ABYSSINIA.

Napier's March to Magdala—His Army and Its Difficulties.

The Chiefs, Christians and People, as Seen by the British Civilizers.

Geography and Topography of the English Mexico in Africa.

Boundaries, Mountains, Rivers, Ravines, Climate and Resources of the Empire.

THEODORUS' PEDIGREE AND FAITH.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE HERALD.

The Province of Tigre—Its Geography and Resources—March of Napier's Advance Brigade to Antalo—The Enormous Transport Trains—Horrible Fate of the Hindoo Muleteers—The Envoy of Kussai, Chief of Ethiopia, and his Reception—Theodorus Advancing Upon Gobazye—Gobazye's Stratagem—Zoology, Manners and Customs—Hatred of the Natives to Arabs—Disappearance of three English Officers—European Notabilities in Abyssinia.

CITY OF ANTALO, PROVINCE OF TIGRE, ABYSSINIA, February 17, 1868.

Before proceeding with a description of the expedition I have thought it better to give a brief sketch of the province in whose capital we are now encamped.

Tigré is now the most important province of Abyssinia, and is bounded, as you will observe by the map, on the north by the Bekla, Boja and Takue, and several of the wild tribes of the Shangalla; on the west by the mountains of Samen; and by the Denakil, Doba and Galla territories on the east and south; including not less than four degrees of latitude, and nearly an equal extent in a longitudinal direction. The high range of the Samen hills, stretching from Waldubba to the south of Larta, together with the line of the Tacasse, which flows in a northeasterly course along its base, sufficiently points out the natural boundary between Tigré and the province of Amhara on the west. Tigré is a large and exceedingly populous district, and contains a number of cities which figure conspicuously in the history of Ethiopia, more especially Axum, Dixan, Chelicut, Antalo, Atigeratt and Agulla.

The first of these cities was the ancient residence of the Abyssinian monarchs, who still go thither for the purpose of being crowned. Its antiquity is very great, as it is mentioned by Arrian in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea. The modern town of Axum contains about six hundred houses. On the eastern frontier stands the city of Antalo, which formerly was the seat of government. It is quite a large place, compared with any we have yet seen, and contains about twelve hundred houses, constructed of mud and straw, in the midst of which stands the palace, distinguished by its magnitude rather than by the elegance of its plan or workmanship. It stands on a hill which rises column-like out of the valley, and could be made a very defensible position. In Itjus province there is a very large convent, the Monastery of Fremon, which has always been the chief establishment of the Jesuits. It is about a mile in circumference, surrounded by walls flanked with towers and pierced for small arms. Atigeratt contains a small fort, and a small convent where the widow of the son of Subegadis, lately King of Abyssinia, lives. Atabeyen contains two small citadels, built on the edge of a rock rising five hundred feet perpendicularly from the plain. Agulla contains the ruins of a fine temple built by King Lalaba in the eleventh century to the Greek saint St. Korcas. The floor of this temple, which was marble, was in many places still entire. It was a strongly built building of large blocks of granite, but as it was said to contain gold, King Subegadis caused it to be pulled down to search for the treasure. The above cities stand near the road to Antalo which, after a continous march of eleven days from Senafe, the advance brigade under Brigadier General Collins reached. It is exactly 140 miles from Senafe and 193 miles from Boola, on Annesley Bay.

Our future route lay through the highlands of Abyssinia, after reaching Senafe, which stands almost on the brink of the tableland overlooking the sea of ridges which lift their scraggy peaks up into the very clouds, and look down so frowningly upon the "Feringhee" invaders.

Theodorus made a great mistake in not guarding these passes which have admitted the English into his dominions. Twenty men within the defences or on the heights, with serviceable muskets in their hands, could have defied three thousand; and were it not that the present ambitious Ras of Tigré is at variance with his fickle and tyrannical sovereign advantage might have been taken of the natural fortresses, which could so effectively have protected him, and another Thermopylæ added to history.

A most curious and interesting sight is presented upon attaining the summit of the plateau. Out of the level plain shoot up in the most forward and obtrusive manner a thousand differently shaped hills. Many of them are solid boulders, round and polished as a pebble, rising from one hundred to five hundred feet high; others are like sugar loafs, prisms and pyramids, and each height is crowned by a village, which is inhabited by either the Agames, Hazortas or Shihos.

These people of the highlands are better dressed than the miserable black Shihos of the coast; they are also more intelligent and very independent. There is plenty of forage in the country, as the land is more or less cultivated, though in a peculiar manner, yet sufficient for the use of the inhabitants. A new and sound dollar of the Maria Theresa stamp must be paid for a goatskin full of barley which will weigh about twenty-two pounds. The same amount of money must be paid for two hundred pounds of wood. A half crown, a rupee or a shilling they look upon with contempt, and angry words or blows they resent quickly.

