted the hill, but there were no enemies. On arriving at the top we descended on the other side, following a big torrent, and there we passed the night.

On the morning of the 17th June we followed the same torrent for two hours. It is surrounded by hills, void of vegetation, but consisting of slate with felspar and iron. This arid chain is inhabited by goat-herds. By degrees the range becomes more open. We leave the torrent on our right, and after passing a plain without any vegetation, and covered with stones, we descended into a deep ravine, where we found at four feet drinkable water. With the exception of a few stunted sayuls (Babul), there is not a trace of vegetation. We passed a most miserable day in this hole, scorched by the sun and deprived of all air,* watching our poor animals munching the thorns. At noon the heat was suffocating. We heard thunder towards the south-east; it clouded over, and we hoped to have rain: it did not, however, reach us. In the evening we followed the same torrent, which enlarges gradually, and is covered

* It must be recollected this was in June, the hottest month in the year.

with rich vegetation; but so interrupted with boulders that marching is difficult. Very soon, to cut short a long détour—the torrent making to the south—we mounted a plain which follows the torrent at an elevation of 100 feet. It is completely level, and covered with fragments of flint, without a tree or shrub or grass.

After sunset we again descended into the torrent, which passes between small hills. It is called here "Woraris." Its borders are covered with bushes of the Doom palm. They told me that, long ago, there was running water here, and that even now water would be found at a very little depth.

On the 18th June, leaving the torrent on our right, we crossed the last rampart which separated us from the salt basin. It is an irregular plain, with crevices and ravines so numerous that there is little more to be seen than a ridge. The whole is formed of gypsum, covered with pieces of shell and quartz, with veins of talc, of which there are large transparent pieces. Arriving at the edge of the rampart we saw below us the magnificent Salt Plain, bounded on the south by the volcanic Artali, and prolónged into infinite space on the north. On the south-west hills are visible; behind them again some black mountains; and at the horizon you see the grand chain of Abyssinian mountains emerging from the vapour and mist which covers the whole plain. I regretted deeply that there was not even a puff of wind to raise the vapour, and enable us to see the African Alps.*

We descended now 100 feet, and arrived on the level of the plain, crossing it where the fresh water from the torrent struggles with the salt and produces sayal, acacia, and coarse bushes. We encamped at last on the borders of the veritable Salt Plain, which is marked by a line of palm-trees. We encamped under the shade of a group by the side of a well, which at a depth of 3 feet gives abundant water, though a little brackish. Here we passed the day.

V.—Crossing the Salt Plain.

Mankind are easily pleased in their choice of a country. All these groups of palms, which mark the real interior of the Salt Plain, are inhabited by some families of the Woyta tribe. They live on the juice or wine of the palm-trees, which they draw morning and evening by making incisions in the trunk. They sometimes exchange a goblet of this beverage with travellers for some flour. Their houses are simply the palms, under the

* They are plainly seen in the cold season.

shade of which they live, increasing the shade a little with dry branches. Houses and tents are unknown. Each family has its own group of palms, which they have the right to do anything with they like; this is their only property. No domestic animals could live in this fiery climate; but when man has once settled down here, should he ever emigrate, the recollection of the wine of his palms induces him to return to his simple life. At my desire, one of the children brought me a goblet of this wine or milk. The goblet was cut from a Djarid (branch of a palm), and so well made that not a drop escaped. The drink resembles milk-and-water, very frothy, and tasting like cider. The fermentation is so quick that it cannot be kept from one day to another. It is strong enough to inebriate those not accustomed to it, but it is astonishing that it is capable of nourishing these people. I saw several very good-looking people, who came to draw water; and especially the boy who brought us the wine had a charming face, fresh, full-cheeked, and very amiable. I gave him some tobacco, of which these people are very fond. He showed his contentment in a way very unusual with Africans.

We had the whole of the day a strong northerly wind, nearly a storm, most frightfully hot, bringing clouds of dust, which obscured the heavens and the scene, not allowing us to see 100 yards off (this wind blows all the summer). Hot winds, with a salt vapour, the mornings calm and heavy, and these siroccos all the day. This is the life led by these people.

I must not forget to say that here our guide, Asa Mahomed, told me that he wished to make a new contract with me, the old one having expired on the borders of the plain. I did not answer him.

As it was impossible to march during the day with this burning wind, we waited till the moon was sufficiently above the horizon to light our road. It was nearly 9 o'clock when we started. All our people had bought sandals (shoes) cut from the Djarid, so that they might not spoil their own leather ones with the salt. The first part of the salt basin is sandy, but, after a short distance, clay appears on the top, and every now and then we found a rain-ditch with powdered salt in it. After $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour's march we found a line of potasse trees, otherwise no tree or bush. The soil by degrees becomes of a greyish tint, and further on resembles a frosted ploughed field; but at the end the bed of salt becomes more thick and hard, and presents the appearance of a lake frozen over.

It was a magnificent night; the full moon lighted this grand and most striking—even terrific—scenery; the illusion of snow and ice would have been complete but for the heat. It was a pleasant ride; we were encouraged by a cool, fresh wind from

the north. The hard soil made our march easy. The nearer we approached the Salt Plain, the more unequal and furrowed became the soil, on account of the salt which cropped up; but it is alongside the isolated hill of Asali itself that the salt becomes a stony bed. It was a night never to be forgotten; but there were drawbacks. The hot wind during the day had made our legs stiff; our mouths and skin were full of salt; our poor donkeys, half-starved, marched with difficulty, and every instant one or the other was down. But the greater disagreeables came, of course, from our guides. We had hardly been marching two hours when Asa Mahomed called a halt, and stopped. Knowing the man, I continued the march without paying any attention. We could not mistake the road, for it was a black line on a white sheet. Asa then sent Mahomed Zoula to me, who found himself in a predicament between his friendship for us and his fear of his brother-in-law. He came and said, "Asa Mahomed insists on remaining here. It is too late to arrive at the end of the Salt Plain to-night, he will guide you there in the morning; you can there buy water." I replied, very briefly, that every one might do as he thought best; but that I had no ambition to pass to-morrow in the Salt Plain. I would give Asa Mahomed permission to remain and sleep, and begged his messenger to give him my "mana" (adieux). I soon saw Asa Mahomed and his troop rejoining us. He said nothing to me, and we continued our march, which the Dumhoita strove to shorten by singing heroic songs and dancing a war-dance. I should have found great pleasure in listening to them; but at the moment when they began showing their teeth, and we did not know whether they were to be our friends or enemies, they were not to my taste. The comedy was repeated after another hour's march. The troop commanded by Asa Mahomed sat down on the ground, and appeared as if they intended letting us proceed alone. Their intention was to intimidate us, and force us to make a new contract with them; but, as we paid no attention, the brave people again resigned themselves, and we continued our march. But Asa Mahomed declared to me that he intended returning after we had crossed the plain, that he was tired of us, and was not obliged to go further. This was not true, but there was no use disputing it. I only told him that his actions were quite indifferent to me. After this scene we continued our march in two divisions, my people moving the first. The number had been augmented by a Dumhoita merchant, named Ali, who joined our caravan at Sugo; he was going to Doga to sell a musket. The second, composed of the Afars, followed at a distance of 300 paces.

At last we saw in front of us salt-fields, close to the hill of Asali. We passed a few deserted salt-pits, where the crumbling soil and pieces of earth were proofs of former excavations; the salt forming again had not had time to smooth the earth. Soon we saw another piece of ground, surrounded with trenches and heaps, and some men working. We stopped about 200 yards off, as it is dangerous to appear suddenly amongst these men without their knowing who you are. During the march Ali, who was jealous of the guides and saw their bad faith, saw his hour was come, so he began blaming the others and offered his services: "Wait near the salt-pit, and I will join you. I shall no doubt find some friend amongst them; it is the caravan of the Chief Hodeli. I will go, and when I tell them you are going to that Chief they will let you join it." Ali went in front; our guides also went and spoke to the men at the pit, while we held ourselves in readiness for fighting; but after a few minutes they came, and made us encamp on the salt. The caravan, which was encamped close to us, was that of Hodeli; it was to return to the highlands in the morning. Asa Mahomed brought me one of these Chiefs, who talked a long time, trying to dissuade me, at the instigation of Asa Mahomed, from continuing my march. "If you must go on, absolutely, you must conciliate your guides and follow their advice." It was becoming most ridiculous, for Ali at the same moment brought and introduced to me a parent of the Chief Hodeli, who asked me to travel with them as far as the market. These intrigues of Asa Mahomed were therefore labour lost; he had really hoped to extort from me a large sum of money; he resented his bad luck dreadfully, and wished to return. But at this moment Nakhoda, who had been so good and quiet all through, and had never opened his mouth, came and said that he intended accompanying me through, that he had promised it to his father, and that it would be an eternal shame to him if he abandoned me in the middle of the desert. This frank declaration decided the affair. Asa Mahomed's companions, who could not hope for any presents, decided on returning from here to their own houses. I was very pleased at this, because they consumed the provisions and were of no use. Asa Mahomed decided on going on with us, which I did not refuse to allow, as his knowledge of the country and people made him very useful, notwithstanding his other qualities. We passed the remaining hours of the night lying on the salt.

The 19th of June we started again at sunrise, at the same time as the caravan, which consisted of camels, mules, and asses, heavily laden; there were also a number of women and girls,

who carried salt. On the whole, there were more women than men, both Dumhoita and Abyssinians. Asali* is not very far from the border of the Salt Plain: the last part of the latter is quite different to the former; the soil consists of white clay; it becomes a regular pool. Everywhere the water moistens the earth, and there are many places where the water gushes out. The caravan kept to the marked route; one false step and animal and man would disappear, never to be seen again. The border of the basin is exactly like Kottahari, where are some palms, acacia, and herbs. We found a well with a very little water in it. On this side also the basin is bordered by a wall of gypsum, which extends as far as the brow of the mountains, but is more accidental and not so large as the east wall. As we were too tired to go on as far as Sabba, where the caravan intended halting, we passed the day in a dry torrent, close to the mouth in the salt basin (Handeda). As we are going to enter a new country, I must make some observations on the Salt Plain.

VI.—General Observations on the Salt Plain.

The name of the "Salt Plain" does not well express its character. We prefer using the name of the Salt Basin, for from the showing of the barometer there is no doubt that it is below the level of the sea. The more or less salt found there is quite a secondary thing. The length of the basin from north to south is 45 miles, and from east to west about 20 miles. The Salt Basin separates the desert hills of Arrata from the terraces of Doga, and receives the waters of both. The basin is surrounded on all sides by a high wall of gypsum, which is often penetrated by the torrents which fall into the basin; it is only to the north that the wall is continuous, and forms a separation for the waters.

The south part of the Salt Basin is formed by the volcanic mountains of Artali, which have a peak from which smoke continually issues. The Salt Basin is not of the same nature all over; it is divided into an outer and inner circle: the latter is altogether influenced by the salt, and barren; the outer circle is separated from the inner by a ring of palms, and has vegetation. Everywhere water is to be found at very little depth, but the east side is quite dry, while the west side in its whole length forms a morass, and at its south end has a lake, which is much exaggerated in the maps. It is 6 miles long, the same width, and 1 to 4 feet deep. The number of streams falling into the lake is considerable:—

* Name of the hill and salt-field.

1. It receives water in the south from the Didik stream.
2. At its extreme southerly point the waters of Ala, from the declivity of Dessa.
3. The River Rira Guddy, with its branches from Ayba, Efisso, Ala, &c.
4. The River Raguali (or Awra), the only true Abyssinian river, which flows into the plain, forming an oasis there.

From the middle of the basin there arise three small hills—the peak of Asali, and two elevations elongated towards the north —which are called Dellol, where there is a little salt-pit and a deposit of sulphur, which is also exported to Abyssinia. The salt-pit of Asali extends over nearly 4 miles, but one part of it is always wasted; it forms a horizontal crust over a stratum of clay. The inferior beds are naturally wet and dirty. If a pit is drained, it takes many years to recover itself. We passed close to some, abandoned for the last four years; the crust of salt was very thin. The Afars who work the salt and prepare it for exportation live the whole year close to the plain, under palm-trees or in caverns; they make the salt into pieces, which look like whetstones, weighing one pound.

The men of the caravan are prepared to give them tobacco, bread, cloth, and even money. The people who cut the salt work all day under the shelter of a mat all the year round; they do not stop even during rain. When a great part of the pit is under water, they then establish a bed of clay, on which the blades of salt lie dry for cutting. About sending the salt to the interior we will speak later. We regretted much that the clouds would not allow us a full view of the plain and its environs. The whole time we were near the basin a thick fog enveloped the whole, and I think this veil is not often raised.

VII.—FROM THE SALT PLAIN TO ALA.

An oblique plain, intercepted by isolated hills, conducts you to the borders of the real hill-land, the first step to the Abyssinian plateau, through which the torrent Sabba has formed a breach towards the Salt Basin, offering a means of communication with the higher mountains. We arrived very late at night; we were obliged to go a long way round to avoid a large caravan of Dahimela, who were strangers to us. We no longer kept the route; our road crossed a plain covered with stones, which impeded us dreadfully, to the foot of the mountain, where we descended into the torrent Sabba, with running water. We encamped close to the opening in the torrent itself, which is overshadowed by barren and dark rocks; no tree or grass is visible. We thought ourselves very happy to have got rid of

the salt, which had penetrated our bodies, but the taste we should not lose for many days.

On the 20th of June we followed the torrent Sabba, where there is almost always running water. We mounted constantly, but almost imperceptibly. There are no cataracts, but the road is most difficult from the number of boulders which obstruct the bed. The torrent takes a long circuit in trying to find a way out of the mountain, the openings of which are very irregular, forming defiles of only 10 feet, whereas the ordinary size of the torrent is 150; it is accompanied by high black rocks of slate and clay.

As we ascended we found more and more vegetation, green grass, and a few acacias, &c. We passed the day under their shade, together with a party from the caravan of Hodeli, whom we had out-walked yesterday. We met a caravan coming from Efisso, with 200 camels and 400 to 500 mules. The people looked at us with great curiosity, but showed neither friendship nor enmity. A little above this place the roads separate with the branches of the River Rira Guddy. The principal branch comes from Efisso, another from Ayba; a third we followed, an affluent which comes from the south-east, crossing the country with a slight declivity. The reunion of these three branches is called Maglalla. Having taken the left branch, we entered into the defile of Imba. It is difficult to give an idea of the beauty of this passage, when you figure to yourself the bed of this torrent, hardly 20 feet wide, bordered on either side by walls 200 feet high, forming walls and towers in squares, large and regular, of slate, sometimes joining over the torrent-bed as steps of a staircase. From here to Edelo, where we arrived in the night, we followed the same torrent, rising gradually with clayey hills. The water disappeared after two hours' march. The torrent was broken up into a number of small affluents, vegetation increased with the elevation, the country became covered with trees,—tamarisk, sayal, rhamnus, and bushes of wild henna. The hills grow a fine yellow herb, which resembles thef. The soil is clayey and very pleasant to walk on. We saw very little vestige of population on our road; some goatherds. At Edelo, where we encamped, the torrent becomes a ravine; there we found water. We had before us the mountain of Desso, round which we had to turn to descend into the more elevated terrace of Ala. After passing it, by two saddles, we descend to Ala. The country is one irregular plain. We passed three dry torrents, which are separated one from the other by low hills, and join together again lower down, under the name Methongoli, to throw themselves into the lake at Artali. The market of the Dumhoita is by the side of the third torrent, surrounded by

several villages close by on the slope of the hills. Hodeli, the Chief, lives in one of these affluents, about 500 paces from the market. He lives quite alone with his wife, little daughter, and son, and two women slaves. The large torrent has water in a pool close to the market; it comes from the declivity of Desso and Wonberta, whose outlines are visible. The valley is very large above the market. We knocked at the door of the Chief Hodeli, and were received with much respect.

VIII.—OUR STAY AT ALA.

A short time afterwards the old Chief came to see us. He looks very strong and vigorous. As the morrow was market-day we did not talk of our interests till the day after; my idea was to go to Asubo-Galla. Hodeli, after becoming accustomed to us, did not raise any obstacle, but he told me I had not enough men (three were ill), the route by the Doda being really dangerous. "If you really go with those few, your asses will be of no service to you; the road is very mountainous and stony. Go to Atsbi, and try the route into Abyssinia." But that was risking too much. I was very much perplexed, as I could not in the first place abandon my men here; for then I should have been obliged to return by the same road, and the Prince of Wonberta, Cassai, who was encamped at Atsbi, could then stop me. Another consideration was money, which would have sufficed had I not had mules to buy, the latter costing from 25 to 30 dollars. It was with great regret that I made up my mind to give up my project and return. I had passed the worst part of the journey; I was no longer quite a stranger to the people, and my name had preceded me. The Doga people whom I saw in the market, notwithstanding they were very wild, had no objection to my going with them. My regret was a little moderated by finding that my watch had stopped and would not be of any service.

When Hodeli saw our decision was taken, he intimated his desire of sending us on at once. Some soldiers and followers of Prince Cassai visited me the day of the market. They wanted me to go to their camp with them; if I wished to remain a few days more, Cassai would send soldiers to escort me. I did not care about this, as the Chief was new to me, said to be very avaricious and wicked, and, above all, a strong partisan of Theodore. Hodeli wished us to go on with his caravan, but we were not ready; and the next day we heard they had been attacked by brigands, who killed 12 men and took 200 camels —a large part of the wealth of the country; but the natives are as indifferent to losing as they are to gaining. I visited the

market; but my curiosity was less satisfied than the people's, as they surrounded me. There were 2000 to 3000 people in an open space beside the torrent. Salt was sold for dollars and stuff from Massowa, brought *viâ* Abyssinia, of middling quality. Commencing at 7 A.M., everything is finished at two; and the merchants resume their march for the plateau, which they reach the same evening. I found all provisions dreadfully dear, except coffee. Our life at Hodeli's house was very pleasant. There was his wife, a very pretty woman, who, when she got accustomed to us, used to visit us with her husband, and would have liked to visit the wonders of Massowa. Our host could not have been more attentive, and treated us with great liberality. When we had to leave he gave us provisions which lasted as far as Massowa.

IX.—General Geographical Observations.

After having crossed the country of the Afars from Amphilla to Ala (south-west), and from south to north between Ala and Annesley Bay, we wish to give a general idea of the country and people that we have visited.