They are of the complexion of our Indians, well proportioned, with fine hands and features, short, hair, kept plaited and always well buttered. When they visit camp they come well armed with spear, shield and a curved sword very likeun sickle. In the use of the shield they are very expert. For the purpose of testing their expertness an English soldier, thoroughly skilled in the use of the sabre, was pitted against a strong, athletic Agame. Like lightning the sabre flew around the native's head, with back strokes and front cuts, now at his head and then at his legs; but like a black shadow the shield glided from side to side and successfully averted every stroke for over fifteen minutes.

These shields are circular and are made of double oxhide, well tanned and oiled, and are impenetrable to sabre or spear. Of old the Ethiopians were famous in their use, for Jeremiah, in his exhortation, says, "Come up ye horses, and rage ye chariots, and let the mighty men come forth—the men of Ethiopia and Libya that handle the shield." Their dress is the breechcloth and a cotton robe, with a broad red stripe across its centre, which is worn like a toga. Until within four days' march to Antalo these tribes inhabited the country through which our route lay.

THE CIVILIZERS ON MARCH.

Early on the morning of the 5th instant the advance brigade, composed of the Thirty-third regiment Europeans (mostly Irish), Fourth regiment native infantry, the Scinde horse, native cavalry, a rocket battery of artillery and two mountain batteries, numbering in all about 2,500 strong, marched out of their camp at Senafe and started for Antalo. The Scinde horse, with their sheepskin coats and green uniforms, presented a very fine appearance, and their officers, who were East Indian Englishmen, were decked out in the splendid uniform of an officer of the regiment, with silver helmets, silver scabbards, silver sword handles, gold buttons, silver spurs, silver embroideries, silken sashes and gold epaulets, which must have cost something like $1,500; while the horses on which they rode were as richly decorated as their riders. The infantry in their dull brown linen uniforms did not look so well, nor was their drill, after eleven years' service, anything extraordinary. A band of twenty-five musicians preceded the column, and when the order to march was given struck up the well known tune of "Cheer, boys, cheer." It was certainly very good advice, for the distance was long, the sun parpitiously hot, and the brown appearance of the protected hill land gave the country a dry appearance, which, with the uncertainty of the end of the expedition, might perhaps cause the troops to be dejected. Truly, the column had a somewhat piebald look, with all its fine haberdashery. Here were red men, black men and white men; cockneys from London and Cots from Ireland, cocking up their eyes with impudent leers at everything; grave looking fat Parsees from Persia, scowling Hindoos from the banks of the Indus, black eyed, well oiled Sikhs from the Mahratta; gentlemanly Sepoys from the Deccan, ferocious Soumali's from Arabia, ugly-faced Pagans from Barbary, Janus-hearted, treacherous Bengalese; wild looking Egyptians from Cairo and Alexandria, turbanned and red fezed Turk from his darling Stamboul; the literal, olive-cheeked Jew from Palestine, followed by the naked Shoho, the daring, athletic Nubian and the plundering Hazortite, all riding or walking, chatting and smoking as they went, with a train of commissary stores two miles long and a train of mules laden with camp equipage five miles long, besides a motley number of sutlers and natives carrying tobacco, ghee halieb (milk) and barley bread. Including the muleteers, servants, dholy bearers, pottawallas, ghorawallas and natives, there were over 4,000 men and about 7,000 animals in that seven mile procession.

A company of the Scinde horse regiment brought up the rear, and before many miles were passed the task devolved upon them of driving up a lot of sickened wretches who had become faint-hearted on leaving the plateau and descending down roads that seemed to lead to hell, so steep the hills became, while another hill of equal height loomed up dark and stern, inclosing an oven-like valley which teemed with carnivorous animals. On clambering up the steep sides of the opposite hill numbers fell out by the way—sore-footed Hindoo soldiers, who eat nothing but rice, home-sick Arab muleteers and other emaciated wretches, who prayed in piteous tones to be left alone to die. Several did fall out and never rose again.

Up steep hills rough with massive rocks, made more difficult by the scorching sun, over rolling plateaus, past smiling pastoral valleys, by robbers' roosts and the Troglodytes' caves, the column wound its way. Now the brigade the van of the expedition passed over a gentle rolling country overgrown with banbool bushes, anon it straightened its lines along a deep ravine, down the dry bed of a mountain torrent the precipitous banks of which were lined with rocks, trees, copses and tamarinds, whose branches were alive with strange singing birds, and where the cheatah watched for its prey. Here blocks of quartz and felspar rocks reared themselves above us, on whose hot surfaces the horned viper or the cerastes basked, and the lithe lizard glided with quickened motion at our approach. Gradually ravines widen into lovely valleys, through which meander murmuring streams, in whose waters the lowing cows lazily wagging their tails, slake their thirst. In these valleys the valuable Kusso tree flourishes, whose exudition is considered a specific in cases of worms, a malady to which the natives of the country are subject. This tree is about twenty feet high, with a crooked trunk and clothed with pinicated leaves of a pleasant opaque green color. The sycamore tree, which is the true sycamore, with its evergreen branches adds to the beauty of the scene. Soon we leave the valleys and ascend the mountains, higher and higher, until we stand fully 11,000 feet above the level of the sea. Then we descend gradually downward through fields of flowering shrubs, aloes which cover the mountain tops, in full bloom, honeysuckle; then through natural arbors caused by the interlacing of branches of great trees, and still downward to parts covered with wild olives and thick groves of the berry-bearing cedar tree, where the fragrance of the sweet brier, wild myrtle and other aromatic shrubs was almost overpowering.