If we look at a map of the Red Sea, we see there two sides of a triangle; the acute angle is the end of Annesley Bay, where the first line, the grand chain of Abyssinia, meets the second line, the coast of the Red Sea. The first line goes towards the south, while the second elongates towards the south-east; the third imaginary line, which completes the triangle, and goes from Zulla to the west, is determined by ethnographic reasons, because at the south of this line commences another type of people; but it is not so clearly defined, because in Africa ethnographical frontiers are always vague, each tribe making inroads on the other.

The configuration of this triangle, called the country of the Afars, is, as far as we know, very simple; first, there is the Salt Plain, which extends from north to south, and divides great part of it. If we take it as base of the partition we shall find the following parts:—

1. The coast (Sahel) from Arena to Edd, a plain rising imperceptibly towards the west, formed by the deposits of the torrents, fertile and wooded, 10 to 20 miles broad, and limited on the west by a chain of hills.

2. Arrata, a hilly country, inclined towards the Salt Plain, and sending its waters in it, stony and arid, with very little water.

3. The Salt Plain (Ragad), bounded by a wall of gypsum, which separates it from Arrata.

4. The country to the north of the Salt Basin, as far as

Annesley Bay, consisting of volcanic hills and clayey soil, covered with lava, showing extinct volcanoes, interrupted here and there by marine plains covered with shells and madreporic forms.

5. The peninsula of Buri, a magnificent plain at the foot of Mount Aouna (Hurtow Peak).

6. To the south of the Salt Basin is a chaos of high volcanic mountains, with extinct solfataras, approaching the Sea at Ayth or Edd Ayth.

7. On the southern side of these mountains is another salt plain (Aussa), receiving the river Hawash, and limited, as it appears, on the south, by volcanic hills.

8. On the west side of the salt plain, on the brow of the Abyssinian plateau, we found successive terraces, but communicating with each other; together they are prolonged the length of Abyssinia, from Agamé to Asubo-Gallas, and are called "Doga;" it is a mountainous country, cut up into several valleys by the torrents which descend from the plateau, and by the number of mountains dispersed about; but the form of these last is so irregular, and the valleys so transverse, that the country is not so sharply divided as one would suppose.

The Doga is 3000 to 5000 feet high, and partakes of the nature and climate of Abyssinia,—moderate heat, moderate vegetation, and not very shady; notwithstanding the distance, it has its rainy season *in winter*. It is much like the Habab country north of Massowa.

It is remarkable that the Abyssinian plateau, which in the grand line from Hamazen to Halai shows a rapid declivity, changes its character here, and takes the form of terraces like those to the north of Abyssinia, where they decrease successively to the level of the sea. Doga is therefore as commodious as the frontier, presenting as easy access; it is therefore another door into Abyssinia.

I will now hasten to draw some conclusions from what has preceded:—

1st. Without hazarding too hasty or rash an opinion, it appears, by the present conformation, that formerly the Salt Plain communicated northwards with the sea in two channels by the bays of Annesley and Howakel, where the bay appeared always tending to approach. Vestiges of this union are the low elongated plains, covered with shells (like Addado), but too high to warrant the conclusion of recent sea-action. At this time Arrata and Buri were islands; volcanic action raised terraces and isolated the salt lake.

2nd. It is not probable there would be any coal; and, if there was, only on the two slopes of the hilly chain of Arrata.

The watercourses have been forced to follow this configuration.

3rd. All the declivities in Abyssinia send their waters into either the Salt Plain of Asali or into that of Aussa. From Takondu to Shoa there is not a single river which runs towards the sea. The conclusion is, that the Salt Basin receives an immense quantity of water, enough to form a constant subterranean lake. As we find marked on the maps a torrent, called Mai Mena, running from Agame to Howakel, I made particular search; but I am persuaded that from the end of the bay of Annesley as far as Ayth (15° 13′ 4″) not one of the Abyssinian rivers communicates with the sea.

4th. From what we have said it also follows that generally vegetation is scarce and arid, with the exception of Buri, the coast, and, above all, the oasis of Raguali; it follows also that Arrata ought to have very little water, while Buri and its coast are rich—thanks to the quality of its soil, which retains the water; the climate also ought to be hot and feverish at Buri, where there is a great deal of vegetation. The western part of Buri, the coast, and Raguali, alone are fertile enough to admit of much population, the rest can nourish but a very few. It is therefore at Buri that the force and power of the tribe is concentrated; indeed, all the country of the Afars would be unimportant if it were not for the Salt Plain and the road to the sea, which gives it a certain political importance.

X.—Ethnographic Observations.—Tribes.

In History and Geography, errors are propagated from book to book, and from map to map, which are very troublesome to correct. This is the case as regards the tribes who inhabit the triangle of which we have just been discussing the principal characteristics: they are always called Danakil.

It is true that there are Danakils in the tribe, but they form a third and the most feeble portion of this confederation; formerly they used to be powerful and numerous, but for upwards of a hundred years there has been no reason why the whole should be called by the name of the less number.

Salt found things as they are now, and he only imitated the Arabs in calling them the Danakils. How are we to give them any other name? The inhabitants of the triangle are simply a conglomeration of a number of small tribes, who talk the same language; this language creates a sort of nationality, and a certain similitude in living. I do not think we shall do wrong in calling them the Afars, after the language they speak.

The Afar language is a sister one to that of Shoho. Shoho and

Afar have no difficulty in understanding each other; but the Afar dialect is a great deal harder and more guttural, I think more difficult on account of its consonants and uncouthness. There are several vocabularies of this language, but we do not know enough of it to fix its place among languages. It something resembles the Galla; but I do not think that from that we have any right to conclude it has any affinity, but I hope soon to have time to study it well.

I shall give the names of the principal tribes, but it must be remembered that it is impossible to fix their places.

The Dumhoita are the most powerful among the tribe of Afars. They are said to have emigrated from the Habab country; it is certain they come from the north. They usually inhabit Buri and the coast as far as Ayth, and in the mountains the market of Ala belongs to them; but you find them amongst all the tribes, and they make themselves feared by their coolness and energy.

The Dumhoita possess a number of men of different origin, the descendants of other tribes who have become their subjects.

The Dumhoita are divided into three families:—

1. The house of Aly Keferto (Chief Aly Nakhoda).
2. The house of Asa Mahomed (Mahomed, son of Osman).
3. The house of Gas (the descendants of Aly Gabeyto).

The first family lost their ascendancy a little while ago; it is now the house of Asa Mahomed that is at the head, thanks to the energy and talent of Osman, and of his father Ahmet Goolay.

The Ankala formed formerly a very powerful tribe: now there remains very little of it. Their Chief is Moostafa, the son of Negoos, whose village is in Annesley Bay.

The *Danakil* (S. Dankali) live together with the Dumhoita, whose subjects they have nearly become; of old they had the same position among the Afars which the Dumhoita now hold, but it appears that a bad use of their power was their ruin. They all remember this so well that the Dumhoita, when they pass one of the Dankali villagers, get off their mules to show their respect for a fallen power.

The *Dahimelas* are the masters of Arrata, &c., and of all the country of Sugo as far as the Salt Plain. They live also in the mountains to the south of the Salt Plain. Their Chief is called Ali Kefer, who is obliged to manage the Dumhoita. On the contrary, in the highland of Doga, this tribe is possessed of the two largest markets, those of Efisso and Ayba; where they are far superior to the Dumhoita.

The *Belessua* hold the country to the north of the Salt Plain as far as Annesley Bay, and to the west as far as Agamé. They

are called, after the different branches, Wotto, Haleyta, Bedal, &c. In the highland their chief is Mahomed, the son of Dardar, who governs the market at Kablagubbi. In the lower countries they have no chief since the death of the celebrated Abdulla Betal, who, having established himself close to Annesley Bay, forced the caravans to pay him duty, and made obstinate war against the people of Zulla and the Haso. At last the Governor of Massowa was compelled to interfere. Ahmet Aray, son of Naib Hassan, Governor of the ground, together with the Dumhoita, who were jealous of Abdulla, forced him to retire. Abdulla having found an asylum in the family of Sabagadis, he was delivered up for a sum of 1000 dollars, and his enemies took him in chains to Massowa, where he died in prison, 1865, of cholera. Since then the Belessua have been very quiet, and support the authority of the Dumhoita.

The *Hadarema* (S. Hadrami) live along the coast from Amphilla to Edd, and are to be found also dispersed in the mountains south of Amphilla. They were originally from the Hadramaut. The people of Amphilla belong to this tribe.

The *Madeyto* are masters of the country from Beylool to Aussa. The Chief, the son of Anfera, appears to have monarchic power, and makes himself respected as far as the coast. Their neighbours are the Adali, inhabitants of Tadjurra and Obok. I will add the names of some other tribes: Mandita, Subura, Asanato, Woyta, Genninto, Asaméla, Asagala, Shéka, Matanna, Wuéma, Irrónabo, &c. In the upper countries there are also the Doga, who deserve mention. They inhabit the prolongation of Doga to the south as far as Betta (Asubo Galla). They are also called Hurtow, and are a mixture of Doga and Dumhoita. Their principal establishment is 40 miles from Ala, in a large plain. They are said to be very wild. They do not cut their hair, and wear long beards; they are called Mussulmen, but they never pray, and do not approve of others doing so, as they say it stops the rain; they have immense troops of camels; they are brave men, and far-famed thieves. I saw one or two of them when I was staying with Hodeli, and they were very well made. The Hasos, the Gasos, and the Rassamos, who inhabit the slope from Agamé as far as the end of Annesley Bay, separate the Afars from the Shohos; they speak the same language as the Afars, but are not looked upon as confederates.