The various stations on the route to Antalo are named as follows:

From Zoula.	*Miles.*	*From Zoula.*	*Miles.*
Koomaylee	13	Adabergen	15
Sooroo	14	Dongalo	14
Undel Wells	13	Agulla	12
Baraguddy	14	Doula	8
Senafe	9	Moochtan	8
Guckunda	15	Antalo	16
Pekudo	16		—
Atigeratt	10		193
Aturo	14	Magdala	160
			—
Total distance			353

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,

Sir Robert Napier, is a man of ability; he is certainly a courteous gentleman, and so is Brigadier General Merewether, who looks more like an American than an Englishman.

They have both made great mistakes in sanctioning the engagement of foreign muleteers. The Arabs prefer to die by the roadside than go any further; while the Hindoos, who eat nothing but rice and dhall, become weak-kneed, and die from sheer exhaustion during the fatiguing marches. From Senafe to Antalo, however many the cross roads, however intricate the bypaths or however expansive the level plateau or dense the banbool forest, no stranger could need a guide, for the dead mules and horses which lined the track would have guided him on the way to Antalo; and but for these carcases it would have been often impossible to have found it, for the East Indian sappers and pioneers have done their work in a very ineffective manner from Senafe to Antalo.

THE CHIEF OF TIGRE IN COUNCIL—HOW HE EMPLOYED COLONEL MEREWETHER.

Two days before we passed through General Napier had been visited by the ambassador of Kussai, Chief of Tigré, who came with a well armed retinue numbering over a hundred men. They were all mounted upon fleet, hardy ponies, but the ambassador and his secretary were mounted upon the same horse. They all wore clean coarse cotton cloth with the inevitable red stripe, and a kind of a high, steep turban. They rode to the presence of the General with great pomp and parade of horsemanship, howling barbarously and throwing the spear after the manner of the Turkish *djeride*. After amusing the General's staff with several battle manœuvres very well executed they alighted from their horses and salaamed before the General's marquee. The council then commenced, during which the envoy laid his head in Merewether's lap, staring up in his face very insolently; for which, I was told, Merewether used him very roughly, so there was reason to suppose that Kussai, the Chief of Tigre, would be apt to consider it an insult and resent it accordingly. Your correspondent did not arrive in time to hear the speeches, which were good Eastern orations.

This Kussai was formerly a chief of the western part of Tigré, when Wagsbum Gobazye was governor of the whole province. Kussai was sent to punish another rebellious chief, and so well did Kussai perform his allotted task, that Gobayze confirmed him as ruler over half its province. By and by Wagsbum Gobayze rebelled against Theodorus, the Emperor of Abyssinia, when Kussai declared himself in favor of Theodorus. Gobayze was so incensed that he marched against him with an army, which was defeated, upon which Kussai assumed the governorship of Tigré, which tickled Theodorus so much in getting such a strong supporter of his throne, that he permitted him to retain that which he had won. Having been successful so far he soars higher, and already fancies himself supreme ruler, as he signs himself Chief of Ethiopia and seals his letters with the great seal of Abyssinia, the lion of the tribe of Judah. Feeling assured that Theodorus' reign is about to draw to a close he seeks to strengthen his claim to the regal dignity by a timely friendly alliance with the Ferringhees, by whom he imagines he is about to be made Negashi of the empire. He is to meet Sir Robert Napier at Hussein on the 20th, a small village standing halfway between Adabergen and Dongalo, where a treaty will be made.

Gobayze, his former master, is sorely pressed by Theodorus, who is advancing upon him with his whole army, apparently careless whether he meet the Ferringhees or not, although he knows they are in the country. The Wagsbum is inclined to receive the British force with open arms, as they afford such an excellent safeguard to fall back upon.

NATIVE TRADITIONS AND HOPES.