XI.—Political State of the Afars.

To understand these people, it must be borne in mind that they are not all of the same origin; if the authorities for this were not so precise, we might be inclined to doubt it.

For how is it possible that language alone can create confederation? Above all, when it has to be learnt by the new emigrants, and the Menafere and the Hazowerta, how is it that they, speaking the same language, are not in the confederation? I think we must assume as the origin of the nation a people living on this coast, having unity of language and origin. When this people, in war or other misfortune, lost their national unity, strangers crept in, learnt their language, and inherited this unity, assimilating themselves in every way with them.

We see now a confederation of the wildest tribes, who without calling on God like the Turks, or the rights of men like the Americans, thought it was better to live together in peace, as all spoke the same language, and could not help it.

But what is the most surprising is that the tribes do not keep to themselves; each tribe sends its sons in every direction. Athough each tribe has its own ground, they receive, without making any difficulty, the children of other tribes; and often the strangers surpass the natives in numbers.

The constitution of the confederation is very simple; while all strangers are natural enemies, so long as they ask not for protection, every one who speaks Afar, and is born in the country, is considered in all the Afar territory as a friend, and is respected as long as he is not guilty of murder. Here ends the law; there is never such a thing as common justice; there is, however, rarely occasion to regret this.

It is only necessity which forces the people to abandon their individual liberty. Thus with the Afars each follows his own way, independent of any one else. This is explained by the fact that the country is much larger than the population, that there is no village of more than twenty houses, and that between the settlements there are many miles of desert. This isolation prevents combination for a general attack or defence; it does away with all quarrelling, anger, and ambition.

There are, however, exceptions: as it is only the absence of opportunity which creates these peaceable relations, and not political wisdom, they get troubled when a stronger necessity or opportunity arises; the stronger never suffers the weaker to be equal, if he can help it, and so we see chiefs and subjects, as all over the world.

There are among the Afars a number of small ruined tribes, probably the descendants of the old nobility of the country; they have lost their political unity, and live under the bigger tribes. This may also be said of the Danakil, who became little by little the subjects of Dumhoita. All the subjects are called "white men," while the nobles are called "red men." It is difficult to say where these names came from, as all the

people are black. It is perhaps the colour of the blood gave these names, higher animals having red blood, whilst fish and all inferior animals have white blood. From what I saw, you could not distinguish between the white men and the red. The latter hold the fortunes of the others with a high hand; they tax them as necessity occurs for a cow or camel, and when they marry they are helped by them.

Between the white and the red there is the man who belongs to an independent but weak tribe; he leans to one of the high nobles, but is not treated as a subject; it is what they call to the north of Massowa "slender nobility."

It does not appear that the Afars ever had a king; but there are traces of monarchical power: each tribe has a head chief, called "Makāben," a dignity which seems to be hereditary; but in our time it is the most powerful chief who is the senior, and who usurps the title, but without having, very often, more power than the parents. When the Makaben receives a present, or does anything political, he must share the former with his parents, and without their sanction no one of his acts is legal.

One tribe lives quite independently of the other, but as soon as circumstances force them to approach, the strongest ill-treats the weak. The Dumhoita are now the most powerful from the coast to Ayth; the Dahimela are masters of Arrata, &c. Each tribe recognises the independence of the other, but should anything occur, this justice disappears altogether. This was very manifest on the occasion of our entrance from Amphilla to the Salt Plain. Only one quarter of the way belongs to the Dumhoita, the rest to the Dahimela: when they took it into deliberation, the latter were obliged to give their opinion; but when it came to sharing the benefits, they were put on one side, as also the Hadarema of Amphilla. The same thing occurred in a recent transaction. A daughter of Belessua was married to a Dumhoita, who soon died, and she returned to live with her family. Some years after, she was confined of an illegitimate son, who was brought up by the Belessua; the father was unknown; the child at the age of fifteen years, while playing with some children, was hit by a stone and killed. To whom belonged vengeance? The Belessua said it was only their affair. The Dumhoita said the woman was the widow of one of their tribe, and that a Dumhoita was the father of the child. The Belessua replied that the woman was free, and returned to her family; as to the paternity of the child, it was too late to claim that now. They had reason, but, notwithstanding that, the Dumhoita thought them wrong, and would have enforced their

belief if happily the cause had not reached the Turkish tribunal of Amphilla, which I think will do justice.

From what we have already related of the political life of the Afars, one would suppose they were an independent people, but we must define this independence. As to the past we know nothing, the natives having no memory for history. But in the time when Imam Ahmed, the left-handed, was about to convert and conquer Abyssinia with the help of the Turks, we cannot doubt that a large part of his army were Afars, while he himself was of the Adali tribe.

The first traveller who furnishes us with details of the country is Mr. Salt (1810), and what he says still applies to the present time. From his time the Dumoita have had the upper hand, as they have now; the men he had to deal with were the grandfathers of those with whom I treated. Nothing has been altered since: the naibs of Arkeko had then already a great influence on the tribes; their policy has remained the same. Incapable of conquering the country, they did their best to close it to strangers, especially Europeans. Between 1810 and 1860 they had fifty years' rest, during which time the Turks did not invade the country, contenting themselves with the vague title of masters of Abyssinia; but they never lost an opportunity of declaring that the whole coast belonged to them. Sometimes the Governor of Massowa sent an armed ship to Amphilla to remind the natives of the Sultan; it was in the time of the princess of whom we have spoken above; there was an appearance of Turkish sovereignty, but without the natives having abdicated their right to alienate their country. In that time a French company bought Edd, which has now been bought back by the Viceroy of Egypt.

In 1860 all was changed. The Governor of Massowa, Purto Effendi, who governed without soldiers, and enriched himself without making the people discontented, received the order to take possession of the coast, and did it. He was simply to persuade the natives to sign the declaration of loyalty, and to fly the Turkish flag in all their ports. This naturally was to be done without violence. Purto handed the execution of the order over to Ahmed Aray, the most capable member of the family of naibs, a man who had already distinguished himself on several occasions. Ahmed Aray made Osman the first chief of the Dumhoita his partner, who had no trouble in persuading his countrymen. Instead of demanding tribute by paying presents to the chiefs, Ahmed Aray, without any difficulty, planted the Turkish flag from Zulla to Ayth, and caused to be recognised the supremacy of the Sultan as far as the Salt Plain.

The people of Beylool and Rohaita alone refused, declaring themselves dependents of the king of Aussa, who would hear nothing of the Sultan. The southern extremity of the Red Sea was left at the mercy of speculators. The French profited by it, and bought Obok. This affair was very advantageous for Osman, because his being Chief of the country became notorious; perhaps he would have gone further, and made himself known as Chief of the whole coast, only he was killed in 1865 by a troop of Abyssinians, who came and plundered Buri.

Ahmed Aray died himself in 1866, of cholera, at the time that the Egyptian Government had constituted him Chief of the whole coast of Afar. The advantage Osman gained in aiding the Turks was shown on the occasion of the fight against Abdulla Bellal; there is no doubt the last Chief committed numberless crimes, which in civilised countries would have been punished with death, but which in him were excusable, because they were committed in a legitimate war between tribe and tribe. But by his influence and energy he might become dangerous to Osman. He would probably have established the ascendancy of the Belessua to the destruction of the Dumhoita: he was therefore prevented reconciling himself with the Government; they forced him to extremes that they might punish him—a wise government would have reconciled and used him. But, unfortunately, there is no doubt that every conquest the Egyptian Government made in the Red Sea or in the Soudan was by helping the strongest native Chief to beat his rival.

The Egyptian Government took possession of Massowa on the 30th May, 1866; and some days after the Ibrahimya went to Ayth to establish there a garrison of 300 soldiers, but the place displeased the general who went with them so much that he returned with them to Massowa.* Since this time the Governor of Massowa has distributed amongst the principal Chiefs of the country dresses of honour, but the country pays nothing to the Governor.†

They have lately established a soldier post at the end of Annesley Bay (Arafali), a place well situated, commanding the little salt plain of Buri; there is a garrison there of 100 soldiers, who take a duty on the salt.

The Afars commence to see the advantage of being governed by a regular government. They do not yet know the trouble it will bring them, and think their submission is all that is wanted; but their days of independence are undoubtedly at an end. Egypt, like all young powers, shows in all its commencements a fictitious energy which deceives itself at first sight; it no sooner receives

* Since a garrison of 60 men has been put there.

† Buri is to pay this year 500 dollars (1868).

a new province from the Sultan, than it talks as if it would renovate everything; but, after a good deal of fuss, it settles down in the old routine. The Egyptians will not take long in taxing the Afars and establishing ports; they felt astonished that the Turks had done nothing during their long reign. If this was only caused by the proverbial laziness of the Turks, it could easily be changed; but the Egyptians will soon find that it is the nature of the country to be independent, because it does not repay the trouble of occupying it.

The Egyptians have their eye also on the Salt Plain; but I think that, notwithstanding its great importance, they would find the sacrifice of men and money too great, and perhaps the prize, when taken, would have so much the appearance of an invasion of Abyssinia, that Europe generally would disapprove of it.