All the natives that we have met in the country seem to have an idea that the English will be annihilated. The Romans, in the time of Augustus, made war upon Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, Mohammed, the arch imposter, made war upon the Christians of Abyssinia, and the Egyptians under Mohammed Ali essayed the task of conquering the country, and all these were defeated. Why not the English? There would be no question of their utter annihilation were all the kingdoms and provinces of Abyssinia united. The English have seized a propitious moment to extend their conquests, when the whole empire is torn by civil war, tribe against tribe, and all against the King. Courage, even when seconded by discipline, cannot always overcome the obstacles opposed by the law of nature. The burning sun, the almost inaccessible mountains and the scarcity of water and provisions aid King Theodorus in opposing the English. The long straggling, lines of transport trains conveying the commissary stores, could by a stroke of Sheridan tactics be easily captured, and the isolated stations along the route destroyed one after another. Even now, when all Heaven and earth seems arrayed against Theodorus, he has a chance to retrieve his waning fortunes, and that is by taking the prisoners along with him and making what Merewether calls a "running game." I fear if King Theodorus undertakes that kind of war that England will sorrow greatly at the weight of expenses thrown upon her. The £20,000,000 already spent would be increased to £100,000,000, and this sum for the vindication of her dignity and the acquirement of prestige.

JOHN BULL COUNTING THE PROFITS.

The English have already turned their attention to the revenues of the country and found it to be only $400,000, but which might easily be raised to $6,000,000 per annum if the country was properly cultivated; for agriculture, as might be expected in a state of society where there are so few rewards for industry, is still in a very rude condition, the occupiers of land trusting much more to the natural fertility of the soil than to any system of management. The ploughs are so extremely inartificial that they consist of nothing more than a crooked stick, pointed with iron. With fine harvests and the modern implements of industry what might the country not produce? By irrigation seed time and harvest would follow each other every month of the year. In fact, vegetation never falls asleep in this happy climate.

The natives sow barley in the beginning of May, that is a little before the commencement of the monsoon rains; it comes to maturity in June, and is immediately carried off the fields, that it may not be destroyed by the excessive moisture. Then they sow vetches, which likewise ripen during the rainy season. In September they sow wheat or teff, and if they have water they repeat barley or tares in January. The rent paid to the king is one-tenth of the crop; but as the produce is small the peasants never become affluent.

The number of animals, both tame and wild, that have been seen by us already is something wonderful, and they all seem different to the animals of other countries. There are two kinds of cows; one kind have wide spreading horns, with hump on their backs and are about the size of the American buffalo. The other kind are diminutive creatures, well formed, with short horns, and are about the size of a common calf in our country. The horses are small, active animals, a very hardy breed, similar to Mexican mustangs. The Ethiopian hog, or wild boar, is a perfect monster, with tusks spreading out like horns. These afford exciting sport to the enlighting hunting propensity of the English officers. Hyenas, jackals, wild cats, mungos, cheetahs, panthers, lions, elephants, wild buffaloes, small ferocious animals, lynxes, foxes, the addax (an animal between a cow and a goat), the fenne (half rabbit, half fox), the serbos, small deer, and a host of others too numerous to mention, have been seen on the route. Van Amburg and Barnum could stock a splendid and choice menagerie and museum out of the animals in Abyssinia. As for birds, I will only name the gigantic faccan, hornbill, ibis, kite, guinea fowl in abundance, kaylee, hawks, plover, snipe, turkeys, geese, ducks, large quail, clock bird and a thousand others. Each patch of forest and wooded banks of rivers resound with such a strange chorus of voices that it is perfectly deafening. Under the verdant foliage of the baobab, the cedar and woody kolynall sport scores of monkeys denantly, as if they knew the soldiers were not allowed to kill any of them. While the mosquitoes are the largest and yet the most timid, the flies were the smallest and yet the boldest. This variety of sights and sounds affords infinite amusement and serves to while away the marches.

RELIGION.

The monotony of travelling was also relieved when passing villages on observing groups of nude maidens and lusty lads in fig-leaved dress issue out of their villages, playing on their reed pipes blithe and cheery notes of welcome. Gray headed elders and village dignitaries came forth and exchanged their friendly salaams, and made anxious inquiries respecting our religion.

One old centenarian hobbled up to your correspondent and asked earnestly whether he was a Christian.

"Oua (yes)," was the answer.

"Bemin gardach Iesu Cristos," was his reply in the only Turkish he could muster, which means, "You are my brother in Jesus Christ," after which he took out of his bosom a fanciffully ornamented iron cross, which he reverently kissed, and to show our love for the Christian religion our party followed his example, which so pleased them that they accompanied us on our journey for a mile or two, and only parted from us after exchanging many a courteous salaam. At the village of Adabergen the entire population came out and inquired if we were Christians. The Mussulmans, Parsees and Hindoos replied with contempt, which contempt ensued hatred. Six Arabs have been killed and mutilated, and one Hindoo was found literally cut to pieces.

Six days' march from Senafe we came to a country where the people were all Christians. Their churches were built of mud and stone with turrets, were situated in the most lovely places under the evergreen foliage of the sycamore or the baobab, which screened their places of worship from intrusive curiosity and by this seclusion and holy calm served to add to the spirit of devotion by which the Christians in Abyssinia are animated.

The summits of many of their churches were perfect cones, while the walls were encircled by a number of wooden pillars—being trunks of the cedar tree placed so as to support the edifice—and as the roof projects about eight feet beyond the walls an agreeable walk or collonnade is thereby formed, which proves of great use in hot or rainy weather. The inside is divided into several apartments nearly according to the directions which are given in the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one, here the congregation say their prayers. Within this is a square, which is divided by a rail or curtain, corresponding to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Tabernacle. The latter is so narrow that none but the priests are admitted into it.

There is something very fantastic in their mode of conducting divine service. Their musical instruments are little drums, which they hang about their necks and beat with both their hands, and this exercise is performed by their chief men as well as by the gravest ecclesiastics. They have sticks likewise, with which they strike the ground, accompanying the blow with a motion of their bodies. They begin their devotions by stamping with their feet on the floor and playing gently on the drums; but when they become warm and animated they leave off beating and proceed to leap, dance and clap their hands as if in ecstacy at some infinite bliss, straining their voices at the same time to the highest pitch, till they become more like an infuriated crowd than a religious assembly. For this manner of conducting the religious services they quote the psalm of David, "O clap your hands, all ye nations."

It is strange with what tenacity these people have clung to Christianity when reflecting upon the vigorous efforts made to crush it by Mohammedanism. Though the Crescent rules over Egypt, Christianity, which was preached by St. Mark in the city of Alexandria, defies Mohammedanism still, secure in the mountain fastnesses of Abyssinia.

FROM ISRAEL.

The more I see of these people the more am I convinced that they belong to some of the lost ten tribes of Israel, who, as the prophecy foretold, should be "distinguishable from Gentiles save by circumcision vain. The royal standard of Abyssinia displays the lion of the tribe of Judah, to indicate the descent of the kings from Solomon. The great seal of Abyssinia is the lion of Judah, and there is a prediction extant which is cherished by the natives, viz.—that the delivery of Palestine from the hands of the infidel Moslem and the gathering together of all the children of Israel would be effected by a king of Ethiopia.

The valleys as we proceeded were better cultivated; haycocks were seen standing in the vicinity of comfortable looking houses. Cattle were lowing in the fields; sheep and goats browsed on the hills, over which shepherd boys, with a goatskin over their backs, watched, while playing upon their reed pipes shrill and mournful tunes. Indeed, for many miles a panorama of contentment and happiness unveiled to the view such as might be presented in the most civilized or peaceful portions of the globe.

REVENGEFUL NATIVES.

A ferocious, blood thirsty and perfidious set of natives occupy the mountain heights, to whom many are inclined to believe that we owe the death of three English officers who have been found dead, while others say that one shot himself, while another was killed by an elephant. The officers' names are Colonel Duncan, of the Thirty-third; Major Cooper, of the Fourth, and a Captain Edwards. These fierce natives live in caverns like the ancient Troglodytes, or in hovels constructed with a cone-like roof of rushes and mud. Leading a pastoral life they change their dwelling as soon as the rains have produced a little verdure on their parched soil, for when the hot season ends on the coast it begins among the mountains.

A TELEGRAPH LINE

has been laid all the way from Zoula to Atigeratt, a distance of one hundred miles, and it is intended to extend the line as far as Antalo as soon as practicable.

EARLY AND MODERN EXPLORERS.

All the great Powers of Europe have sent experienced officers to examine and report on the Abyssinian expedition. France has sent General Le F——, Captain Herdecourt (a son of General Rochet D. Herdecourt, who made a journey through Ethiopia in 1817 under the auspices of the French Academy of Sciences) and Commandant Galle, of the marine service. Prussia is represented by Count Secondorff and Captain Steum, also Dr. Roiff, the African traveller and an author of celebrity. Italy is represented by Major Bacon and Captain Osslo, officers who served with distinction during the late war with Austria. The King of Holland has sent Captain Prince and First Lieutenant Bujis. Dr. Louis Knaph and Captain Speedy, Abyssinian travellers, also Major Levison, the "Old Shekamy," an author of some repute, are with the expedition. All the above gentlemen are with the advance brigade. There are several correspondents also here, four English, two East Indian, two German, two French and one American, the NEW YORK HERALD correspondent.

Your correspondent might add that he, in company with Major Levison, was the first who entered the ancient and important city of Antalo.

Geography of Abyssinia.

ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE—ITS SITUATION, ENTRANCES, TOPOGRAPHY AND INHABITANTS.

Abyssinia is a vast country of Eastern Africa, extending between latitude 7 degrees 40 minutes and 16 degrees 40 minutes north, and longitude 34 degrees 29 minutes and 43 degrees 20 minutes east; bounded on the east by Adel, northeast by the Red Sea, northwest by Nubia, and south and southeast by what is known to explorers as the country of the Gallas.