XII. The Manners and Customs of the Afars.

We had not time enough to study these people; but we conclude, from what we saw, that their customs and private life must be very curious. It is difficult to speak of the physical qualities of the Afars, because, from the different origins of the tribes, the types also are very different. The colour is generally black, while at the same time there are shades to the clearest brown. I observed that the Dumhoita were fairer than the other tribes; all the features are Caucasian, with the exception of the mouth, which everywhere in Africa is very large, and the lips thick. They have noses of all sorts; the most common is the "turn up." Generally speaking, you would call the people handsome, men and women. The people of the interior, above all the inhabitants of Doga, are very heavily made; they are taller, and have larger hands and feet than the coast people. Generally the Afars resemble the Agow, and the Doga the Gallas. I did not see an example of obesity.

The Afars have hair tolerably fine, short, and straight; it is always black. The men let it grow freely in tufts; the women dress their hair at the back in the same way as the Abyssinians. The people of Doga have hair and beards more abundant, and are higher and stronger built; the coast people finer, hands and feet beautiful, good teeth, except on the Salt Plain. The Afars enjoy robust health. On the coast there are some very old men; in the interior, so many being cut off by war, old age is rare.

The sicknesses most common are intermittent fever and ophthalmia; syphilitic diseases are quite unknown. Cholera raged here in 1865, and made dreadful ravages.*

* A seeming proof against its epidemic character, considering the distances of the settlements.

The dress of the Afars is very simple: the men wear a piece of calico forming a mantle, another covering the loins, and a strong belt; rich people wear coloured stuffs and silks. The only luxuries are in the way of weapons, which consist of a curved cutlass, which they fasten on the right side, an enormously long and heavy spear, and a large round shield of buffalo-hide. Many add an English sword; no one has firearms. Even little children of ten or twelve years old carry at least the cutlass, which is never taken off except in bed. The arms are well taken care of, and of good quality; as much cannot be said for the clothes. They are seldom long enough to cover the body, and are rarely washed. The people of Doga are not different from them in this way, but their arms are still brighter, their lances gigantic. One thinks of the heroes of the 'Iliad' when one sees these vigorous men over six feet high.

The women are still more simply dressed than the men: a piece of stuff covers the head and falls on the shoulders, a piece of tanned skin, the lower part ornamented with shells, round the loins, falling as low as the feet. They wear very few ornaments; brass rings in their ears, chains of brass and shells in front, bracelets of camels' skin—silver ornaments are very rare. If they may be considered beautiful, their beauty consists certainly in their fine persons only. The houses of the Afars are not better taken care of than themselves: it is generally a rude mat tent, very small and low. Sometimes they are replaced by conical huts made of branches of trees, covered with leaves or grass. On the Salt Plain we saw houses of branches of trees, and often only caverns. The drinking utensils are made of wood or leaves of the palm, very neatly worked; they have neither tables nor chairs. The bed has the feet fastened in the ground, and on it a cowhide. They have goats'-skins for keeping water.

Their food consists of polenta, with milk or butter; it is only the Doga people who drink beer or tedj. The Afars are very fond of tobacco, which they use in every way; men, women, girls, and little children prefer a little tobacco to a piece of bread. The Afars are wandering shepherds; they have never tried cultivation. Some of the people on the coast, however, tried commerce, and they have boats in which they export butter and djerid, returning with durra, date, and stuffs.

The domestic animals of the Afars are camels, cows, goats, sheep, and asses; horses and mules are very rare. I saw very few dogs or cats. The camels are very fine, particularly those of Doga and Madeyto; those of the coast are small. The price up to the present was very reasonable; but the great demand for them at Massowa, and the great gains they realise in the salt trade, raised the price to 20 or 30 dollars each. The greatest

number of camels are found near Ayth, belonging to the Dogas and Dumhoitas. The Belessua have only cows. The inhabitants of Doga do not breed camels, but they buy a great number of males to carry salt on the coast, where the camel is rarely employed; they use no saddles. I have often been surprised at the bad condition of saddles in Africa, which are never fit for use, they only hurt the animal's back, and are always badly put on; all this, notwithstanding the experience of hundreds of years, during which time the camelmen have had no other occupation.

The Afars have very little trouble with their flocks, except in giving them water; they graze without any one looking after them, thanks to the scarcity of thieves and wild animals. During the morning the animals come of their own accord to the wells; in the day they are in charge of the children and girls. The women are engaged carrying water from the wells, and preparing the food for their husbands—also in making mats; whilst the men occupy themselves in carrying and polishing up their arms, and watering the animals. The women hardly hold the same position as in Mussulman society. They do not hide their faces, talk with whom they like, salute strangers without shyness, and work much both indoors and out; but they are considered by their husbands as very inferior beings, and often ill-treated, and even beaten, although they are good companions and very active. The only thing they have in common with the people of Massowa is that they can neither eat with or before their husbands. The women of Doga have the same manners and customs as the Abyssinians.

Marriage is often preceded by an arrangement; the husband pays a marriage price and advances a sum of money to the father-in-law, which is returned with interest some time after the marriage. Often the man and woman prefer not going through the official form; they live together in concubinage, which is not considered dishonourable, until a child is born, when they get the blessing of the Sheik of the tribe: children born so are legitimate. It is exactly the same as with the Barea.

A woman or girl who becomes with child without being married, or living in fornication, is not despised or scorned. The father, with the greatest pleasure, if no one claims the infant, adopts it himself, and calls it "Yelli Baho," which means, "God has given."

The former Chief of the Dumhoita, Osman, never gave a daughter in marriage without formally stipulating that the children belonged to him and not to the father's family. To ensure this being adhered to, he compelled his sons-in-law to live with him.

If a girl already engaged has an illegitimate child, her future husband is not at all displeased, having the right of adopting the child as his, and forcing the seducer to pay a heavy sum of money. I have a friend amongst the Dumhoita, called Yelli Baho; he is a bastard. A little while ago a girl of the country to whom he was engaged gave birth to a son. He was very much pleased, adopted the child, received twenty cows from the real father, and I believe still intends marrying the girl notwithstanding. The Afars are so pleased to have plenty of children, that they forget all delicacy or jealousy.

There are no public women among the Afars; but for that, morality is not at a very high standing with them. The women are said to be very faithless, and the men indifferent about it. There is polygamy among them, as there is everywhere else; but it is exceptional. They say that the Hadarema, to the south of Ayth, offer their wives to strangers, like the Amarar on the coast of Sonakyu. Amongst the Asubo Gallas this custom forms a necessary part of hospitality.

Up to the present we have found that these people are devoid of all culture, and it is to be feared that they are equally limited in their knowledge of God. In name the Afars are Mussulmen, but in religion they give as little to God as they do to the Sultan in political matters; they acknowledge both, but pay no tribute to either.

The people of the coast, priding themselves in being connected with Arabia and Massowa, commenced a short while ago to pray and fast during the Ramzan; but the people of the interior, 10 miles from the sea, know neither prayer nor fasting, and not even the name of the prophet. The name of God is sacred everywhere. Some of the tribes are angry if even a good Mussulman who happens to be among them prepares for prayer. But, with or without prayer, the Afars worship the Devil more than God. There are sorcerers (Sahar) among them, rain-makers, spirit people (Burridoo), who pretend to have power over everything—who, intoxicated by songs and the sound of the drum, make predictions; their word is firmly believed. They believe in amulets for love and hate, as well as to preserve from danger. The greatest sorcerer they told me was the Chief of Aussa, and he was always surrounded by master sorcerers; he knew even how to make ice! The "Bouda" devour men, transforming themselves into hyenas. Special adoration is not missing either. Every year, on the summit of the mountain Yalwa, they take a cow for a sacrifice. Every one goes, guided by the sorcerers, who pronounce mysterious words; the meat is wrapped up in a skin and placed on the pyre. At the moment when the

flame commences to lick the victim every one present flies down the mountain without looking behind them, as then the genii of those regions approach; a like sacrifice takes place at the foot of the peak Hurtow.

When thinking over the religion of the Afars one can hardly be surprised, if the influence nature must have over the men is considered. Look at this country, with its Salt Plain covered with vapour, surrounded by volcanic hills, which never cease to menace men with their burning tempests and "fata morgana," it is only natural that the bad spirits should have as much respect paid to them as the good, and be equally adored here, as they are amid the snows of Siberia.

A few observations on the manner of burying the dead. What a contrast! The living have such bad houses—the dead have such fine graves. The tomb is a vertical shaft, which at the bottom joins a horizontal shaft, like an oven, the mouth of which is closed by a stone on the body being deposited in it. The vertical shaft is then filled up, and the place is indicated by a great heap of stones, encircled by a wall. If the deceased has been killed, the heap is made conically. Rarely we saw square tombs, with very rude masonry.

The great care the Afars and nearly all the people of Northern Abyssinia take in burying is, I believe, not a consequence of their belief in the simple immortality of the Monotheists—Christians and Mussulmans of Abyssinia pile up the grave just over the body—but is justified by the old belief in a subterranean second life, of which vestiges are yet to be found all over the Abyssinian frontiers, even where Christianity and Mohamedanism have long since been introduced.

We must say a few more words on the character and spirit of the Afars. That which surprised us most with these people was their loquaciousness, and their greed for news, which is, perhaps, only another form of the same: they live a long way from one another; their visits to each other are very frequent, and merely to exchange news.

We need hardly speak of the eloquence of the Afars—it oppresses a stranger; but I see by it the people understand that persuasion is better than force. More civilized people have not yet arrived at this. Another thing is, the Afars never interrupt a conversation; in which they again differ from more civilised people.

From what I have seen, I should say that the intelligence of the Afars was very mediocre, although they are not wanting in animal instincts. The Afars have many bad qualities: they are very avaricious, liars, obstinate, and cruel. The slightest

dispute provokes blows with the knife; murder is honourable. The Afars, like the Gallas, mutilate those they kill, and wear the trophy.

They have also some fine qualities: one is the respect they pay to old age, and that is not such a common quality with wild people as might be supposed: another is the profound disgust they have for stealing; this crime is, therefore, unknown here—an extraordinary virtue for such avaricious people. I have met with a good deal of wickedness and falseness, but have also met here and there very faithful and amiable people, which makes me hope that most are not bad. We do not know enough, in any case, to judge of the characters of the Afars; but we know enough of their lives to pronounce that in the whole of barbarous Africa there is not a race more barbarous than the Afars, and the chief reason is, I believe, their isolation from the rest of the world.

XIII.—The Inhabitants of Doga.

The foregoing observations entirely concern the Afars of the Lowlands. The Dogas deserve mention on account of their peculiarly exceptional character. It is very probable that Doga was before inhabited by Christians; the tradition even now says that they had a market close to Maglalla, and that the Christians therefore extended there. What nearly settles the question is that all the Doga names are derived from the Abyssinian language. They gradually retired before the Afars, who aided commerce by employing camels, that being the cheaper means of transport; they put the whole caravan-route from the Salt Plain to the foot of the Abyssinian hills under the care of the same people; it is, therefore, the salt commerce which produced the colonies of Afar and Doga, and which by its nature compelled them to abandon their nomadic lives and occupy themselves little with herd breeding.

If we take the line from south to north we find the following salt markets:—

Country.	Place.	Tribe.	Chief.	Market-day.
Ala	Hadar Kussra ..	Dumhoita ..	Hodeli	Saturday.
Ayba	Au	Dahimela ..	Weld Shéko ..	Monday, Thursday.
Efisso	Efisso	Dahimela ..	Johannis	Monday.
Kablagubbi	.. ..	Belessua ..	Weld Dardar ..	Saturday.
Géf	.. ..	Haso	Ditto	Ditto.

These five markets are situated close to one another, at the foot of the principal Abyssinian chain, on a space which is divided by low watersheds into many valleys, and which com-

municate easily one with the other. The two last markets correspond with Agamé, at a rapid slope, while the three others correspond with the plateau of Atsbi, at a descent easy and perfectly accessible to a camel. I calculate the number of men as 500 for No. 1, 700 for Nos. 2 and 3, and 400 for No. 8. The Hasos are not Afars; that would give a population of from 6000 to 7000 souls. The Dahimela are the strongest; the most powerful chief among them is the Chief Weled Cheko, who does all he can to harm the Dumhoita market. Notwithstanding their close neighbourhood, the Dumhoita and the Dahimela are enemies and rivals; now they tolerate each other, but are not pacified, while the Belessua are friendly with all. Each market forms a city, where the dispersed natives of the tribes meet on the market-day—no one remains away. The next day all who are occupied in transporting salt descend into the plain, and only return the night before the market-day. The salt-caravans make their journey without any precautions against the dangers they may and will most certainly encounter. They take neither chief nor escort; they don't even go together, one caravan often covers a long line of road. Each part of the caravan is often separated by many miles; it is, therefore, not astonishing that brigands in small numbers, badly armed, succeed almost always in carrying off part of the caravan.

The salt is carried by camels, mules, asses, and porters. The beasts of burden have not regular saddles; for these are substituted two triangles of wood, which they place on either side of the back, so that one side of the triangle is attached to the side of the corresponding triangle, while the two other ends are fastened with ropes which pass under the belly of the camel, and it is along these triangles that the pieces of salt, well tied with ropes, are placed. A camel carries 500 pieces, a mule 250, an ass 200, and a man 60 to 100. On leaving the market they always overload the animals, and if they drop from fatigue on the road they throw away the extra load.

The salt sold at the market is often taken away by the Abyssinians, who have beasts of burden: if they have not, the Afars let out their camels and mules, and carry the salt as far as Enderta.

Some Abyssinians travel with the Mussulman caravans; it is very rarely that Christian caravans visit the Salt Plains; the men of Doga are, therefore, fully occupied with this commerce, and have not time to think of cultivation, for which the country is not favourable either, and they seldom trouble themselves about their herds of cows, which generally graze on the Doda lands. I will add a rough estimate of the extent of the salt trade:—

Weekly Charges of the Markets.

Mean charge, pieces of salt, 250. { No. 1 .. .. 700 / Nos. 2 and 3 .. 1500 / No. 4 .. .. 800 } 3000 × 250 = 750,000.

Make weekly 750,000 pieces, in forty working weeks 30,000,000 pieces. The price to-day being twenty for 1 dollar, a value results of 1,500,000 dollars a year.* The least weight of each piece is 1 lb.

The camels which carry the salt earn 25 dollars in a single journey, but the road is fatiguing, living expensive, and there is a great deal of risk. It is not probable that the salt will hold to this price. There are some years when you can buy from 100 to 300 pieces for 1 dollar. It is difficult to explain the cause of the great rise and fall in the price of salt. Must we look for the cause in the demand of the consumer? No; because Abyssinia buys less salt than formerly. Is it owing to war? Most certainly not; because communication interrupted would stop the demand on the market. Then whence comes the rise? I would suggest that the demand increases as consumption decreases, to obviate the great want of small change which they feel in Abyssinia the more dollars disappear, poverty necessitating retail trade.

There are custom-houses established at the markets in favour of the chief of the market, who shares his gains with his parents. The duty is about 2 per cent. on the quantity. One exception is made at Efisso, where there is an Abyssinian custom-house, owned by the Chief of Wonberta. The three markets to the south are under the masters of the Wonberta and Enderta; the two others are under the Chief of Agamé. They pay tribute, but without any fixed rule; when we arrived at Hodeli's place, Cassai asked him for 500 dollars; Hodeli, to raise this, charged each salt-merchant a tax of 1 dollar; the duty is here exorbitant, but from the continual changes in Abyssinia it often happens that in the same year the duty has to be paid to two Chiefs.

The Doga, on account of their friendly relations with their neighbours and masters the Abyssinians, like the people of the Tigré, speak the same language. The Dumhoita live always in tents, while the Dahimela have conical huts like the Abyssinians. The west part of Abyssinia takes its salt from here; all Amara, Godjam, the Gallas, all Tigré, with the exception of Hamazen and Akulo Guzay, who find it is cheaper at Massowa. The south of Abyssinia (Shoa), Wolo, and Asubo take it from the plain of Aussa. We have already said that

* The mean value being 100 pieces, that makes 300,000 dollars, = 60,000*l.* mean value.

salt is a merchandise which serves for small change. If it were possible some day to replace this heavy money with something more reasonable, the price would fall, and Abyssinia would get on better.

XIV.—RETURN JOURNEY.

On the 25th June, the last day of our stay at Ala, an affair happened which was not then explained, and which caused me great anxiety.

My men were invited the evening before by the people inhabiting a village 2 miles from us; they all returned in good time, having been most hospitably received and well treated. My Abyssinian servant returned with them, but under the pretext that he had lost part of my sword, which I had confided to his care, he returned alone without giving me notice of his intention. As he did not come back, I, towards noon, spoke to my host, and he started in search of him, but in an hour returned and said, "Your servant has been deceiving you. He is with his own countrymen in another village, but I have given an order for him to be brought here." An hour after, the nephew of the Chief arrived with the news that they could not find the man, and that it was most probable he was already *en route* for Abyssinia. I would not believe this, and thought the men were quite capable of murdering him, but they would hardly do it in broad daylight, on a frequented road: nor is it likely the man would desert me for the sake of stealing the sword; he would have more to gain by remaining with me, and he knew it. There was only one conclusion to arrive at; that, having heard me make inquiries about the road and country, he thought I had hostile intentions against Abyssinia, so would make himself useful to Dedjus Cassai by telling him of it, and causing me to be taken prisoner.*

This supposition, which was more than likely, made me very uneasy; we were too close to the Cassai's camp to wait for further news, so we started at half-past seven in the evening. Hodeli having advised us to leave at night, to conceal the direction we were going from our enemies. We said good-bye to our kind host, who had done all in his power to make our stay with him agreeable.

Hodeli's son and nephew, with ten men, escorted us as far as Edelo, where we arrived the next morning (26th June). In the afternoon we continued our route alone, and we arrived after sunset at Maglalla; on the morning of the 27th we descended

* I heard since that the man had really escaped, and was killed by a Galla, who took my sword and went to Doda; but Hodeli sent for it, and I received it in October at Massowa.

the River Sabba, and passed, close to Maglalla, the Efisso caravan, which was going to the Salt Plain.