From various sources to hand during the progress of the war in Abyssinia and the official topographical reports of the English authorities we compile the following statement of the ancient history and geography of the empire:—

More than two thousand years ago the father of Greek history described Ethiopia as the most distant region of the earth, whose inhabitants were the tallest, most beautiful and "most longelived" of the human race. Before him the father of Greek poetry had already sung of the Ethiopians, "remotest of men," most just, with "whom the immortal gods delight to banquet." Beyond the confines of Egypt, the furthest nation of whom the Greeks knew anything, there rose a vision of a mighty empire, glorious, ancient, powerful, rich in gold and jewels and spices. Its inhabitants dwelt around the sources of the mysterious Nile, and, as some thought, had power to restrain or pour down its fertilizing waters. But it was known only by report. No traveller had reached its distant borders. No conqueror had marched an army within its sacred territory. The Persian master of Egypt had made the attempt and failed. But history repeats itself, and it is, it seems, the lot of England to be perpetually treading in the steps of the ancient heroes. Not many years ago she reproduced the campaigns of Alexander and Porus in the Punjab. She is now about to conclude the baffled enterprise of Cambyses in Africa. Abyssinia is really a most ancient empire, which has preserved through long ages of isolation and degradation some relics of civilization and Christianity. Surrounded by negro tribes it still maintains in form and language the higher type of the Semitic race to which it belongs. Pressed on all sides by Mahometan invaders, it has never relinquished its nominal adherence to the Gospel. The royal dynasty, derived originally—so runs the tradition—from Menilek, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, sank down, like the Merovingians in France, to a succession of *rois fainéants*, who are practically superseded by their viziers. Province after province set up a king and governor of its own, until at last Abyssinia became little more than a name, like France in feudal times, or Germany and Italy before their latest rehabilitations, for a collection of independent States, a mere geographical expression. Gibbon concludes his brief summary of the latest incident in its history which fell under his review—the rediscovery of Abyssinia by the Portuguese Jesuits and its conversion to Latin Christianity, followed by its sudden and total relapse into its old Monophysite heresy—with the following characteristic sentence:—"The gates of that solitary realm were forever shut against the arts, the science and the fanaticism of Europe." It was a premature announcement. During the present generation the gates have been gradually unclosing and will soon be flung wide open by Britain.

Sir Samuel Baker's book, "The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," does not deal directly with Abyssinia proper, the country of Theodorus. Of this work the *London Times* remarks thus:—We opened Sir Samuel Baker's book with an expectation that it would throw some light on that unknown region to which, not without anxious misgivings, we are about to despatch a British expedition. In this respect we have been disappointed, for Sir Samuel Baker, in following the course of the Abyssinian tributaries of the Nile, did not pass over the mountain ranges that wall in the territories of the Emperor Theodore, and he has told us nothing about Abyssinia proper the Switzerland of the African continent. Except, however, for this our hopes respecting this work have not been frustrated; it is a valuable record of discovery and adventure, described graphically and in a pleasing manner. It is hardly necessary to remind our readers of what Sir Samuel Baker has achieved in the matter of exploring in Africa. How, accompanied by his heroic wife, he set forth on his famous expedition to find out the sources of the Nile; how, braving perils and difficulties innumerable, they made good their way into the heart of the continent; and how, having solved the geographical problems left undetermined by Speke and Grant, they beheld the head of the mighty stream issue from the gigantic Albert Nyanza, is a tale not to be soon forgotten by thousands in the present generation. This renowned journey settled a question which had been a mystery since the dawn of history; it showed conclusively that the origin of the Nile is to be found in two lakes of immense size—the Victoria and the Albert Nyanza, in the centre of Equatorial Africa. Before, however, the whole system of the Nile could be said to have been explored another question remained obscure—namely, what was the cause of the extraordinary rise of the great river at settled periods, and where the fountains of its prolific overflow? It has been the good fortune of Sir Samuel Baker to have put this question also to rest, and thus to have completely unfolded one of the most remarkable secrets of geography. Before departing on his great expedition he made a tour with Lady Baker through Nubia and Egyptian Abyssinia, in order to ascertain the character of the affluents of the Nile in those countries; and the general result of his discoveries is that, while the Victoria and Albert Nyanzas are the parent reservoirs of the Nile, its inundations, with their fertilizing effects, are caused wholly by its Abyssinian tributaries. The volume before us is a record of this interesting and important journey, and it has satisfied us that Sir Samuel Baker is correct in his views on this subject.

General Description of the Country of Abyssinia and of the Different Routes Leading into It.

Abyssinia is often represented on maps as bounded on the east by the Red Sea. This, however, is an error. Abyssinia proper consists of a high mountainous table land, the eastern boundary of which may be considered roughly as following the fortieth degree of east longitude. Between this mountainous region and the sea there is a tract of arid, low lying, waterless country, inhabited by the savage Danakil tribes; this region at Massowah is only a few miles broad, but it widens out to 200 or 300 miles at Tajurrah. In climate, inhabitants, soil, cultivation, &c., these two regions are totally opposite, the highlands being salubrious, temperate, generally well watered and traversed by paths in every direction, while the low country is arid, waterless, with few exceptions trackless and uncultivated.