Arriving at the bottom of the torrent, we suddenly came on another caravan, which was encamped along the river. These people took us in their first surprise for Abyssinians or Belessuas; every one jumped up—there were at least 200. We waited in the middle of the torrent with our guns raised ready for battle, when happily there were some men among them who recognised us, and tried to quiet the others, who were blinded by fear or excitement. We found out at last that the caravan belonged to Hodeli; thus, instead of enemies, we found friends, who were very sorry to have shown any hostile intentions. They begged us to encamp with them, but we placed ourselves under the shade of rocks or trees. The caravan came in a body to make their excuses, and present us with fifty loaves of wheaten bread, five for each of us. We were to have gone on with the caravan as far as the plain where our roads separated; but our animals were not loaded soon enough, and the caravan departed. At the moment we were starting the Johannis' caravan, which we had left behind, came up. We were in the torrent, which was not wider than 100 paces, so surrounded that we could not retire: to stop was to show our fear; so on we went together, although we heard many words indicating hostile feeling. So with our fingers on the triggers of our guns, we descended the rest of the torrent, which was not at all an advantageous position for a battle in which we were as 1 to 20, but we were decided to sell our lives as dearly as possible. When we gained the open ground, we felt more at our ease. We were few in number, but had guns, two shots of which would have driven most of them away. We found in the plain which lies over the Sabba twenty more awaiting us. We passed close to them, hearing their conversation; some were quite ready to attack us, others thought differently, and they said one to the other that we should not be passing so quietly if we did not feel stronger than they were. This storm therefore passed without bursting, and in a few moments our roads separated; the caravan was going to Asali, while we were looking for a road to the north along the Salt Plain.

I shall most likely be asked what we had done to this caravan to make the people so bitter against us. In this country every stranger is an enemy worth killing. We came from Hodeli's market; he had become our host and protector; we had not had leisure to make friends also with the Dahimela Chiefs, we were therefore their natural enemies as long as we showed a preference for Hodeli. I must not forget to mention that Asa Mahomed deserted us at Sabba. He could not but see the danger which threatened us, but thought he had served us long

enough; his *finale* therefore was not more honourable than his *debût*. Nakhoda, on the contrary, only left when we were free from all danger. We slept close to the salt pit, a little to the north, where there were a few trees and coarse grass, our animals had thus a good feed; but we had to be up all night to protect them against very large hyenas; the donkeys often drove them victoriously away themselves.

From that we followed for three days the western side of the salt basin, which is skirted by a chain of mountains about 1000 feet high, showing here and there ravines made by the torrents. Between these and the Salt Plain extends, along their whole length, a plain with a considerable slope formed of a chaos of volcanic stones, which had probably been detached by the water from the mountains. The basin itself is in a marshy state here.

The morning of the 28th June we walked a long time without going far; we were to stop at the Beliga water, which lies in the chain. There was no longer any road; after following for some time the edge of the basin, we diverged towards the first hill of the chain. We followed for some time a torrent which to our surprise we found made a second bed in the clayey earth to the depth of from 200 to 300 feet; we descended into this precipitous ravine: the sides undermined by the water presented a peculiar appearance—towers, walls, and peaks without any support; we were astonished the sound of our footsteps did not bring them down. This deep channel conducted to another large torrent, where we found shade in a grotto formed of soft lava, pieces of which we could break off with our fingers. All this part of the chain is formed of gypsum, mixed with lava of more or less solidity, which crosses the gypsum like veins in the human body.

In the evening we again came on the sloping plain, covered with stones, and encamped opposite to Dellol, in the Salt Plain itself, where the torrent has raised the level a little, depositing sand which is covered with grass. We found here some Woyta and Gedal salt-diggers, living under the rocks. We perceived to the north a mountain peak, Mará (which signifies "not to be attained"), this guided us on our route.

On the 29th of June we continued our course of the previous day, burying ourselves very soon in the mountains, where we found almost running water. Here there are a few Belessua workers in salt. The men and women came to see us, all very good-looking. The air seems to preserve the skin. We passed the day here, as we should find no water till we got to the Raguali, nearly 20 miles from this, which requires at least ten hours' from the bad road. We made this march in the night and morning of the 30th of June; we kept along the Salt

Plain, which is close to the mountains, and touches the promontories. We had to go round one cape after another, and really it was just as bad as doubling the capes in a boat with a contrary wind; we often tried to shorten the road by taking the line to the right, which leads from one to the other across the Salt Plain, but we hardly made two steps before our animals sunk in, and we had great difficulty in getting them out. Then again we gained the border, and started across a terrace so covered with stones that we hardly knew where to place our feet; everything was against us—no moon, and a stifling wind in our faces.

We walked thus the greater part of the night; on the morning of the 30th we found ourselves close to Marâ. The salt basin here changes its character. It is divided by a long strip of land covered with trees, tamarisk, and hotam (soda-tree), which extend a good deal to the south. We soon entered it and found a large torrent called Raguali; bordered on the east by a dry canal, perfectly straight and hidden amongst the trees, the bed covered with luxuriant verdure. As the guides did not know exactly where the water was, we encamped on the edge of the canal. It being impossible that all this green grass could have grown without water, I made them dig, and at a depth of 3 feet we found an abundant supply of fresh soft water. We passed the day here, lying on the grass, resting our eyes after the monotonous grey and white of the Salt Plain.

There is a village of the Belessua here, whose Chief, Abdulla Féré, came to see us in the afternoon, and begged us in a most courteous way not to leave without partaking of his hospitality. He took us across a perfect forest of hotema,* by a zigzag path almost covered with branches which had grown across it, to his village. We came out on a lawn on the banks of a canal of running water, 10 feet wide and 1½ foot deep; the village only consists of 20 huts, but round about are several hamlets belonging to the Belessua of the Alleyta division. We were very much surprised to find in the middle of the Salt Plain, and on the same level, such an oasis—most fertile soil, magnificent Abyssinian grass (Serdit) in abundance, a veritable running-water canal. This miracle is effected by the Raguali River, which, rising in the centre of Agamé, makes a breach in the mountains, and sends its abundant waters from the high country into the Salt Plain. The Abyssinians call it Awra; it is the only river which turns from Abyssinia to the east and runs into the Salt Plain. Sometimes during the years when the river runs with great force, it brings down a considerable quantity of sand, and so interferes with the richness of the soil;

* Soda-tree (Arab. Eshnan).

this might be easily regulated. There is no country better adapted for the produce of cotton, but it is impossible the Belessua can turn their minds to cultivation, harassed as they are by their enemies, who force them to leave and change their habitations very often. Abdulla Féré brought us in the morning plenty of milk, and two sheep. What struck me most here was the absence of all ostentation. He begged us to spend the next day with him. He quite appreciated the beauty of his country, and enumerated complaisantly all the beautiful places he possessed along the river. He told me he would willingly give up all, to be saved from the brigandage of the Hasos and Abyssinians. He said the Turkish Government has been of no benefit to him so far.

On the 2nd July we left the village. We first crossed a forest in which were concealed several Belessua villages, and at last we found ourselves for the last time on the Salt Plain, naked and grey, with large stones and pumice thrown here and there, bordered by a chain of hills of gypsum mixed with lava. We saw many ostriches grazing.

We found on the outskirts a little drinkable water, a few palms and miserable acacias. At noon, leaving the plain, we commenced ascending the chain in front of us, which proved to be a series of terraces consisting at the bottom of gypsum. There are a number of small extinct volcanoes, which have thrown their lava on and covered the soil with black stones. Passing the ridge of this chain, which is barren and desert, with the exception of some small low grounds, between the terraces covered with acacias and inhabited by wild asses, of which we saw many tracks forming regular roads, we descended into a large plain (Addado) which forms a kind of valley between the gypsum chain and the hills which run parallel with the sea. The waters uniting in a torrent run to the coast of at Howakel Bay. The ground is sandy, rich in grass, and in some parts covered with shells.

We abandoned this torrent on the morning of the 3rd July. Having passed another small volcanic range, we went down into another valley, where we found some wells, bordered by fine palms and immense acacias, named after the people who had them dug, Kuntubba-Ela (well of Kunt). Water is to be found at 15 feet; it is sweet. We found here a small Belessua village, the people of which brought us some goats as a present. From here, to arrive at the coast, from which on our right the hills divided us, we had to pass over whole heaps of stones, which beat all we had walked over yet. The morning of the 4th July we descended into the large plain of Arena, which, between the sea and the volcanic hills, extends as far as Buri.

We encamped at a well named Geréra, with water at 15 feet, which is sweet but gives colic. The plain is covered with grass, and fine Sayal acacia. We were 2 miles from the sea at Arena. Before us extended the peninsula of Buri, bordered on the south and south-west by a chaos of hills, consisting of piles of stones, which continue as far as Annesley Bay. We had at first intended to have gone to Massowa by sea, but a strong wish to visit Buri and Annesley Bay made me change my mind.

We received a visit from the young Chief of Aréna, Mohammed Anbesh; he brought us a sheep and rice, and invited us to come to his village. But having a guide from Raguali with us, who had formerly killed a native of Aréna, I was unwilling to insult people by bringing him into their village, and so decided to pass the night outside. The man himself I sent in the night safely back to his tribe.

We started only on the evening of the 5th; we crossed the peninsula of Buri in a north-west direction. We passed the night in the plain of Bardoly, and on the following morning we entered soon the low hill range, which separates Buri from Annesley Bay, and leads down to the sea at Missé, leaving the small salt plain to the right.

After the scenery of the Salt Plain we duly admired the plains of Buri: a fine level road, all the country covered with luxurious, even green grass, and beautiful forest (wells in many places with abundant water), and enlivened by an immense number of flocks and many settlements of Dumhoita, who received us exceedingly well and gave us plenty of milk. The people are much better dressed than elsewhere, and men and women exceedingly well made.

From Missé, where there are wells, we followed the shore for 2 miles further, and camped at Addoor, between overhanging rocks near the shore, where many fine grassy plains interpose themselves between the sea and the hills accompanying the shore-line. We found water very near the surface, but it is said to become bitter in autumn. The plains and the hills hereabout are inhabited by Belessua.