This inhospitable region effectually cuts off the highlands from all communication with the sea except at three points, Massowah and its neighborhood on the north, Amphilla Bay, about 100 miles to the southeast, and Tajurrah on the south. From these three points the roads into the interior are of a very different character, for at Massowah they very soon climb the eastern boundary of the highlands and continue along the elevated land, whilst from Tajurrah they have to traverse 200 or 300 miles, and from Amphilla Bay from 50 to 100 miles of the low lying country before they reach the highlands.

The western and southern boundaries of Abyssinia are very undefined, but they may be taken roughly as conterminous with the edge of the highlands, and having the White and Blue Nile on the west and the Red Sea rather south by east.

ROADS FROM MASSOWAH.

After traversing thirty or forty miles of hot, low lying desert country the main road from Massowah to Gondar ascends the mountains by the Taranta pass. This pass is described by all travellers as one of great difficulty, up which in some places loaded animals can with difficulty make their way. It can be avoided by going round to the west, where there are at least two paths, one of which was followed by Ferret and Galinier, on their return to Massowah, in 1842, and the other by Mansfield Parkyns, on his way to Adowa, in 1843. Neither of these travellers described the same difficulties on reaching the highland by those routes as are experienced in the Taranta pass. M. Münzinger has also lately given a description of two paths by which the table land can be reached in the direction of Kaya Khor. Of this line Dr. Beke, writing in 1842, says:—"After quitting the table land of Scrawé at Gura I descended from Kalyakhor to Massowah by a gradual and easy road, well watered, and occupying two days and a half, very gentle travelling. This is so much superior to the steep way up the Taranta that it is now generally chosen by the Europeans." The Taranta pass may also be avoided by following up the Haddas stream to Tohonda. This road was traversed by Krapf, who states that it is an easy one and that it might be made available for camels. From Annesley Bay Tohonda and Senafe may also be reached.

When the highland is reached the country for the whole distance to Gondar and Magdala appears to present alternations of fertile land, rocky, barren tracts, mountain passes and defiles. The table land appears to be from 5,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea, and the mountains rise from it to the height of 10,000 and 15,000 feet, the whole country being broken and tossed about in a remarkable degree. With the exception of the first 50 or 60 miles after leaving Massowah there seems to be generally no want of water. There are numerous paths between the villages, but none that deserve the name of roads.

Besides the main road from Massowah to Gondar by Adowa there is also, according to Dr. Beke, a second great caravan road from north to south of Abyssinia, from Massowah, through Antalo and Socota. Antalo (about latitude 13½ degrees, longitude 29½ degrees) may be reached either through Addigraht by the route followed by Ruppell and Ferret and Galinier, or through Adowa, as travelled by Beke, or by an intermediate route followed by Salt. Magdala, according to Dr. Beke and Dr. Blanc, can be more easily reached from the direction of Socota than that of Debra-Tabor.

There are numerous streams and rivers and high mountain passes to be traversed on these highlands.

THEIR WATER SYSTEM

is peculiar. The water shed runs very near their eastern edge, from which it results that all the great rivers have their rise near the eastern side of the table land and then take a westerly course. The principal of these are the Mareb, Takazze, Atbara and Abai or Blue Nile. The Takazze crosses the the principal caravan road from Massowah to Gondar and is a most formidable obstacle. It is described by Parkyns, who crossed it in the rainy season, as nearly equal in volume to the Thames at Greenwich, but resembling in rapidity the Rhone when it leaves Lake Geneva. In the dry season it is fordable. Bruce describes it as flowing in a "prodigious valley." Ferret and Galinier say:—"The ravine in which it runs is one of the steepest possible. At Tchelatchekenne it is not less than 2,000 feet deep; the breadth of the river is about sixty feet, and its depth in March not more than three or four feet, it is then fordable almost everywhere. In the rainy season it overflows its bank and its depth is often from fifteen to eighteen feet." Parkyns says that mountains almost impregnable by nature are common in this country.

MOUNTAINS.

One important feature of Abyssinia is the existence of ranges of snow-topped mountains in the provinces of Samen and Lasta, which stretch at right angles to the roads leading from the north towards Gondar and Magdala, and the passes through which are described as of the most formidable character. The two principal passes leading to Gondar are the Lameimon and Selki. Of the first, Ferret and Galinier say:—"We found ourselves in the Lameimon, whose summit, 8,600 feet above the sea, sinks into the plains of Waggara. All at once an immense gulf opened under our feet. We got off our mules, and, leading them by the bridle, descended the mountains by a precipitous path, blocked with fragments of rock, which threatened at every step to precipitate us into the abyss on our left."

Bruce says of the same pass:—"We were now ascending the Lameimon through a very narrow road, or rather path, for it scarcely was two feet wide anywhere. It was a spiral, winding up the side of a mountain, always on the very brink of a precipice. Torrents of water, which in winter carry prodigious stones down the side of the mountains, had divided the path in several places, and opened to us a view of that dreadful abyss below which few heads can bear to look upon. We were here obliged to unload our baggage, and by slow degrees crawl up the hill, carrying them, little by little, upon our shoulders round those chasms where the road was intersected."

Combes and Tamisier thus speak of the Selki Pass:—"We then abandoned the banks of the river to mount by an infernal path. * * * At length we arrived at the top of the prodigious mass. On every side still more colossal mountains raised their heads, between which was the path which we had to follow. * * * After marching two hours we passed the gate called Sancaber, closing the finest and perhaps the only road in Abyssinia carried along the side of a high mountain inaccessible from the top to the bottom."

CLIMATE.

These highlands are very healthy. They are stated by Parkyns to "enjoy probably as salubrious a climate as any country on the face of the globe. The heat is by no means oppressive, a fine light air counteracting the power of the sun. At certain seasons of the year the low valleys, as of the Mareb and Taccazy, especially the former, are much to be feared from the malaria which prevails and which brings on, in persons exposed to its influence, most terrible inflammatory fevers, of which four cases out of five are fatal." Harris thus speaks of the highlands of Shoa:—"As if by the touch of the magician's wand, the scene now passes in an instant from parched and arid waste to the green and lovely highlands of Abyssinia, presenting one sheet of rich and thriving cultivation. Each fertile knoll is crowned with its peaceful hamlet, each rural vale traversed by a crystal brook and teeming with herds and flocks. The cool mountain zephyr is redolent of eglantine and jasmine, and the soft green turf, spangled with clover, daisies and buttercups, yields at every step the aromatic fragrance of the mint and thyme." Krapf, when travelling near Lake Haik, says:—"The climate in these plains is beautiful, neither too hot nor too cold, the air being always refreshed by the winds blowing from the mountains. There is plenty of water poured out from the veins of the neighboring mountains."

There is a dry and a rainy season in these highlands. The latter extends from May to September, and, with the exception of a few showers in the beginning of November, little more rain falls during the year. Bruce gives the rainfall from a register kept at Gondar and Koscam as follows:—

	Gondar, 1770. *Inches.*	*Koscam*, 1771. *Inches.*
March and April	.039	.746
May	2.717	2.501
June	4.307	6.388
July	10.089	14.369
August	15.569	10.019
September	2.834	7.338

—After which it rained but little more, except at the beginning of November. During the rainy season the rain almost invariably falls in the afternoon and night. From Bruce's diary of the weather during the rainy months, it appears that there was hardly a single instance of rain falling between six A. M. and noon.

The temperature of the highlands is mild, but at great elevations the cold is severe.

Bruce gives a series of daily observations at Gondar, 7,420 feet above the sea, from which the following is extracted:—

Month.	*6 A. M. Degrees.*	*Noon. Degrees.*
January	61 to 66	69 to 75
February	63 to 70	69 to 76
March	66 to 70	70 to 83
April	59 to 73	67 to 85
May	60 to 74	73 to 80
June	60 to 65	63 to 69
July	55 to 61	55 to 65
August	55 to 58	58 to 63
September	58 to 67	61 to 68
October	56 to 61	63 to 69
November	59 to 61	60 to 72
December	59 to 63	67 to 72

Harris gives the following as the temperature of Ankobar, the capital of Shoa, which is in the hill country, 8,200 feet above the sea.

Month	*Mean of Month. Degrees.*	*Extreme Maximum.*	*Extreme Minimum.*
January	52	65	41
February	54.6	66	46
March	57.2	69	46
April	55.2	62	46
May	59.7	67	51
June	62.1	69	52
July	58.1	69	51
August	55.8	63	47
September	55.3	63	46
October	52.1	62	44
November	51.9	60	43
December	51.8	61	41

PORTS OF ENTRY.

The following short account of the different harbors which communicate with the routes that have been mentioned has been furnished by the Hydrographer to the Admiralty:—

Massowah.—Eight or ten of the largest ships with double the number of smaller ones could be securely moored in the harbor. There is also a good harbor called Daha-leah, larger than Massowah, about a mile to the north. In both of these the water is quite smooth. The fresh water supply is from tanks in the island of Massowah. There is fresh water also at Daha-leah. Fresh water is not abundant either here or in any other part of the Red Sea, but the supply at Massowah could probably be increased by digging wells on the main land.

There is a pier with facilities for landing on Massowah island which is connected with the main land by low, wet ground about a mile in length. The rainy season is from November to March.

It is 380