From Addoor we followed the sea-shore to Arafali at the bottom of the bay, where we arrived only on the following morning, on account of the hills approaching the sea so closely as to oblige us several times to wade through the water or to look after a passage over the overhanging rocks.

We were received at Arafali by the chief of the Egyptian post, which has been settled here to protect the country and to receive a small duty on the salt, which the natives bring from Buri and sell to the Abyssinians, the amount of which is 120 dollars a month. The soldiers have dug many wells with sweet water and made some little gardens.

We left Arafali the following morning, passed the day at Zulla, and on the following morning, on the 9th of July, we arrived at Ras Gherar, opposite Massowa, after just a month's absence.

OBSERVATIONS made on the JOURNEY through the AFAR COUNTRY.

No.	Name of Place.	Date.	Time.	C. Thermometer.	Aneroid Barometer.
		1867.		°	°
1	Amphilla Village	June 11	A.M. 8·	32· c.	29·76
2	Fridello	,, 12	,, 7·30	31·5	29·61
3	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 1·	41·	.. ..
4	,, ...	,, 13	A.M. 7·	31·	29·55
5	,, ...	,, 14	,, 7·	32·7	29·53
6	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 3·	40·	29·45
7	Sugo	,, 15	,, 9·	32·	29·07
8	,, ...	,, 16	A.M. 7·	31·3	29·16
9	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 11·	31·5	29·16
10	Height Didik	,, ,,	P.M. 8·	33·	28·4
11	Camp Ales	,, ,,	,, 9·30	.. ..	28·55
12	,, ...	,, 17	A.M. 5·	.. ..	28·55
13	Camp Ramud	,, ,,	,, 9·	39·	29·10
14	,, ...	,, ,,	12·	41·	29·07
15	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 1·	43·5	29·
16	Camp near Woraris ..	,, ,,	,, 8·	33·	29·6
17	Camp Kottahari	,, 18	A.M. 7·	36·5	29·99
18	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 9·	37·	30·80
19	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 2·	47·	29·85
20	Camp Asali	,, 19	A.M. 2·	.. ..	30·20
21	Camp Handeda	,, ,,	P.M. 2·	43·5	29·50
22	Camp Sabba	,, ,,	,, 9·	.. ..	29·15
23	,, ...	,, 20	A.M. 6·	.. ..	29·14
24	Camp Upper Sabba ..	,, ,,	,, 9·30	40·	28·60
25	,, ,, ..	,, ,,	P.M. 4·	44·5	28·43
26	Lemalé	,, ,,	,, 6·30	37·	27·85
27	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 9·30	33·	.. ..
28	Edelo	,, 21	A.M. 2·	.. ..	26·90
29	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 8·	35 5	26·87
30	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 3·	38·	26·80
31	Hadar Cussra	,, 22	A.M. 7·	31·	25·80
32	,, ...	,, 23	,, 7·	33·	25·72
33	,, ...	,, 24	,, 7·	28·	25·75
34	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 12·8	34·	25·67
35	,, ...	,, 25	,, 7·	28·	25·8
36	Edelo	,, 26	,, 10·	30·	26·77
37	Night after Edelo ..	,, 27	,, 6·	27·	28·25
38	Sabba	,, ,,	P.M. 3·	38·	28·95
39	Camp up Sabba	,, ,,	,, 6·	41·	29·4
40	Beliga	,, 28	A.M. 10·	43·5	29·54
41	Camp vis-à-vis Dellot ..	,, 29	,, 5·	41·	29·37
42	Camp Night	,, ,,	.. ..	.. ..	30·
43	Raguali	,, 30	,, 11·	35·	30·
44	Camp Raguali	July 1	,, 6·	30·	30·
45	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 4·	41·5	29·87
46	,, ...	,, ,,	,, 6·30	37·5	29·90
47	,, ...	,, 2	A.M. 6·	31·5	29·96
48	End Salt Plain	,, ,,	,, 9·30	29·5	29·95
49	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 2·	45·5	29·83
50	Vulcan	,, ,,	,, 5·	39·	29·37

Observations made on the JOURNEY through the AFAR COUNTRY—*continued.*

No.	Name of Place.	Date.	Time.	C. Thermometer.	Aneroid Barometer.
				°	°
51	Plain near it	,, ,,	,, 5·30	.. ..	29·43
52	,, beneath it	,, ,,	,, 6·30	38·	29·50
53	Addado	,, 3	A.M. 5·	31·5	29·57
54	Kuntubba	,, ,,	,, 10·	37·	29·43
55	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 2·	40·	29·33
56	Gerera	,, 4	A.M. 10·	44·	29·55
	,, ...	,, ,,	P.M. 2·	40·5	29·44
	Thermometer broken.				
	Ele Barha .. .. .. (Arkiko.)	,, 9	.. ..	.. ..	29·60

NOTE.—The thermometer in degrees of Celsius. The barometer a pocket aneroid by Pastorelli.

Itineraries.	Miles.	*Directions.*
June		
10.—Amphilla Pass to Village ..	4	Amphilla Village, Fridello Hill, s.s.w.
11.—Vill. Fridello	8	
15.—Fridello, Beheyto Well ..	4	
Fridello; Sugo	8—10	Sugo. Amphilla, 31; Fridello, 33; our probable way before us, 230; Didik, s.w.
16 P.M.—Sugo, Ales.		
4—5. Torrent.		
1—2. Plain and ascent to Didik.		
3—4. Camp Ales ..	8—11	
17 A.M.—Ales, Ramud	..	About w.s.w.
4—5. Torrent Ales, narrow.		
1. Torrent Ales, large.		
1—2. Open plain ..	6— 8	
17 P.M.—End Woraris	..	About s.w.
2—3. Torrent Ramud.		
2—3. Plain over torrent.		
1½. Side of the torrent.		
4. Torrent to camp	9½–11½	
18 A.M.—To Kottahari	..	About s.w., w.s.w.
5—6. To beginning of Basin	..	*Dis.* From Kottahari.
2—3. Basin to the Palms	7— 9	To Woraris, 50; but great turn to s.
18 P.M.—To hill Asali	13—15	Dellot, 270; Asali, 240.
19 A.M.—To end Basin	4— 5	
To torrent Handeda	2	From Handeda—Asali, 100.
19 P.M.—To under Sabba ..	4— 6	Road before us, 260.
20 A.M.—Torrent Sabba, to ..	..	Upper Sabba—Maglalla.
Camp Upper Sabba ..	7	Maglalla to Imba s.w.

Itineraries.	Miles.	*Directions.*
June		
20 P.M.—To Lemalé.		
1½—2. Upper Sabba, Maglalla Reunion.		
2. End Imba defile.		
2—3. Plain Malharez	..	Imba—Malharez, S.W.
2—2½. Over hill to Lemalé	7½— 9½	Lemalé S.W., and then S.
20 P.M. and 21 P.M. To Edelo	.. .. ..	Dis. S.
3. Torrent.		
2—3. On its side.		
5—6. Open country	10—12	Dis. to Desso W., and so about.
21 P.M.—To Ala	.. .. ..	Ala.
12. Actual march winding		
5½. To Saddle Galara	..	S. for 3 miles, then W.N.W.
2. To torrent Buri	..	S.W.
4½. To market	.. ..	
Direct only	.. 7— 8	

RETURNING ROAD.

27. —Camp near Salt Plain, about	.. ..	
5 m. from Sabba, W. from Salt Plain	.. .. ..	Dis. Artali, S.E., 5 S.
28 A.M.—Beliga	.. ..	Sabba, S.W. 5 S.
4 h. march, only	.. 3— 8	Route forward, N. 10 E.
27 P.M.—Camp vis-à-vis Dellol	5— 6	Here *Mara* h., exact N.
29 —To Promontory	.. 2	Dis., road N. 10 W.
To Camp behind in torrent	 1	Asali, 130; Artali, 145; Dellot, 4 miles.
29 P.M.—To torrent Lemalé	.. 3	Off 90—70.
Night march, and		
30 A.M.—To Raguali	 20	*Dis.* Raguali Village; Mara, S.E. 4 miles off.
30 P.M.—To Village	 2	
July		Arafali estimated, N. 5 W.
2 A.M.—To end Salt Plain	.. }	Buri is N. 10 E.
2 P.M.—To Addado Camp	.. } 7	Dis., road N.N.W. Mara, 170.
5—6. To small Volcano	.. ..	Dis. Raguali, 200; Solli, N.W. To Village Raguali, 178.
6—0 To descent to Addado Plain	..	Dis. 48, after W. Solli, 3 miles off.
1—3. To Addado Camp	.. .. 11—12	
3 A.M.—To Kuntubba Ela	.. 7	W.N.W. Boka from hence E. 5 N. about.
4 P.M.—Mudino	 5	Solli, 190. Salun, W. Route before N.N.W.
4 A.M.—To Gerera	.. .. .. 8— 9	N. 10 W., after W. Sea 2 miles off; to Arena, N. 6 miles off.

Distance computed; watch stopped at Ala.

N.B. All the bearings and distances have only comparative value. Country and night-marches prevented sure bearings; bad road made difficult the evaluation of distances. To correct the map, take—

1. Amphilla, sure point.
2. Arafali, Narina, sure point.
3. Col. Merewether's and Col. Phayre's determination of Raguali.
4. Adsbi in Abyssinia, after the old maps.